

Light

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN

BAPTIST CONVENTION

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BEFRIENDING the HOMELESS

'Jeff Street' Opens Its Doors and Heart

By David Wilkinson

Mike Elliott has never been homeless. But, thanks to an incident five years ago, he understands what being homeless means.

The lesson came on a frigid January Sunday morning in inner city Louisville, Ky., where Elliott is pastor of Jefferson Street Baptist Chapel and director of Christian social ministries.

Elliott, whose family then lived in the second-floor apartment above the Chapel, rose early to go downstairs and turn on the heat in the sanctuary. As he passed the glass front doors, he noticed four or five men huddled near the entrance trying to shield themselves from the arctic gusts which had plunged the wind chill factor to 80 degrees below zero.

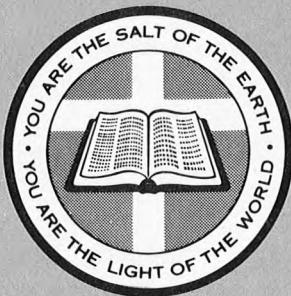
He unlocked the door and politely explained that the men needed to leave but were welcome to return for Sunday School in a few hours. They protested that there was nowhere else to go. The nearby mission where they had spent the night routinely emptied its residents at 6 a.m. Churches were locked, security guards kept them out of hospital waiting rooms and bus stations, and none of the stores were open yet.

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Foy Valentine, Executive Director
David R. Wilkinson, Editor
Duann Kier, Editorial Secretary



**Christian Life
Commission**
Of The Southern
Baptist Convention
901 Commerce, #550
Nashville, TN 37203-3620

Teen Pregnancies

Unwanted teenage pregnancies are epidemic in American life today. Consider these startling statistics compiled by the Children's Defense Fund.

Each day more than 3,000 teenage girls become pregnant; 2,300 of these pregnancies are unintended; teenage mothers give birth to 1,300 babies with 800 of these mothers having not completed high school and 100 having not even completed ninth grade; 500 school-age teenagers have abortions; and 26 teenagers who are 13 and 14 years of age have their first baby while 13 teenagers who are 16 years of age have their second child.

Each year one American teenager in 10 becomes pregnant, compared to fewer than one teenager in 20 in England, France, or Canada and one in 30 in Sweden; teenage pregnancy rates among white teenagers are twice those in other industrialized nations; and of the more than one million teenage pregnancies that occur, 125,000 are to girls age 15 and younger, three out of four are unintended, and about one in two ends in abortion.

About 11 million unmarried American teenagers are sexually active. One out of every five 15-year-old girls and one out of every three 15-year-old boys have begun to have sex. Eight out of 10 babies born to married 15-to 17-year-old mothers were conceived before marriage. Out-of-wedlock births are increasing: in 1983, one in two teenage births were to single mothers compared to one in seven in 1955; and 96 percent of unwed mothers choose to keep their babies rather than place them for adoption.

What can the people of God do to help prevent unwanted teen pregnancies? We can reaffirm some basic beliefs about sex, sexuality, family life, and fundamental moral values. We also can strengthen families, clarify values, shape structures, and do the truth.

1. Strengthen families. Some biblical principles which can help strengthen families come readily to mind. They are grace, commitment, freedom, faithfulness, and responsibility; and their application to the problem of unwanted pregnancies among teenagers is plain.

Grace means acceptance of each other including acceptance of the teenager's need to untie the apron strings as well as acceptance of the teenager's need for continued nurture and discipline.

Commitment needs to be not only between two people in love with each other but to the institution of marriage itself as a vital part of God's purpose for human beings everywhere.

Freedom is a beautiful and necessary principle in strengthening families; but it is not an excuse for the license of unbridled sexual passions on the part of pitifully immature teenagers or for a ceaseless search for things or gratifications on the part of parents.

Faithfulness has to do with sex but it goes much further than sex. Faithfulness is to start before marriage, continue in marriage, and extend to the larger family loyalties owed by each family member to all other family members; and it is to continue through all of life.

Finally, we have a *responsibility* not to be unequally yoked together, to provide for each other, to be examples if we are parents, and to honor our parents if we are children. We have, moreover, a responsibility to love one another with a maturing love that includes discipline.

2. Clarify values. The essence of revealed religion and the heart of authentic moral values is to love God with one's whole being and one's neighbor as one's self.

Today people are caught in a tangled web of moral compromises resulting in an exponential curve of mounting problems. With regard to sexual values, the ideal of one man and one woman joined together for life in the bonds of holy matrimony is still valid. Children from their earliest

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OPEN DOORS

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Dumbfounded, Elliott invited them in and made a pot of coffee. The next few hours were spent getting an impromptu education on homelessness in America.

Since that introductory Sunday morning lesson, Elliott and "Jeff Street" have learned a lot about homeless persons, and they have turned that knowledge into a variety of programs reflecting a combination of social ministry and social action.

That initial pot of coffee was followed for several months by a breakfast prepared by Elliott and his wife Janice. Now every Sunday morning a group of volunteers from local Southern Baptist churches meets in the basement kitchen to cook breakfast for 50 to 100 homeless persons.

Some of the unused Chapel space was converted into small bedrooms

for the homeless. Showers were installed for street people who needed a place to clean up. Storage was provided so people could leave their belongings in a safe place rather than carrying them all day. A change of clothes and personal care items such as razors and toothbrushes were offered. A clothes closet was begun.

A washing machine and dryer were installed. Street people, Elliott explains, "just pick up clothing and wear it until it wears out and then throw it away. They don't have money to wash their clothes at a laundry mat."

Since the ministry to the homeless was launched, the numbers have escalated each year, reflecting a nationwide trend. Persons who seek shelter at Jeff Street also reflect other aspects of the profile of

the nation's homeless:

- Today's homeless population is younger and more diverse in age, education, race.
- The ranks of the homeless have swelled in recent years with huge numbers of released mental patients who now make up one-third to one-half of the total, estimated by experts

The homeless population now includes more single women, more women with children and more complete families.

to be anywhere from 300,000 to 2 million.

- The homeless population now includes more single women, more women with children and more complete families. It includes immigrants, illegal aliens, blacks, Hispanics and other minorities. It also includes a growing number of



MEAL TIME—Early Sunday morning the aroma of sausage, eggs and biscuits flavors the dark air of inner city Louisville as volunteers from Baptist churches cook breakfast for 50 to 100 persons who seek a haven from the hazards of street life.



COMPASSION—Mike Elliott, Jeff Street's innovative pastor, has learned much about the homeless by simply listening.

working men and women who have been forced on the road in search of a job.

Many of these uprooted persons, particularly the young, are more than restless—they are angry. "They have

Many of these uprooted persons, particularly the young, are more than restless—they are angry.

no meaningful employment, few if any intimate relationships and little hope for change in their lives," says Elliott.

Jeff Street's response to the homeless reflects the holistic approach advocated by its 29-year-old pastor. When Elliott came six years ago, Jeff Street had a few programs and a dwindling congregation. Now, 130 to 150 persons attend worship. During the week, every square inch of space is put to use as the Chapel buzzes with activities: nutrition programs, missions education for area children,

ceramics and other crafts for senior adults, a "Breakaway" program for men from the Community Treatment Center, Bible studies for single mothers, tutoring, recreation.

Each week Jeff Street responds to crisis calls for emergency food and clothing and financial assistance for medicine, utilities or overdue rent. Creating order out of apparent chaos, secretary Janice Money patches together assistance for needy people through church benevolence funds, social service agencies, missions and other groups.

"What do you do with a mother of four with a part-time job and no car who has had all her money and \$400 in food stamps stolen?" she illustrates.

As the staff of Jeff Street "saw what was happening to people," it was obvious that the church had to move "beyond band-aids," from social ministry to social action, from aid to advocacy, Elliott says.

While ministering to the needs of the homeless, Elliott has addressed underlying public policy issues. He served on a mayor's task force on the homeless which studied the extent of the problem and made a

series of recommendations to the mayor. Among other things, Elliott says, it was an opportunity to "make our presence known to people who make decisions and have the power."

With Elliott's encouragement, Jeff Street has provided office space and support for Project Independence, an effort to get fair energy legislation.

While ministering to the needs of the homeless, Elliott has addressed underlying public policy issues.

The project's goal is to establish a guaranteed service plan that would keep people who can't afford to pay their utility bills from having their service unilaterally cut off.

The need for such a program was demonstrated by one elderly woman who came to the center for a blood pressure check. She was not surprised to learn that her blood pressure was dangerously high. "Yes, I know," she responded, "but I can't pay my utility bill and still afford my heart medicine."

Elliott also has been working to



ISSUES—Elliott preaches both social ministry and social action.



LOVE IN ACTION—For Elliott and Jeff Street "the key is relationships."

get a Habitat for Humanity project going, hoping to utilize a glut of abandoned housing in Louisville to build homes for the poor.

Whatever the project, the goal is to extend the love of Christ. In the environment of the inner city, dignity is respected as a precious commodity. Aware that, as Elliott stresses, "the key is relationships," Jeff Street finds ways to salvage wasted lives and recycle persons discarded by society.

In the process, the Chapel has naturally taken on the personality and priorities of its pastor.

Elliott's informal, easy-going demeanor wins rapport in any setting. Yet it also disguises a workaholic pace that at times borders on burnout. He is intense, complex, sensitive. Like others who confront overwhelming needs on a daily basis, he walks a fine line between anger and compassion, a tightwire act he has negotiated successfully thus far.

For Elliott, success isn't measured in terms of budgets, buildings or even baptisms, though the congregation has grown significantly during his tenure. Rewards are counted in the personal currency of individual lives.

Like Ed. After years of working for a meat truck driver, retirement meant

living on the streets. Ed had always been paid in cash. Retirement income was a forgotten luxury.

"One day we found him out on the sidewalk, drunk and crying," Janice Money recalls. "He kept saying, 'I just ain't got nothing to do, nothing to do.' So we gave him something to do."

Despite frail health, arthritis and two hip replacements, Ed is a regular at the Chapel, helping with everything from firing the kiln for the

Jeff Street finds ways to salvage wasted lives and recycle persons discarded by society.

ceramics class to folding the Sunday bulletins. After a hip operation, the Chapel staff presented him a tee shirt with a message typical of Jeff Street's caring spirit: "Made by God. Replacement Parts by Dupont."

Or Chester. A promising career as a licensed practical nurse was destroyed by 45 years of alcoholism. Elliott and Jeff Street, however, convinced Chester that life was not over. Now a deacon and a regular helper at the Chapel, Chester is a source of

encouragement to other alcoholics.

Or Randy. One of Chester's former drinking buddies, Randy now helps coordinate weekday ministries to the

"The road to the inner city is a two-way street; you give and you receive."

homeless, including supervision of the clothes closet.

Through persons such as these, Elliott's faith is kept alive and honest.

"I'm convinced that the road to the inner city is a two-way street; you give and you receive," he says. "The poor and the homeless are not just some people we're trying to help. They are a way by which we are blessed. They keep the gospel tangible for us. They help us. Just like Jesus said."

Indeed, Elliott has been willing to learn from the people he encounters at Jeff Street. He is a good listener and has the ability to communicate with street people without talking down to them. Yet he can also hold his own as a speaker at a civic organization or as a preacher in a local church.

In appearances before Baptist groups, Elliott never apologizes for who he is or what he does. He simply tells the story of Jeff Street, often bringing persons with him to relate how their lives have been changed through the church's ministries.

"Baptists want to know where the action is," he says. "They don't need more talk. They need models."

While his political views and outspokenness on social issues such as economics, peace and women in ministry have sometimes led him into deep water, Elliott's credibility has kept him from drowning.

"He gets away with saying some things most pastors would never say," relates a friend. "But he also gives more than most pastors are willing to give." ■

Wilkinson is director of news and information services for the Christian Life Commission and editor of LIGHT.

CHARACTER AND MORAL DECISIONS

Paul's 'Fruit of the Spirit' Addresses Need for Christian Character Formation

By John C. Shelley, Jr.

When I taught my first course in Christian ethics more than a dozen years ago, the field was still under the influence of Joseph Fletcher's "situation ethics" and John A. T. Robinson's "new morality."

Courses and books in Christian ethics were heavily issue oriented—the standard list of capital punishment, abortion, euthanasia, genetic engineering, war and peace, race relations—and considerable attention was given to moral quandries that challenged the rigidity and restrictiveness of conventional legalistic morality.

There was, for example, the true story of the pioneer mother on the American frontier hiding her children during an Indian attack. Suddenly the baby began to cry, and afraid that the crying would give away their hiding place, the mother strangled the baby. She and the other two children escaped detection and survived. The moral dilemma: Was the mother morally justified in taking the life of one child to save the life of the other two?

Other examples were more hypothetical. Suppose you find two persons trapped in a burning building: One is your mother, the other the world's most brilliant medical researcher. The moral dilemma: Assuming you have time to rescue only one, which one do you save?

Such issues are not trivial. They reflect the moral ambiguity all of us have confronted at some time or another, and they expose the inadequacies of legalism. In the strict sense, there are no exceptionless moral rules, for one can always imagine some limit situation in which the most moral act transgresses one or more rules. And in the final analysis, love alone is the ultimate norm for moral decision.

But this emphasis on moral quandries and love alone gives a

distorted picture of Christian ethics. It suggests that Christian ethics has to do primarily with exceptional situations and mind-boggling dilemmas, and it fails to note the significance of character in making moral decisions. It makes ethics an academic exercise.

Ethics in the real world can be quite different from discussions in the college classroom or in Sunday School. In a moment of crisis, a person often does not have the luxury of time to reflect upon and debate the issue. He or she must simply act, and such acts are a reflection of character.

Paul spoke of character in Galatians 5:16-25 in terms of the "works of the flesh" versus the "fruit of the Spirit."

I have never been particularly fond

Ethics in the real world can be quite different from discussions in the college classroom or in Sunday School.

of this passage. When I was a child, it was used by my Sunday School teachers to support a very narrow, moralistic view of the Christian life and an unbiblical dualism of body and soul.

I do not question the sincerity of these teachers or the genuineness of their faith, but I do question their lack of balance in dealing with the two lists: "the works of the flesh" and "the fruit of the Spirit." Most attention was focused on the former, especially those sins of the body like fornication, licentiousness, drunkenness and carousing. Hence the Christian life became identified with a narrow list of don'ts: Don't smoke. Don't drink. Don't dance. Don't play marbles for keeps.

Careful reflection on the second list, "the fruit of the Spirit," explodes the idea that Paul viewed the Christian life primarily in terms of negative virtues. The list—love, joy, peace, patience, etc.—does not describe the life of the narrow-minded Puritan.

I like Sallie McFague's suggestion that Paul was dealing with the formation of character, those "studied and steady qualities of mind and spirit that develop slowly over the lifetime of Christian discipleship."¹

Whatever else we may need to face the moral issues of our future, we need character—"not any character and not different characters at different times, but a character formed by the Christian story that can be counted on when the going gets rough."

Character is the disposition in a person that is the person—a settled and dependable way of responding that defines a person. Paul's "fruit of the Spirit" comprises virtues that point to a particular kind of disposition or character. "These are qualities one either has developed prior to needing and practicing them or one does not have them when one needs them. No one can 'work up' patience, faithfulness, self-control, peace, and love on the spur of the moment. One acts as one is; we are the deeds we do."

We moderns, especially we modern Protestants, have some difficulty with this language of virtue, character and disposition. Are these not gifts of the Spirit that some people simply have and others do not? After all, "the Spirit blows where it wills." Doesn't the notion of virtue suggest Roman Catholicism, especially Thomas Aquinas' linkage of virtue with *habitus* or habit?

Paul writes: "If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (*Gal. 5:25*). Here is a juxtaposition of gift and command, indicative and imperative, and we distort the gospel if we sever them.

"Just as I am" and its secular counterpart, "I'm Okay, You're Okay," are a tacit plea for acceptance of the status quo. They are at best half-truths. Paul tells us to "live by the Spirit" and to "walk by the Spirit," that is, to accept the gift of salvation that only God can give and to let it make a difference in the way

we live, to give up the project of trying to earn our salvation through our own power and to be transformed by the renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2). Indicative is bound to be imperative: You are free from sin, therefore go and sin no more.

It is significant that

we are not told to jump or run, but to walk, a humble mode of journeying, a slow way, suggestive of some determination, discipline, and perseverance.

All of us would acknowledge the need for disciplined practice in athletics, music and academics, but

We acknowledge the need for disciplined practice in athletics, music and academics, but we live under the illusion that the Christian life of love and mercy will come naturally.

we live under the illusion that the Christian life of love and mercy will come naturally—without any effort on our part. You cannot simply decide to master the piano and then with no practice sit down and play one of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsodies. Similarly, you cannot simply decide to turn the other cheek or love your enemies and without practice purge yourself of all vengeance and prejudice.

Flannery O'Connor once said: "Becoming a Christian and joining the church is like marriage in that it is the beginning and not the end of the struggle to make love work." ■

Shelley teaches religion at Furman University, Greenville, S.C. This article was adapted from a presentation at the annual workshop of the Christian Life and Public Affairs Committee of the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

End Notes

¹Quotations are from the May 1978 commencement address by Sallie McFague at Vanderbilt Divinity School, published in *The Spire* (Summer 1978).

ETHICS LIBRARY

Reviews of Works in Applied Christianity

Beyond the Curse: Women Called to Ministry by Aida Besancon Spencer. Thomas Nelson, 1985. Excellent resource for avid students of the Bible who are searching for Scriptural truths concerning roles of women and men in ministry. To support her strongly-expressed convictions, author relies on a thorough, in-depth working knowledge of original source materials.

Consistent, intentional pedagogical tool of asking thought-provoking questions before drawing conclusions serves as a catalyst for continuing dialogue with the reader. Making no attempt to hide behind a facade of academic objectivity, author acknowledges that the issue of male-female relationships is deeply "personal." With this in mind, she offers an Afterword written by her husband, also a minister. His experiences add practicality, depth and sensitive insight to the preceding theological/exegetical chapters.

Appendix of "Suggestions For Group Study"—including "discussion starters," "research questions" and "appropriation questions"—make this relatively inexpensive volume (\$10.95) even more valuable.

—Ashli Cartwright Peak

Black and Reformed: Apartheid, Liberation, and the Calvinist Tradition by Allan Boesak, ed. by Leonard Sweetmon. **For My People: Black Theology and the Black Church** by James H. Cone. Both Orbis, 1984. The first represents, with two chapter exceptions, addresses made by Boesak between 1974 and 1983 to various ecclesiastical, university or political groups in South Africa. His theme is the struggle against apartheid which he calls a pseudo-gospel. The struggle, he claims, is finally one for the integrity of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Writing from the perspective of an ordained Dutch Reformed minister, Boesak raises the challenge that even the Afrikaans-speaking Reformed churches have contributed to the theological justification of apartheid. Though his discussion centers in South Africa, he correctly asserts that on an international scale, "the church has not been successful in struggling against racism in society, because it has not yet

learned how to deal with it in the church itself . . ."

Cone's book, though written primarily for black Christians in the hope they may discover or rediscover their theological heritage, provides a helpful resource for whites and others to understand the Black Theology phenomenon.

Cone considers the civil rights movement of the '60s and '70s to be his primary theological matrix. From this matrix, he explores the historical seeds of Black Theology as well as its worldwide expression. Book's descriptive facet will plug information gaps for those endeavoring to understand Black Theology. Book's analytical facet illustrates how a clear-thinking scholar can produce a cohesive theological reflection on matters close to him both sociologically and emotionally—not an easy enterprise.

—William M. Tillman, Jr.

To Walk As He Walked by T. B. Maston. Broadman, 1985. Latest book from the dean of Southern Baptist Christian ethics professors is a reverent and practical little volume that challenges Christians to go about doing good. Its starting points are Acts 10:38 in which Peter says that in this earthly life and work, Jesus "went about doing good" and 1 John 2:6 in which the Apostle insists that anyone who says he abides in Christ "ought to walk in the same way in which he walked."

Book is characterized by profound simplicity, yet reflects the kind of authentic scholarship which has distinguished the author's teaching and writing for half a century. It is based on the Bible, rooted in Christian experience, pointed toward Christian growth, built on more than 50 years of sacrificial service and designed to encourage believers to do the good news in daily life. Buy this book. Read it. Do it.

—Foy Valentine

REVIEWERS—Peak is a staff member at Cornerstone Baptist Church, Columbia, Mo., and president of Southern Baptist Women in Ministry; Tillman teaches Christian ethics at Southwestern Seminary, and Valentine is executive director of the Christian Life Commission.

FUNDAMENTALS OF FOREIGN AID

Understanding U.S. Foreign Aid Policy Will Help Christians Help the Hungry

By Robert Parham

As Africa hobbles from an era of acute hunger into an era of chronic hunger, the debate intensifies about how best to help the people in the second largest land mass in the world.

Beyond emergency food aid, what can foreign governments do to help Sub-Saharan Africa help itself? What can foreign governments do in

To some, foreign aid is a barrier to helping the hungry. To others, foreign aid is a bridge.

Africa to stabilize economies, raise the standard of living and overcome chronic hunger?

The very nature of the debate centers largely on foreign aid. To some in the American anti-hunger community, foreign aid is a barrier to helping the hungry. To others, foreign aid is a bridge.

Understanding American foreign aid—and the reasons for it—is a prerequisite for Southern Baptists and other Christians who want to participate intelligently in the formation of foreign policy designed to help hungry and economically dis-

advantaged people.

The reasons for foreign aid are at least sixfold.

First, foreign aid exists as a non-military tool to promote economic stability.

In his 1986 budget request letter to Congress, Secretary of State George Schultz said: "The proximity of the Horn of Africa to the Middle East and vital oil shipping routes in the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean adds a critical dimension to our interests in creating a politically stable and economically viable environment in the region. Consequently, we are seeking the resources necessary to help Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, and Djibouti cope with their troubled economies."

A tangible indication of this policy objective is the fact that of the \$1.2 billion in foreign assistance requested for Africa in fiscal year 1986, one-fourth is for only three nations: Kenya, Somalia and the Sudan.

Second, foreign aid is used to encourage nations to cooperate with the United States on international issues. One of the most poignant examples of this use of foreign aid occurred in Mozambique. In 1981, Mozambique expelled four Americans accused of spying for the CIA. The U.S. Agency for International Development responded by shutting

down food aid operations, despite widespread hunger. As relationships between Mozambique and the U.S. gradually warmed, U.S. aid began to flow into the country. In 1984, the U.S. gave Mozambique \$43 million worth of food.

Third, foreign aid is designed to expand America's foreign markets and to stimulate this nation's domestic economy.

When the "Food for Peace" program was begun in 1954, it had two purposes: to dispose of American agricultural surpluses and to create future markets for agricultural products. Over time the "Food for Peace" program was reformed to help hungry people and to encourage economic development in poor countries.

Nevertheless, the disposal of agricultural surplus remains a principal rationale for foreign aid. Testifying last year before the U.S. House Select Committee on Hunger, an American Farm Bureau spokesperson said "the large surpluses of agricultural commodities . . . have an adverse affect on market prices for American farmers."

He added: "Farm Bureau believes that these huge surpluses overhand the market and help depress market prices. We believe that more of these surpluses should be moved into food assistance programs as well as in other innovative export programs." The speaker understood that food aid helps stimulate the agricultural sector of the American economy.

Fourth, foreign aid is designed to secure access to strategic resources for the U.S. which is dependent on

The disposal of agricultural surplus remains a principal rationale for foreign aid.

natural resources from a number of different nations, many of them in Africa.

For example, the U.S. imports about 99 percent of its cobalt needs from Africa. Not surprisingly, Zaire, which produces about 50 percent of the world's total output of cobalt, is the fifth leading recipient of American foreign aid. Another major cobalt exporting country, Zambia,

also receives a significant portion of foreign aid designated for Africa.

Fifth, foreign aid is used to promote American strategic interests abroad. Evidence of this appears in the State Department's request for foreign assistance. In 1986, the Reagan administration planned to give \$3 billion to Israel, \$2.3 billion to Egypt and \$1.3 billion to all of Sub-Saharan Africa. According to this measurement, the administration believes Israel and Egypt are more important than all of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Sometimes foreign aid provides access to strategic facilities. Substantial assistance is provided to Somalia which allows the U.S. to use a naval base just off the Red Sea.

Foreign aid is sometimes intended

National security interests usually outweigh humanitarian interests as reasons for U.S. foreign aid.

to blunt communist (Soviet) aggression. The fact that three of the top five African recipients of U.S. foreign aid surround Ethiopia, a Marxist state, is not surprising.

Sixth, foreign aid is used to promote America's humanitarian interests. The African hunger crisis is

one of the most visible examples of America's humanitarian concern.

Unfortunately, as the above list illustrates, national security interests usually outweigh humanitarian interests as reasons for U.S. foreign aid. Poor and hungry people may benefit from foreign aid, but more often than not the benefit is a by-product rather than a primary aim.

The content of U.S. foreign aid also reveals the intent of foreign assistance. Foreign aid is divided into two categories: economic assistance and military assistance.

The State Department's 1986 budget request for Sub-Saharan Africa asked for more than \$1 billion in economic assistance and only \$220 million in military assistance. However, \$461 million, or almost half of the economic assistance, was requested for the Economic Support Fund (ESF).

ESF is provided to countries based upon calculated national interests. It is not required by law to be spent on meeting human needs. In fiscal year 1986, the top four recipients of ESF were Sudan, Liberia, Kenya and Somalia.

The other half of the economic assistance pie was essentially divided between development assistance (\$357 million) and Public Law 480, the "Food for Peace" (\$224 million).

But the picture still lacks clarity. Within the "Food for Peace" pie

slice, part of the food aid is not given away but sold to foreign nations which in turn sell the food on their local markets. Thus the actual portion of charitable foreign or food aid is small.

In the years ahead, Africa will need more, not less, aid. But Africa needs foreign aid which has undergone a reformation. Reformed foreign aid

Foreign aid needs to be freed from narrow, selfish political considerations and unhitched from military aid.

could promote the best values in the American tradition and also reduce chronic malnutrition.

Foreign aid needs to be freed from narrow, selfish political considerations and unhitched from military aid. Little historical evidence exists that military aid to many of the African nations has enhanced the political stability of the recipient nations, promoted democratic values and alleviated poverty and hunger. In fact, the reverse has been true.

Foreign aid needs to be targeted for the absolutely poor, not as a handout but a hand-up to self reliance. African food producers, who are predominantly women, need tools, training and access to financial credit.

Foreign aid needs to be offered to countries which are making progress on tax reform, human rights and land reform and are encouraging economic initiatives.

Foreign aid also needs to be channeled through multilateral organizations with good track records for getting the aid to the people. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) is one such organization which needs continued support.

Foreign aid can be either a barrier or a bridge to helping hungry and economically disadvantaged people. Through responsible Christian citizenship, Southern Baptists can help determine which of these structures will be built. ■

Parham is director of hunger concerns for the Christian Life Commission.

CASE IN POINT

Alabama Church Helps 'Stamp' Out Hunger

After witnessing the impact of federal budget cuts on the poor people of Florala, Ala., Dan Bates decided to attack the growing problem of hunger with used postage stamps.

Bates, a stamp collector since age nine and pastor of Westside Baptist Church, found a novel way to get people involved in helping hungry people on the homefront. He and his congregation collect used national and international stamps which are processed and sold to stamp dealers. Proceeds buy food for needy people in the local community.

"It gives the average person a way to get involved," he says. "Any church

can do it. It just takes time to explain the program."

Bates is aware that stamp recycling for the hungry takes time. But he believes the effort will be worth the anticipated \$4,000 Westside will raise in 1986.

He has also convinced Earl Potts, executive secretary of the Alabama Baptist Convention, to ask denominational workers in the Baptist building to save their used postage stamps.

Says Bates: "Stamps may be junk to others, but they are treasures to us."

For more information, contact Bates at Westside Baptist Church, Florala, AL 36442.

Conditions Worsen For Chronically Poor

Although the majority of the nation's 28.6 million blacks are better off economically than 20 years ago, one-third live below the poverty line. And conditions continue to deteriorate for a core group of 2 to 3.5 million chronically poor and alienated blacks.

Described by many specialists as an "underclass," the group at the bottom may be beyond the reach of existing social problems. Its plight is evident in a series of stark statistics:

- In 1950, 16% of children born to blacks and other minorities were born to unwed mothers; by 1983, 58% of black infants were born to unwed mothers, compared to 12.8% of white newborns.

- In 1960, about 21% of black families with children were headed by a woman with no husband present. By 1985, half of such families were headed by women, compared to 15% for whites.

- Measured in constant 1984 dollars, median income of female-headed black families (including those without children) was only \$9,380 in 1967. By 1984, the level had dropped to \$8,648.

- In December 1955, blacks and other minorities had an unemployment rate of 8.2%, compared to 3.7% for whites. In December 1985, black unemployment was 14.9%, compared to 5.9% for whites. For black teens, the rate was 41.6%, versus 15.9% for white teens. Poverty and unemployment rates for blacks are at their highest levels since 1964.

- In 1960, about three of every four black children under 18 lived with two parents. By 1984, the figure was 41%. Among whites under 18, 81% lived with two parents.

- In 1983, about 46% of persons sent to prison were black. In most cases, victims of the crimes were black.

Many experts believe the impact of these statistics is disproportionately borne by a small group of blacks who make up the underclass. Concentrated primarily in inner city ghettos, this group consists of a subgroup of the black poor that lives primarily off welfare or crime. Its members are not only unlikely to break out of the poverty cycle but are increasingly cut off from mainstream American life.

—The Washington Post

Nation's Drug Abuse Is a Costly Problem

Estimates on the cost of drug abuse in America—figured in terms of lower worker productivity, medical expenses and crime—range from \$47 billion to \$60 billion per year.

A 1985 random survey of 100 callers, ages 12-19, to a national cocaine hot line revealed that 64% were dependent on more than one drug. The most common combination: cocaine and alcohol.

A 1984 survey of high school seniors showed that 16% had used cocaine at least once.

A study in Miami, Fla., found that 239 heroin users were responsible for more than 80,000 crimes in one year—nearly 340 crimes each.

—USA TODAY

Physicians Task Force Finds Heartland Hunger

The nation's hunger problem is worsening, especially in the nation's agricultural heartland where food stamps are not reaching those who need them most, concluded a report by the Physicians Task Force on Hunger in America.

"We're quite confident we have a huge crisis," said J. Larry Brown, task force chairman.

The study identified Texas, South Dakota and Missouri at the top of a list of 24 states with pocket areas of needy people. Texas has 29 of the 150 hungriest counties listed in the report.

"A chief factor seems to be the failure of the food stamp program to reach many people who need it," said Brown. He said more than 4 million more people live in poverty today than in 1980, "yet the food stamp program actually serves fewer people now than it did then."

As a result, about 20 million Americans regularly go hungry, he said.

—The Washington Post

The LIGHT Touch

by Norma Young



Yes, Margie, I know Jesus first confessed his messiahship to the WOMAN at the well. I know the WOMEN were first at the tomb. I know the first post-resurrection task assigned by Jesus was to WOMEN. I know Paul commended Phoebe for the office she held in the church, etc., etc.! But I must remind you, dear, that we are no longer living in the first century!

Kids' TV Addiction Shows Unhealthy Trend

One hour of television a day is OK for preschoolers and two hours is acceptable for older kids—depending, of course, on what they watch.

That was the consensus of 20 pediatricians, child psychologists, consumer advocates, network executives and teachers surveyed by *TV Guide*.

The problem is that most children watch far more TV than that. A recent Nielson survey said kids ages 2-17 watch an average of 25 hours of TV a week.

Favorite shows include *He-Man*, *Masters of the Universe* and *Voltron*—programs which Lawrence Balter, child psychologist on *CBS Morning News*,

believes "exploit both products and violence."

The TV panelists offered a list of recommended shows for children in various age groups.

—TV Guide

Tax Bite Softened During Last Decade

For 40 years state and local taxes increased faster than Americans' earnings. In the last decade, however, income increased dramatically, softening the tax bite.

In the last four decades, state and local taxes per \$1,000 of income (including unemployment compensation) were as follows:

1944—\$55
1954—\$78
1964—\$104
1974—\$124
1984—\$117

The statistics were compiled by the Tax Foundation, Inc.

—USA TODAY

Recent Study Highlights Changing Drinking Patterns

Americans are drinking less beer than a decade ago, but they are spending more on alcoholic beverages than ever before.

In 1984 Americans consumed an average of 30 gallons of beer for every person in the U.S. age 14 and older.

As a result, the drinking age population consumed an average of 2.62 gallons of absolute alcohol, a decrease of nearly 6% from five years earlier.

At the same time, the 1984 Gallup Poll on drinking practices found that 64% of American adults indicated they ever had occasion to drink beer, wine or liquor.

The 64% represented a 15-year low.

Nevertheless, Americans in 1984 spent

a whopping \$35.5 billion for beer, more than they spent on wine and distilled spirits combined.

And, to encourage such spending, the alcohol industry in 1984 spent an all-time high of more than \$755 million on measured media advertising.

—The Bottom Line,

Alcohol Research Information Service

VCRs Will Rival TV in Ten Years

Within 10 years videocassettes will be equal to network television and will be a bigger entertainment medium in the U.S. than cable TV or movie theaters, predicts a new study.

The study for Merrill Lynch by Wilkofsky Gruen Associates estimates that 85% of households will have at least one VCR by 1995, compared to 28% now.

The study also predicts that video software industry sales will hit \$20 billion by 1995, versus \$2.7 billion last year. That total, it says, will be equal to TV ad revenues, three times greater than movie box-office revenues and 10 times pay-TV sales.

—USA TODAY

More Women Are Vying for Office

More women are running for Congress and governorships this year.

The National Women's Political Caucus reported that:

- Seven women, including incumbent Sen. Paula Hawkins (R-Fla.), are vying for a chance to run for the Senate in the '86 elections.

- More than 50 women, including 19 incumbents, are contemplating House runs.

- Ten women are seeking governorships.

Currently there are two women senators, two women governors and 23 women serving in the House.

—From news reports

Smokeless Tobacco Popular on Campus

More than one of every 10 college students in the U.S. uses smokeless tobacco products, according to a new survey.

The nation "can expect an epidemic of oral cancer within the next 30 to 40 years" unless use of smokeless tobacco is curtailed, said researcher Elbert Glover of East Carolina University.

In his survey of 4,894 students at 72 colleges, 12% said they now use smokeless tobacco. Another 8% said they plan to try snuff or chewing tobacco in the future.

Fifty-four percent said smokeless tobacco is "less harmful" than cigarette smoking, although experts say smokeless tobacco is directly linked to oral cancer.

—USA TODAY

Number of Divorces Increased in 1985

Divorces in the U.S. last year soared to the highest point since 1980, leaving experts puzzled.

During 1985, 1,187,000 couples were divorced—32,000 more than 1984, according to a report by the National Center for Health Statistics.

Sociologists aren't sure if the increase is part of a trend or a blip.

The rate of divorces has been falling in recent years. Nevertheless, about half of marriages in the U.S. still end in divorce.

—From news reports

"Moral Scene" is compiled and edited by the editor.

SEND THE LIGHT

_____ The following persons would be interested in receiving LIGHT.

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TEEN PREGNANCIES

Continued from Page 2

years deserve to receive a strong dose of this ideal. Neither society nor institutions nor individual families can be excused in any shape, form, or fashion from pressing for this ideal.

If the ideal is missed for whatever reasons, however, then best-available fall-back positions are called for. Sex is sacred and as Paul said, "The marriage bed is undefiled"; but when sex has been profaned, marriage has been rejected, society has run amuck, and too many leaders have laryngitis, then the church ought to be about the business of helping people to start where they are and do the best they can under the circumstances. A lot of teenagers need help now. The values of our Christian faith relate to helping them in picking up the pieces, putting life together again, getting sex into Christian perspective, and behaving responsibly in the midst of a morally irresponsible world.

3. Shape structures. The people of God are not able to shape all the structures of society even to our own reasonable satisfaction; but we can shape some of them, and we can affect the shaping of all of them.

The running of the government, the setting of public policies, and the ordering of public affairs ought to be left neither to the wisdom of unbelievers nor the excesses of the extremists and zealots who now abound. The people of God realize that justice is love at a distance. Therefore we seek justice by helping to shape the structures of society. For Christ's sake, then, we prod the government, cajole Caesar, goad the governor, and press for laws that support values and ideals.

4. Do the gospel. The people of God seek to practice good news, side with the good guys, and do what we can. We understand that to prevent unwanted pregnancies we have to put our minds and our hands and our money to work in providing work options for teenagers, tutoring programs, supervised activities for

children with working parents, organized recreational programs, and responsible sex education.

Until the media bridles itself in its current misuse and abuse of sex or until society bridles it for its unconscionable sexual exploitations and excesses; until parents assume their God-given parental duties of caring and disciplining and guiding and helping not only their little babies but also their teenage children; until government musters the modicum of common sense to see that it is better and cheaper to prevent unwanted teenage pregnancies than it is to perpetuate the inordinately costly cycle of class, poverty, ignorance, and family disintegration which are now the order of the day; until the churches find the courage and develop the expertise to share with their own teenagers responsible sex education materials; until that day, let concerned people whose hearts God has touched join together to speak the truth about teenage pregnancies, to work sacrificially for the avoidance of unwanted teenage pregnancies, and to build the kind of society where teenage pregnancies are not commonplace occurrences but rare exceptions.

Foy Valentine

Foy Valentine
Executive Director



**Christian Life
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Of The Southern
Baptist Convention

901 Commerce, #550
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