

# LIGHT

Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

July 1984

## JUSTICE, KINDNESS and POLITICS Do They Go Together?

### Do Justice and Love Kindness

(Micah 6:8 RSV)



Observe Christian Citizenship Sunday  
July 1, 1984

Sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

By Larry Braidfoot

Justice, kindness, and American politics. Sometimes they go together; sometimes they don't.

The words of the prophet could not be more relevant if they had been written yesterday: "... and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8, RSV).

**The two words**, justice and kindness, summarize the debates which are raging in American politics today. What is justice? Does the role of government include such a thing as kindness?

Justice has meant freedom for former slaves, voting rights for women, and the opportunity for all children to go to a decent public school.

A Baptist statesman told me recently of a conversation with a friend from earlier years. His friend, now wealthy, posed one of the most blatantly unjust questions which can be raised in a democracy: "Is there a state somewhere which has a political vacuum where I could go, set up my operation, and for one or two million dollars buy a senator?"

**Absurd, you say?** Perhaps. But that's not too different from what is happening now in Congress and what will happen in 1985 as the federal government tries to deal with

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# REMEMBERING

## Even We Activists Can Benefit From the Exercise

In his new book, *A Room Called Remember*, Frederick Buechner tells of a dream in which he stayed at a hotel in a special room which somehow pleased him immensely. It was not the way the room looked that satisfied him that deeply but the way it made him feel. In it he felt happy and at peace; everything about it seemed right; and in it everything about himself seemed the way it should be, too.

As the dream went on, he left for adventures far and wide before coming back by and by to the same hotel where this time he was given a room in which he did not feel at all comfortable. It was dark and cramped and made him feel depressed and melancholy.

Going back to the desk clerk he explained that on an earlier visit he had been given a marvelous room that made him feel right in every way and that he would like very much to have that same room again. Unfortunately, he explained, he kept no record and did not know where the room was or how to ask for it.

The understanding clerk said he

knew exactly the room and that Buechner could have it again whenever he wanted it if only he would ask for it by name. He eagerly inquired as to the name of the room. The clerk responded that the room was called Remember.

Remembrance is, indeed, a blessed thing.

We remember sunsets, ripe watermelons, chamber music, train whistles, jumping fences, whippoorwills in the twilight, magnolias blooming, honeysuckles, hootowls in the night, possum hunts, crepe myrtles, new plowed ground, full moons and revival meetings.

We remember our parents in whose structures we were nurtured, in whose disciplines we learned to walk and on whose shoulders we now stand. We remember teachers, old pastors and friends long lost. In this season of celebrating Independence Day, we remember our political forebears who labored mightily with fantastic vision and immense discipline to bring forth a nation with an enduring ideal of liberty and justice for all.

We remember that by the grace of God and in his divine providence we are who we are, where we are, and what we are. We remember that in spite of flaws and foibles, weaknesses and stumblings, problems and failures, things keep on working together for good for those who love God and are called according to his purpose.

We remember that great cloud of witnesses who for the joy that was set before them endured the suffering and despised the shame that they might pass on to us the blessings of revealed religion. And we remember Jesus Christ.

This is the first editorial I have written for *LIGHT* since beginning my twenty-fifth year with the Christian Life Commission. And I am constrained to remember A. C. Miller who preceded me in this calling and Hugh Brimm who preceded him; and I remember J. B. Weatherspoon and T. B. Maston, remarkable trailblazers whose work and witness in support of applied Christianity continue to produce an expanding harvest of good fruit.

I may not be quite as bad off as that friend who wears his suits out from the inside; but I am an incorrigible activist who finds it hard to be still and remember. When pressed into doing it, however, it is a blessed exercise. By consciously, intentionally, purposefully working at remembering, we can magnify that blessing.

Hard lessons have been learned; and we must not forget them.

Marvelous visions have been caught; and we must not lose them.

Wonderful things have been heard; and we must not hush those echoes.

Great happenings have been experienced; and we must not layer them down under inexorably mounting piles of commonplace events.

Let's make the most out of life by going back often to Buechner's room called Remember.

*Foy Valentine*

Foy Valentine  
Executive Director

LIGHT

# CONFLICT IN CENTRAL AMERICA

## Suggestions for a Policy Of Peace with Justice

By Ronald D. Sisk

To put it simply, Central America is in a mess. Of the six Latin-heritage Central American republics, only Costa Rica has a functioning democratic government. Guatemala languishes under military rule. Panama has yet to shake its heritage of heavy military influence in the government.

El Salvador is torn by civil war. Nicaragua's ill-defined Marxist revolution seems to be losing its grip on its people's imagination. Honduras has become a base for both American military activity and the anti-government Nicaraguan *contras*.

In all this, the United States has vital interests at stake. Of special concern are the strategic significance of the Panama Canal and the long-term security of our southern border, including the Caribbean shipping

lanes. Equally important for long-term foreign policy considerations are the establishment of responsible democracies and the stabilization of the Central American economies.

Policymakers and policy critics express relatively little disagreement concerning these basic goals. The dispute is over how to attain them.

Over the past three years the Reagan Administration has committed increasing amounts of military and economic aid to the region. This aid is held to be necessary to oppose Communist aggression there.

American assistance is shoring up the government of El Salvador in its fight against leftist rebels. "Covert" American assistance is supporting rebel Nicaraguan forces fighting the Marxist Sandinista regime there. The

Kissinger Commission's bipartisan report issued early this year calls for \$8 billion in military and economic assistance to the region over the next five years.

Critics of the administration's Central America policies point to continuing human rights violations by the Salvadoran army. Right-wing army "death squads," according to leaders of the Salvadoran Catholic Church, have killed 38,000 civilians since 1975.

Critics also argue that it is inconsistent for the United States to fight rebels in El Salvador while supporting rebels against the recognized government of Nicaragua. Congress has

several times voted its intention that American efforts not be directed at overthrowing the Sandinistas. The World Court has called upon the United States to cease harassment of the Nicaraguan government.

In addition to the above political opposition to American policies in the region, leaders of 11 American Protestant churches recently called upon Congress to support negotiated settlements and deny further American military aid.

The president of the U.S. Catholic Conference has sharply criticized the Kissinger Commission's recommendations. Bishop James W. Malone of Youngstown, Ohio, argued that the central problem in the region is "endemic social inequity and brutal military repression."

Three times in the past year Nicaraguan Baptist leaders have appealed to Baptists worldwide to help change American policy. In May they charged the U.S. with "destroying the life aspirations" of the Nicaraguan people.

How should Southern Baptists respond to such conflicting interpretations of American actions? Here

are some suggestions for positive components of a peace with justice policy in Central America:

• **Negotiate settlements.** The four "Contadora" nations—Columbia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela—have been trying to work out a political settlement for the region. President Duarte of El Salvador has publicly stated his intention to bring the leftists into the negotiating process there. Strong efforts should be made to encourage these negotiations.

In the long run, peace cannot be obtained by imposing a military solution. It can only be secured by paying adequate attention to the legitimate interests of the peoples of Central America.

• **Enhance democratic institutions.** American support of the recent elections in El Salvador was a positive step. Wherever possible, our policymakers should work to encourage Central American nations to listen to the expressed wishes of their people through free elections. By the same token, abuses of human rights such as the Salvadoran death

squads should be opposed at all costs. A decisive end to the death squad activities should be made a condition for continued American aid to El Salvador.

• **Provide social assistance.** One key objective of American policy, as the Kissinger Commission rightly suggests, should be assistance for human development in Central America. Projects aimed at attacking illiteracy, hunger, disease and infant mortality should be increased as quickly as local infrastructures can handle them.

For Latin Americans, let us be clear, these basic survival issues are the stuff of human rights. Without food on the table, our North American, democratic ideals about human rights mean little from a Latin American perspective.

• **Cease subversive activities.** Support of the anti-government Nicaraguan *contras* has earned the United States near-universal condemnation. Such aid should be stopped immediately. The United States should make clear its support for self-determination in Nicaragua and all Latin America.

• **Demilitarize involvement.** American military assistance to the region should be deemphasized at the same time that negotiations toward political solutions are pressed. Military involvement should be limited to levels necessary to prevent imposition of solutions by external or illegitimate means.

It is imperative for the success of American policy in the region that the United States not be seen as once again imposing its will on reluctant Central Americans.

As the Nicaraguan Baptist leaders suggest, it is the "life aspirations" of the Central American peoples which are at stake. There will be no peace in the region without justice. To the degree that our policies support that justice, we will contribute to the achievement of genuine peace among our Southern neighbors.

*Sisk is director of program development for the Christian Life Commission.*

## CASE IN POINT

### Nicaraguan Baptists Appeal for Help

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (Baptist Press)—Nicaraguan Baptist leaders, again condemning U.S. support of rebels fighting the Nicaraguan government, have appealed to Baptists worldwide to help change U.S. policy.

"It is urgent that we make an all-out effort, now while there is still time, to stop the plans for war and destruction designed against us. We need your help to achieve peace," stated the "pastoral letter" signed by Baptist Convention of Nicaragua President Gonzalo Mairena, Executive Secretary Tomas Tellez and Secretary Javier Talavera.

The appeal echoes two letters released last year by the convention and its executive committee. The latest letter charges the U.S. government with "blocking, at-

tacking and destroying the life aspirations of (the Nicaraguan) people." It claims the U.S. has ignored invitations to negotiate with Nicaragua, as well as the peace efforts of the Contadora Group (foreign ministers of Mexico, Panama, Venezuela and Columbia, who are attempting to promote a regional peace).

Both the Carter and Reagan administrations have, in fact, negotiated with the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua, and the U.S. officially supports the Contadora Group's work. But "covert" CIA support of anti-government rebels in Nicaragua has been open knowledge for more than a year.

U.S. officials privately maintain such support will pressure the Nicaraguan government to cease arms shipments to rebels in El Salvador.

# PREACHING AND POLITICS

How does the pastor address political issues without engaging in partisanship?

*LIGHT* posed that question to three Southern Baptist leaders with extensive knowledge about and experience in the pastoral ministry. (The question assumes that the pastor is both priest and prophet, called by God to proclaim a whole gospel that speaks to every phase of life.) Here are their responses.

## WILLIAM H. ELDER, III

### Citizenship Education Vs. Political Bossism

Pastoral ministry involves Christian citizenship. Trying to apply the gospel without a political dimension grossly compromises the authenticity and universality of the gospel. Yet I would add a word of caution. We ought never to take off our "pastor" hat and put on the hat labeled "political boss."

The political boss tells who to vote for, what to give and what to do. The pastor, on the other hand, is first, last and always an enabler. When he moves into the political arena he must never act with the end in view of delivering a bloc of votes but rather to assist his people to deal with political power and political choices in light of the gospel.

I do think a minister can educate people in Christian citizenship without becoming involved in political bossism. Preaching, teaching and writing opportunities are constantly available for dealing with issues.

**I think three** areas need to be touched. First, the pastor needs to help people understand how religion and politics interface. Many Baptists are confused about "the separation of church and state." They know this doctrine has been one of the major contributions Baptists have made to our national life. But for many, this significant Baptist distinctive means that religion and politics should be

kept totally separate. Consequently, they believe the farther from the political arena they can stand, the better.

This absolute separation is by no means what is envisioned in the First Amendment, and when people are helped to understand the balance that is struck there between "anti-

establishment" and "free exercise" they are set free for responsible involvement. They see that they not only have a right to be involved in shaping public policy through the political process but they are encouraged to do so to fulfill the meaning of both American citizenship and Christian discipleship.

**They also recognize** that the only restriction is that they must not try to use the coercive power of the state to evangelize. This should not be disconcerting to any Christian since the Bible makes it clear that manipulation and coercion are totally inappropriate and counterproductive means for proclaiming the gospel.

A secondary agenda which needs to be part of all the pastor says and does is the communication that he knows where the boundary lies between being an enabling shepherd leading in the direction of full discipleship (which includes Christian citi-

## Justice, Kindness and Politics

(Continued from Page 1)  
the problem of the budget deficit. With \$200 billion deficits, taxes are certain to be raised in 1985. Something desperately needed to be done this year in response to the deficit, but Congress and the President lacked the will to grapple with such a "political" question in an election year.

**When the issue** is finally taken up in 1985, political action committee money will flow, special interest groups will hover like vultures, and self-interest will be the driving motive. What place will justice be given in decision making about taxes and other vital issues?

How kind is government? With \$200 billion deficits, you can count on the strongest pressure to maintain the status quo to come from those who have carved out the biggest advantage for themselves.

A business group in one state recently urged the legislature to establish a lottery, even though the lottery is a form of regressive taxation and ethnic exploitation. The governor had admitted that the lot-

tery would prey upon poor people. Yet the message from the business group was clear: tax someone else, especially the poor and minorities, but leave us alone.

**God has a word** for government in such a time. In fact, he has two words: justice *and* kindness. Now these are not words of advice. They are requirements. How "Christian" is our government? How moral is our government? Decide how just and how kind our government is and you have your answer.

Christians have a responsibility and an opportunity to make a difference.

Christian Citizenship Sunday, set on the denominational calendar for July 1, is an opportunity for Southern Baptists to emphasize Christian citizenship and to make a commitment to practice Christian citizenship in pursuit of the goals of justice and kindness in our nation.

It truly is a day to "do justice and love kindness."

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zenship) and being a political boss. If he can communicate his sensitivity to that distinction, the congregation will be less inclined to resist his calls to citizen action.

He must be able to encourage

*The pastor must know "where the boundary lies between being an enabling shepherd leading in the direction of full discipleship . . . and being a political boss."*

people to be involved in a political party, to campaign for their candidates and their issues, etc., without putting his own stamp of approval on party or candidates. He must not endorse candidates from the pulpit or in the newsletter or through any other professional means available to him ex officio.

He must convey clearly, that his call is for church members to be active, utilizing their faith as a basis for political decision making, and that even though he himself has political preferences and is involved in party politics, he will not use his office to benefit his own political choices. When he is involved as an individual in partisan politics, he must take pains to make it clear to any observers that he does so not as pastor of a given Baptist church but as a private citizen.

**Obviously, so neat** a distinction is sometimes difficult to ensure. Some ministers opt never to become involved at all in partisan politics, feeling that their private and professional identities cannot be separated. However, by taking this option, they undermine a very essential point: even a pastor must have his own personal and private sphere of identity, if he is to avoid ministerial burnout.

Also, if what he has been telling people is true regarding the integral linkage between citizenship and discipleship, he has denied himself that same avenue into fuller discipleship. And, if he chooses to sideline himself, he certainly loses the opportu-

nity to teach and encourage by example—probably the most dynamic and articulate form of leadership.

**I think a minister** can carve out his own personal political niche by talking about that necessity and by making sure that he never makes partisan politics the basis for fellowship or friendship or anything else within the life of the church.

Finally, the pastor needs to help people learn how to examine the facts in light of Christian ethical insight. He should encourage them to ask of every political option, "What would God have me do?" He needs to help people understand both how the political process is *supposed* to work and how it *actually* works.

He can do all of these without political bossism. Indeed, what he is really doing is enabling people to see the relevancy of their faith.

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## WARREN C. HULTGREN

### Moral Leadership Without Partisanship

Several years ago I copied the following from a tombstone in a cemetery in Palestine, Texas. "J. D. DuPuy, December 13, 1853—December 19, 1927. He loved relatives, friends and country; was fond of games and sports; believed in God and Christianity, but denounced *Political Preachers.*"

**The dilemma of** speaking to political/moral issues can be difficult. We do have a gospel with social implications and a Bible that cries out for justice. I think the pastor can lead in several ways.

First, remember that many power groups seek to "use" the pulpit. Labor unions, national management groups, federal and state agencies and safety councils all have divisions dealing with clergy relations. One must

be discriminating in the material used.

Second, remember that moral principles transcend partisan political issues. It would never seem right for me to endorse a candidate. There

*"Moral principles transcend partisan political issues. . . . [But] there are issues and occasions requiring direct confrontation."*

are issues, however, such as racism, gambling, abortion, alcohol and child abuse that are bigger than political parties. Roger Williams challenged the authority of the Massachusetts General Court to enforce the "First Table of Law." Our religious liberties today can probably be traced to this influence.

**Third, remember** that there are issues and occasions requiring direct confrontation. There are other times in which we are better off influencing individuals. I do not believe pastors or ministers can lead a crusade as effectively as committed laymen. It is possible to encourage and inspire leadership out of a congregation. Very effective state laws with reference to divorce and incarceration have been directly affected by lawyers within our congregation. We get a lot done if we do not care who gets the credit.

Fourth, remember that some issues are always above partisan politics. These would include the torture of prisoners, the bombing of civilian centers . . . anywhere human values are at stake.

Fifth, remember that on any issue there are reference materials which are impartial and objective. Aside from biblical texts and principles, there is also other information.

I was being interviewed over television on the question of impending legislation concerning Liquor-by-the-Drink. I indicated that I was opposed to it. I was asked if I had any basis for my beliefs other than some Bible verses. Fortunately, I had just read the HEW Report on Alcohol, which indicated the social costs involved in

loss of life and property. This meant a great deal more to a secular audience in a one-hour debate than the Bible. The issue was defeated.

Remember that responsible Christianity is responsible citizenship.

*Hultgren has been pastor of First Baptist Church, Tulsa, Okla., since 1957. A native of Minneapolis, he was graduated from Hardin-Simmons University (B.A.) and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (B.D.).*

## RAYMOND BAILEY

### A Question of Biblical Preaching

I assume the pastor strives to do biblical preaching and biblical preaching will have political implications. If this is our Father's world, then how the world is governed is a religious matter.

Public policy in areas of environment, human justice, peace, education—in short, everything that affects the quality of life in God's world—should not be ignored. The problem is how to address these issues while respecting individual conscience and separation of church and state.

#### Begin with the Bible

Use of the Bible should not be an afterthought in any form of Christian preaching. Too often a preacher adopts a cause or a position and then searches the scriptures for support. Careful, consistent study of the scriptures will lead to relevant preaching on social and political issues. Political ideologies, mores, or commitments to a politician or political party may color one's interpretation. Personal bias must be under the judgment of God.

The pastor must strive to bring to bear all of the tools of biblical interpretation—linguistic, historical, cultural and theological—to discovering the intention of the text. The theological is especially important in resisting the temptation to isolate passages from the Bible as a whole. The most powerful preaching on political issues emerges from the discovery of the message and lets the Bible speak for itself.

#### Respect Individual Conscience

Preaching must not suggest there is no room for error by the pastor. During the Vietnam debate I heard a zealous preacher declare that one could not support a particular presidential candidate and be a true Christian. The moral report cards circulated in recent political campaigns reflect a dangerous inclination to self-righteousness.

One ought to remain open to insights from the Holy Spirit and other Christians. God's truth is absolute but interpretation of the Bible and application of its message is always subject to human fallibility.

#### Use Subtlety

Modern preachers can learn an important lesson in subtlety from Nathan's confrontation of David. Even when preachers do not intend to be partisan they may appear so by a full-scale attack on an issue. As the pastor's position should emerge from study of the scriptures and their theological context, the congregation should be led to its own decisions through the process of pastoral preaching.

Preachers often try to accomplish too much in a single sermon. Use a series of sermons to establish the basis for making a particular decision. Public policy on housing for the poor might be approached via the route of creation, stewardship, doctrine of humanity, etc. Sometimes more can be achieved in a subpoint than in a sermon whose subject will

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***"The most powerful preaching on political issues emerges from the discovery of the message and lets the Bible speak for itself."***

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raise barriers of intellectual and emotional resistance before a case can be made.

#### Avoid Attacks on Persons

To confuse persons with policies is unwise and unchristian. Charges of partisanship are often the outgrowth of attacks on persons. Rather than addressing an issue, Christians often

stereotype its proponents or opponents. Avoid partisanship by sticking to the issues.

#### Sometimes It's Unavoidable

A pastor cannot always avoid partisanship when identifying injustice or immorality. The prophets often sounded judgments against nations and individuals, believing the word of judgment originated with the Lord. The same standard should apply today.

To be silent in the face of a political faction like the Third Reich or Stalin's Marxism would be nothing less than sin. Groups such as the Ku Klux Klan must be opposed by those who speak to and for the church. Toleration is important in a pluralistic society where personal freedom and responsibility are valued but toleration is not to be confused with acquiescence in the face of evil.

History demonstrates that evil is often personified. Pharaoh, Ahab, Jezebel, Nero, Hitler, Stalin and tyrants of all ages offer historical evidence of this fact. Admittedly, these are extreme cases. Less obvious evils are sometimes authored by less violent personalities. But the point is clear: one cannot always oppose an evil without identifying its perpetrator.

#### Risk Cannot Be Avoided

Preaching on political issues is not safe. Being partisan is even more dangerous. No matter which side you advocate, you will offend those who hold an opposing view and those who want to avoid controversy at all costs. The very things I've suggested to avoid may be used against you.

Jesus and Paul chose to join a long line of prophets who were mocked, ostracized, imprisoned, beaten and killed. Retribution today for supporting unpopular causes is usually more subtle but it can be painful. Being unpopular, "unsuccessful" and unemployed is no barrel of laughs.

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# OPENING THE GATE

## A Call for Leadership In the Local Context

By James Flamming

... There is no such thing as citizenship without leadership.

If we who are ... the vines of the branch of the Lord Jesus Christ do not lead, somebody else will. In our nation today there is a conglomerate of inadequate leadership, primarily because those of us who have the right values are much more comfortable in our studies and in our offices. ...

G. K. Chesterton said, "Nothing is real until it is local." We can talk about national issues, yet all things still boil down to a street corner, a courthouse, a state capitol, and a church building. ...

Jeremiah wrote: "To the exiles from the Lord God of Israel, live in the land unto which I have sent you. Plant gardens there. Give wives for your sons. Raise children and seek the welfare of thy city, for in its welfare will you find your own." In a less than ideal situation Jeremiah said, "Make your faith local."

**I do not understand** why it is that those of us who are the carriers of grace expect of our cities perfection. Why is it we want an ideal situation when there never has been an ideal situation in which to lead locally?

I was in a revival meeting with a young man who spent most of the week saying to me, "Help me move. The challenge here is over." I looked at the building and it was ramshackle. Sunday School attendance was going downhill. The local school was a dreadful situation. I looked at the racism involved in that community, and I thought to myself, "Here

[is] an ideal place for a Baptist minister to grab hold of some reins somewhere and do something, and instead 'the challenge is over.'"

Jeremiah, speaking to some people who found nothing admirable about where they had been sent, says, "Seek the welfare of your city, for in it shall you find your own welfare. Plant gardens and live there and put down roots, for that is where I have sent you." Nothing is real until it is local. ...

**Also, there is no** citizenship that does not worry about the gate. "What gate?" you say. It is a gate I didn't have to worry about until last year ... when a black preacher made me look at the gate like I had never looked at it before.

Notice the gate in our Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus. There are those who live inside the gate and those who live outside the gate. Inside the gate there is plenty. Outside the gate there is want.

Inside the gate the question is, "What shall I wear today?" Outside the gate the question is, "Will I have anything to wear?" Inside the question is, "What shall I fix for dinner?" Outside the question is, "Will there be any dinner?" Inside we say, "I have a cold and I will go to the doctor." Outside the real word is, "I hope he doesn't die."

**Inside the gate** (I choose to call it the affluent bubble) the rich man lived. And the interesting thing is the rich man didn't even know there was anybody outside the gate. There is no evidence he even knew Lazarus was alive.

Surely it was just a confession

when the leader said, "I don't know of any hungry children in America." Surely it was just some off-the-cuff statement when he said, "Some are taking advantage of the system."

Did he mean to say there are no politicians in Washington who take advantage of the system? Why is it when one lives in the affluent bubble and gets by with things, cuts corners and manipulates the process, he is swift, cunning and shrewd? But if he is outside the bubble and outside the gate, he is a thug and a criminal?

The gate is not God's; it is ours. We built it. ...

**Whether you interpret** that parable in Matthew 25 to mean nations or individuals makes no difference. If, at the end of the age, we stand before Almighty God and our Lord says to us, "I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat; I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, cold and you clothed me not, sick and in prison and you visited me not," what difference does it make if

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**"Inside the gate there is plenty. Outside the gate there is want."**

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it is a judgment on the nations or on the individual?

We are the affluent nation. As individuals, we live in the affluent bubble. Someday we ... will have to stand judgment about that gate.

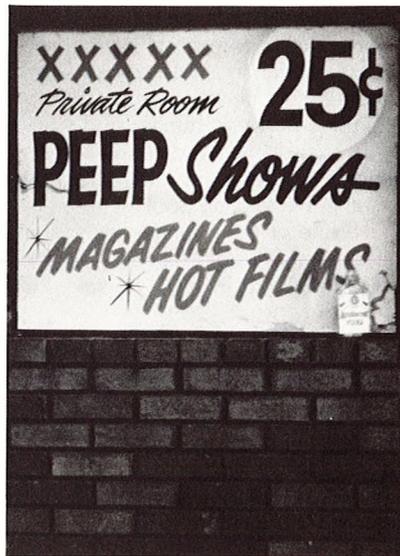
What is that step of influence God is calling you to take? How can you open the gate a little more? "To whom much is given much is required," said Jesus.

*Give us, O God, the courage to do that which is thine, to love those who are thine, to lead as thou dost lead us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.*

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*Flamming is pastor of First Baptist Church, Richmond, Va. This article was adapted from his closing address at the Christian Life Commission's national seminar on "Christian Citizenship 1984." The entire address is available in the printed Proceedings of the seminar.*

# THE NAKED TRUTH ABOUT PORN



## A Christian Critique

By Harry N. Hollis, Jr.

Families today must cope with sex miseducation in many forms. One of the most distorted kinds of faulty and irresponsible sex misinformation can be found in pornography.

In spite of the fact that pornography claims to reveal everything about sex, the reverse is true. The problem with pornography is not that it reveals too much but that it tells too little. It censors and selects its facts. Families can profit by contrasting pornography's view of sex with a Christian perspective.

**1** In pornography sex is limited almost entirely to its physical dimension; a Christian view understands sex as an aspect of personhood which permeates our total being. Always promising to tell everything about sex, pornographers tell us very little about what sex really is. Contrast its mechanical view with the

multi-dimensional view of sex in the best of Christian thought.

**2** Pornography advocates no controls on sexual expression, thus sowing seeds for moral anarchy; in a Christian view, the power of sex is recognized, and responsible controls are called for. Unlike pornography, the Bible recognizes the dynamite of sex and offers guidance for responsible stewardship of this good gift of God.

**3** In pornography sex is associated with destructive, sick humor; a Christian view links sex with wholesome joy and laughter. Pornography knows nothing of the kind of happy celebration of sex found in the Song of Solomon.

**4** In pornography sex is tied to a fantasy world; a Christian view prepares one to see sex as a part of the real world created by God. Pornography provides props for those who want to escape from real-

ity to a dream world. But these dreams soon become nightmares. Christianity gives one the moral resources to choose to work with God to enjoy the real world as he intended.

**5** Pornography presents an inaccurate comprehension of the male and female; a Christian view offers an understanding of the male and female as God's creatures. Pornography tries to make us believe that a male and a female are the sum of their private parts. It pictures the man as a super-sexual being. The woman is seen as a toy, and, if she gets broken or destroyed, as toys usually do, she can be replaced. In a Christian view the male and female have dignity and worth because they are God's creatures.

**6** Pornography really portrays not relationships but the proximity of bodies; a Christian view calls for a covenant relationship in which a married couple can share the totality of life's experiences from giving birth to facing death.

**7** Pornography often links sex to perversion, pain, torture and sadism; in a Christian view sex is related to wholesome pleasure. While pornography often uses sex as an expression of hostility, the Bible points to the good of sharing and meeting the sexual needs of one's mate (Ephesians 5:21-33).

**8** Pornography ignores the mystery of sex; a Christian view recognizes that sex cannot be fully appreciated apart from its mystery. Pornography misses the element of mystery and wonder in "the way of a man with a maid" (Proverbs 30:19).

Though pornography claims to reveal the nature of sex, it dangerously distorts the truth. It is deceitful about one of the most important aspects of our lives. Because its distortions can mislead us and rob us of pleasure and truth, families have a responsibility to understand and combat pornography.

*Hollis is associate executive director and director of family and special moral concerns for the Christian Life Commission.*

## One Trillion Dollars for Arms

The world will be spending \$1 trillion for weapons and other military purposes by next year, reports the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

Military spending has soared from less than \$300 billion in 1972 to about \$820 billion in 1982 and an anticipated \$970 billion this year.

Inflation has been partly responsible for the rise, but even in real dollars, military spending is increasing an average of 3.1% a year. It has moved up twice as fast in developing countries as in industrial ones.

The United States, Soviet Union and the military blocs of both superpowers accounted for nearly 75% of arms sold and delivered from 1972 to 1982. Leading arms exporters for 1978-82 were the U.S.S.R., U.S., France, United Kingdom, West Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania and China.

The Soviet Union held 30.1% of the arms market in 1982. The U.S. was next with 26.2%. However, NATO allies led the Warsaw Pact, 47.9% to 38.3%.

Middle Eastern countries bought nearly half the weapons delivered in 1982. The region has led all others since 1977 in the value of arms imports.

—Associated Press

## Some Sobering Alcohol Facts

Half of the alcohol consumed in the U.S. each year is drunk by one-tenth of the population, reports the Department of Health and Human Services.

Other findings from the report:

- Drinking is estimated to be involved in 45 to 68% of family violence.
- Drivers with significant blood-alcohol levels are 3 to 15 times more likely to have a fatal accident than are drivers who have not been drinking.

• Lowered infant birth weight, IQ and motor development are linked to the drinking of pregnant women.

• Suicide rate for alcoholics is 6 to 15 times greater than that of the overall population.

—Washington Post

## Child Abuse Continues

Child abuse victims in the U.S. number more than one million a year. Of those, more than 2,000 die. And the tragedy continues to grow.

"Our best information says these

numbers are on the rise," reports Anne Harris Cohn, head of the National Committee for Prevention of Child Abuse.

## Hunger Persists In the South

Hunger in Southern areas of the United States is "on a par with the Third World," says a Harvard University doctor.

J. Larry Brown, who headed a Physicians Task Force on Hunger through tours of Alabama, Mississippi and Tennessee, said people "are hanging by a thin line between hunger and starvation."

Brown blamed the conditions on cut-backs in federal aid rather than mismanagement of aid by poor people.

"Some of the counties we saw in Mississippi and South Alabama are on a par with the Third World," he said. "Our

people have become hungry in this nation again and it is not because they suddenly became ignorant."

The needs are so urgent that "we're not going to wait to write [a report] before we go before members of Congress" to appeal for action, Brown said. "Those children can't wait on us to write a report."

—The Tennessean

## SBC Clergy Salaries Rank Near Bottom

The Southern Baptist Convention ranks next to last in average salaries of clergy among major U.S. Protestant denominations surveyed by the National Council of Churches.

SBC clergy salaries average \$19,070, according to the NCC study. Only the

## ETHICS LIBRARY

### Reviews of Works in Applied Christianity

**The Booze Merchants: The Inebriating of America** by Michael Jacobson, George Hacker and Robert Atkins. Washington, D.C.: Center for Science in the Public Interest, 1983. Most powerful collection of data on alcohol advertising available. Takes a hard look at what the alcohol industry says it does with its advertising campaigns and at what it really does. Clever analysis of real alcohol ads strengthens the argument for severe restriction of alcohol advertising.

**Search** magazine (August 1984) will be out just in time to be in your personal or church library before the Day of Prayer for World Peace. T. Furman Hewitt writes about making difficult ethical decisions. Glen Stassen sets forth a Baptist ethic of peacemaking. Gerald Marsh probes the relationship of patriotism and peace. Marv Knox and David Wilkinson illustrate what a local church can do to promote peace in a world at war with itself. These essays (we have by no means mentioned everything) and book reviews represent one of the finest collections on this subject to date by Southern Baptist authors.

—Ronald D. Sisk

**Traits of a Healthy Family** by Dolores Curran. Minneapolis, Minn.: Winston Press, 1983. "Can families be good today?" Yes. Especially if they are willing to discover what the traits of a healthy family are. Based upon a broad survey, this book is rich in insight and illustration. Some traits are the result of plain common sense; others are surprising. Written without much of the jargon and "in" terminology found in much of current family literature.

**Review and Expositor**, Vol. 81, No. 2 (Spring 1984), is a treatment of the theme, "Christianity and Economic Responsibility." Paul Simmons offers a theological critique of capitalism. Larry McSwain discusses Christian ethics and the business world. (An adaptation of this article was featured in June LIGHT.) John Wood reminds us that consumer advocacy is still alive and needed. Articles by other professors and pastors round out a very useful volume. Economic life is too broadly ignored by our Baptist discourse about public life. This volume should help to fill that void.

—Larry Braidfoot

Seventh Day Baptists (\$12,670) reported a lower figure in the survey, which included American Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Reformed and United Church of Christ clergy.

Findings came from questionnaires returned by 1,983 clergy among a scientifically selected sample of 5,400. Salary figures included any benefits received besides a paycheck.

The report said clergy and university professors continue to be paid the least among various professional groups. Female clergy in full-time categories had a median salary range of \$14,000 to \$16,000 compared with \$20,000 to \$22,000 for male clergy.

—Evangelical Press

## Child Care Needs Are Growing

Child care needs in this nation continue to grow. Consider the following statistics cited by Sheila Kamerman, professor of social policy and planning at Columbia University:

- 43% of children to age 3 have mothers who work full- or part-time.
- Nearly 50% of children ages 3 to 6 have mothers who work outside the home.
- 58% of school children, grades 1-12, have working mothers.
- More than 7 million young Americans need some child care.

Kamerman noted that "in survey after survey working parents say that the single most important problem they face in managing their work and family lives is child care."

## A Question Of Values

If you think the daily news can be depressing, you're not alone. Consider the following letter to the editor printed in *The Washington Post*:

"Now let me see if I have my values straight—as illustrated by some fairly recent stories in The Post.

"A broken-down racehorse (Devil's Bag) is worth \$20 million. An executive in an industry that was broken down for several years is suddenly worth over \$7 million a year. A broken-down baseball player (George Brett) is worth \$2 million a year. A broken-down football player (Craig James) is worth \$1 million or so. A woman with a broken voice inquiring 'Where's the beef?' is worth well over half a million.

"But a beginning teacher for our chil-

dren is worth about \$16,000 to \$18,000 a year. And a baby sitter to mind our children for the evening is worth perhaps \$10.

"It certainly makes one proud to be a member of such an intelligent species."

## Black-Owned Farms Decline

Only 3% of the nation's population owns 95% of the land, and blacks are on the losing end of those owning the remaining 5%, says Joseph Brooks, president of

the Emergency Land Fund.

Blacks lost more than half of their active farms during the 10-year period ending in 1978, he said, citing census data collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

In 1968 there were 133,000 black-owned farms in operation on 6.2 million acres. By 1978 the number was down to 56,000 on 4.2 million acres. Rate of land loss by blacks, 1968-78, was about two and one-half times greater than that of white farmers.

—The Christian Century

### CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY IN A MULTIRACIAL SOCIETY

Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center  
August 19-25, 1984

#### MONDAY

The Bible Speaks on Race

Black Southern Baptists Today

Hispanics: The Fastest Growing Ethnic Minority

#### TUESDAY

The Bible Speaks on Justice

Ministering Effectively with Black Southern Baptists

Progress Noted: In Harmony and Justice

#### WEDNESDAY

The Church in the New Testament

Panel: Progress is Not Automatic

Reaching Ethnics

#### THURSDAY

Refugees, Aliens and the People of God

Relating to Black Churches

Prejudice is Alive but Not Well

#### FRIDAY

Overcoming Prejudice: Help for the Church

Organizing for Local Social and Moral Action

Making the Incredible Credible

#### PROGRAM PERSONALITIES

**Chan C. Garrett**, Associate Director,  
Black Church Relations Department, Home Mission Board

**W. David Lockard**, Program Coordinator,  
Director of Organization, Christian Life Commission

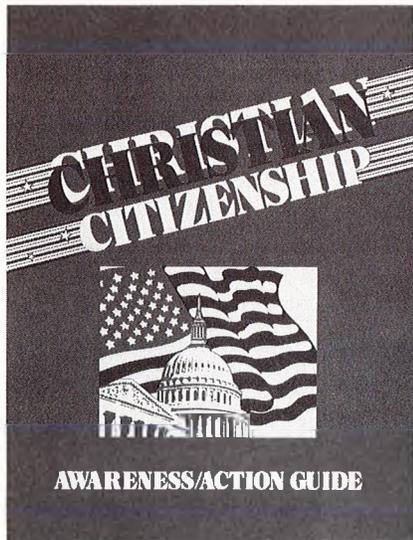
**Emmanuel L. McCall**, Director,  
Black Church Relations Department, Home Mission Board

**Daniel G. Rodriguez**, Editor, Spanish Materials,  
Bible Teaching Division, Baptist Sunday School Board

**Sid Smith**, Consultant, Ethnic Liaison Unit,  
Baptist Sunday School Board

# UNDATED RESOURCES

## Promote Citizenship Awareness



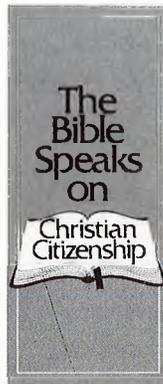
**Christian Citizenship Awareness/Action Guide**, is designed for use by individuals or groups. The five sessions deal practically with the following topics: Why Christians Should Be Involved in Politics, What Christians Hope Government Will Do, Why Christians Reject Civil Religion, Some Issues Christian Citizens Face, and How Christians Can Be Involved in Politics.

AWARENESS/ACTION GUIDE



1984  
Christian Life Commission  
Seminar Proceedings

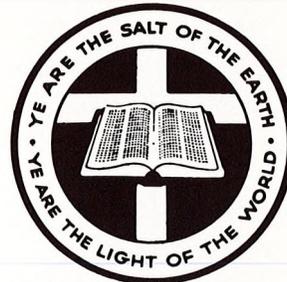
**The Bible Speaks on Christian Citizenship**, in pamphlet form, surveys the basic scriptural teaching on this subject.



**Christian Citizenship 1984**, Proceedings from this year's national seminar, features addresses by Helen Caldicott, Harvey Cox, George Gallup, Bill Hendricks, Senators Robert Dole and Mark Hatfield, Representatives Claude Pepper and Jim Wright, and others.

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Quan.	Resource	Price	Total
	<i>Christian Citizenship Awareness/Action Guide</i>	\$1.50 ea.	
	"The Bible Speaks on Christian Citizenship"	10 for \$1.50	
	<i>Christian Citizenship 1984 Annual Christian Life Commission Proceedings</i>	\$3.00 ea.	

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