

# Light

OCT 11 1999

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN

BAPTIST CONVENTION

SEPTEMBER 1986

## POVERTY AMIDST PLENTY

### The Vicious Cycle Continues in Appalachia

By Ronald D. Eller

More than 20 years have passed since Lyndon Johnson came to Martin County, Ky., to announce his War on Poverty.

Speaking from the porch of an unemployed coal miner's shack, the President shared his dream to eliminate poverty and hunger in America. For millions of the nation's poor, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 promised to "eliminate the paradox

of poverty in the midst of plenty . . . by opening to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity."

Two decades later, much has changed in Appalachia; and much has remained the same. Despite the infusion of billions of dollars of federal aid, the paradox of poverty amidst plenty survives. Martin County and many other mountain counties

remain among the poorest in the nation.

The face of poverty has changed; families are smaller and more likely to be headed by a female, but the pain and hunger remain. Unemployment, malnutrition and illiteracy still stalk the hills. In the midst of another era of national affluence, thousands of Appalachian children continue to be ill-housed, ill-clothed and ill-fed.

(Continued on Page 3)



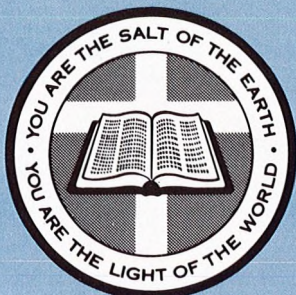


- 2** Valentine's Viewpoint
- 3** Justice for the Poor
- 6** Hunger in America
- 8** World Hunger Day 1986
- 9** Where is the Dream?
- 10** Book Reviews
- 11** On the Moral Scene

**Photos on Appalachia  
by Michael Largent**

*LIGHT*, a Christian ethics publication for pastors, teachers, state and national denominational workers, and other persons with special interest in applied Christianity, is published 10 times a year by the Christian Life Commission. *LIGHT* is sent free to individuals who request it. *Voluntary subscriptions, for persons who wish to help defray costs for printing and mailing and to help underwrite a growing mailing list, are \$5.00 annually (10 issues).* Checks should be made payable to *LIGHT*. Your cancelled check will serve as your tax deductible receipt.

©1986 Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention  
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

## One Piece of Cloth

Personal ethics and social ethics are, as the Harvard Divinity School's venerable and kindly Christian ethicist James Luther Adams used to say, "of one piece of cloth."

**Personal ethics** has to do with personal morality, right behavior, personal honesty, personal integrity, sexual purity, personal dependability, and personal character. It has to do with loving your neighbor as you love yourself. **Social ethics** has to do with love-at-a-distance, with justice, with public righteousness. It has to do with just laws, just weights and measures, and just ways for society to help those who cannot help themselves. It has to do with making fair laws and enforcing them fairly. It has to do with a blindfolded meting out of justice that will not tip the scales with favoritism or prejudice. It has to do with society's control of an overly ambitious militarism, nuclear waste disposal, cartels and monopolies that, uncontrolled, would abuse the public for corporate aggrandizement, and principalities and powers which, unchecked, would manipulate the structures and systems of society for their own benefit and to the public's detriment.

**A lot of Christians through the years** have accepted the importance of personal ethics but have rejected the validity of social ethics. In more recent times, at least a few have embraced social ethics while denying the importance of personal ethics. Such an either-or approach to ethics in which social ethics is rejected while personal ethics is accepted or at least is given perfunctory lip service, or vice versa, won't wash.

Christians ought to maintain a full commitment to personal ethics and an unqualified commitment to social ethics. Without the practice of personal ethics we have the sorry spectacle of professing Christians who go through life engaged in genteel racism, telling dirty jokes, sporting bought degrees, tolerating male chauvinism, slipping in a little petty cheating, wallowing in sexual immorality, and winking at unbridled greed while posturing about stewardship. Without unqualified commitment to social ethics, we have the tragic spectacle of professing Christians trying to keep themselves personally pure while standing in the social sewerage of unemployment, poverty, environmental pollution, alcohol abuse, family breakdown, immoral television programming, and economic manipulation that exploits the poor while providing welfare for the rich.

**It is easier, of course, to extend** self-giving love to a needy neighbor next door than to work through your congressmen and senators for legislation that will extend shipments of grain and support for agricultural technicians to help our desperately needy neighbors in impoverished third world countries. Giving a cup of cold water in Jesus' name is important; and working together to provide equipment and help to dig an irrigation well for poor families in Ethiopia is also important. Which is more important? Christians don't have to answer that abominable and foolish question. Both are important. We ought to do the one but not to leave the other undone.

It is time to clean out our wells of personal ethics. Christians ought individually to be Christ's persons from head to foot, in every area and in every relationship of life. The way of personal ethical behavior is the way of life. To walk personally and daily in the light of the gospel of God in Christ is not optional for the people of God. It is mandatory.

**It is time, too, to build the house** of social ethics. Christians ought, together with other Christians and with other persons of good will, to press unceasingly for the justice and righteousness without which no nation or system or social structure can long endure.

Personal ethics and social ethics are indeed one piece of cloth. God means for them to be together; and what God has joined together let not man put asunder.

*Foy Valentine*

Foy Valentine  
Executive Director



# POVERTY'S PAIN

*Continued from Page 1*

I am the grandson of a Blue Ridge mountain preacher and a West Virginia coal miner. One of my grandfathers spent his life talking about love, compassion and justice. The other, having spent much of his life cutting timber and digging someone else's coal, died with bitterness in his heart and coal dust in his lungs.

I am the son of a man who with only a sixth grade education is un-

---

***After 40 years of scraping together a living, he spends his final working years cleaning a building that houses somebody else's money.***

---

able to find work, except as a part-time janitor in a local bank. After 40 years of scraping together a living and raising five children, he spends his final working years cleaning the building that houses somebody else's money. He resents it when the bank manager refers to him as "just the janitor." He has diabetes, arthritis and high blood pressure.

I am also the son of a mountain woman who spends her days as a part-time seamstress in a local laundry. A quilter of quilts and a maker of clothes when we were young, she now mends the furs and suits of the local rich. Despite the long hours, low pay and a recent heart attack, she works because she has no choice.

These persons are proud, and they are angry. They are proud because they can make do and get by on much less than what the rest of the country deems necessary. They are angry because they and many of their neighbors must struggle to get by in a land of plenty.

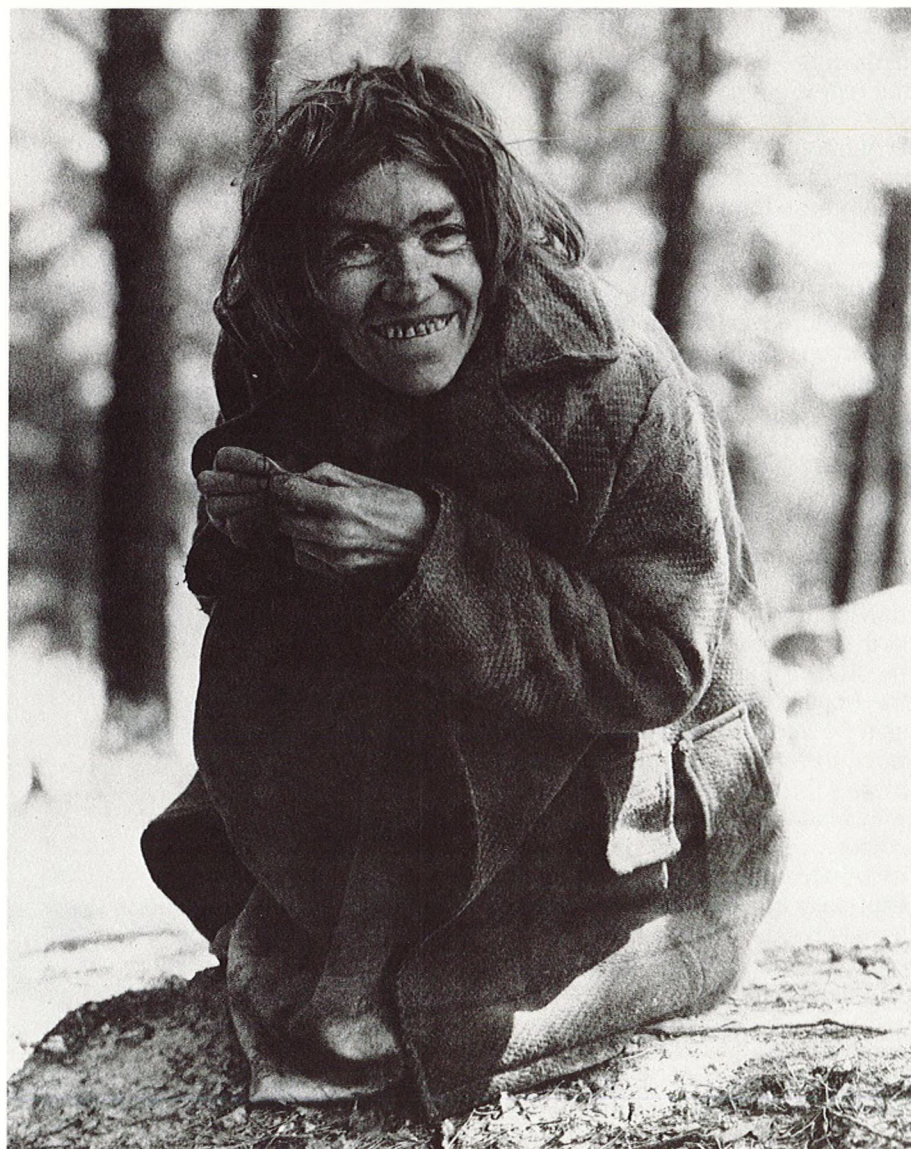
But they are lucky. All around them are people worse off than they. Many of my cousins who are coal miners have been without work for

more than two years. They get by, too, the men finding odd jobs and the women working part-time at Hardee's or Pizza Hut. Their children are not hungry, but they seldom see a doctor or a dentist, for they have little money and no health insurance.

Official unemployment rates in rural Appalachian counties range from 15 to 40 percent; unofficial estimates run as high as 70 percent. In many cases these rates are more than double the levels of unemployment in the region in the early 1960s

on the eve of the War on Poverty. Per capita income in eastern Kentucky and elsewhere in Appalachia has actually fallen in recent years, and the percentages of those living below the poverty level are once again on the rise. Despite significant gains in the 1970s, education in Appalachia lags far behind the rest of the nation. Dropout rates between 9th and 12th grades approach 50 percent in many counties. Possibly 30 percent of the adult population is functionally illiterate.

The pain of unemployment and poverty is perhaps nowhere more apparent than in declining health conditions in the region. A recent survey of rural health clinics indicates a rise in nutritional problems, infant mortality and dietary deficiencies among the elderly. The nutritional





status of infants and poor children is declining, and those people who require special diets—such as diabetics and hypertensives—simply can't afford to eat what they should.

Many of the rural poor in Appalachia still lack electricity and indoor plumbing. A recent survey found widespread well water contamination in 21 counties of southeastern Kentucky. The drinking water supply

---

*These are problems usually associated with the Third World, not with the U.S. in the last years of the 20th century.*

---

of 59 percent of the households in the study area was found to contain high levels of bacteria and other contaminants—a factor contributing to the region's high rate of hepatitis, which is twice the national average.

Although many rural clinics offer free medical care to indigent families, when these families need more specialized care, hospitals and physicians in metropolitan areas 50 to 100 miles away will not serve them. Moreover, recent regulatory restrictions on Medicaid and Medicare exclude from eligibility folks who have any kind of employment or who have had a job anytime in the last 18 weeks. This has essentially precluded specialized care for poor people unless they are totally destitute or completely disabled.

For many of Appalachia's poor, transportation is another barrier to both employment and adequate health care. Despite \$3.2 billion which the Appalachian Regional Commission poured into Appalachian highways, the poor frequently have little money for gas and an automobile with which to drive to unemployment offices or jobs located in the region's metropolitan growth centers. This is especially true for the elderly and for female heads of household who often have little access to child care and transportation.

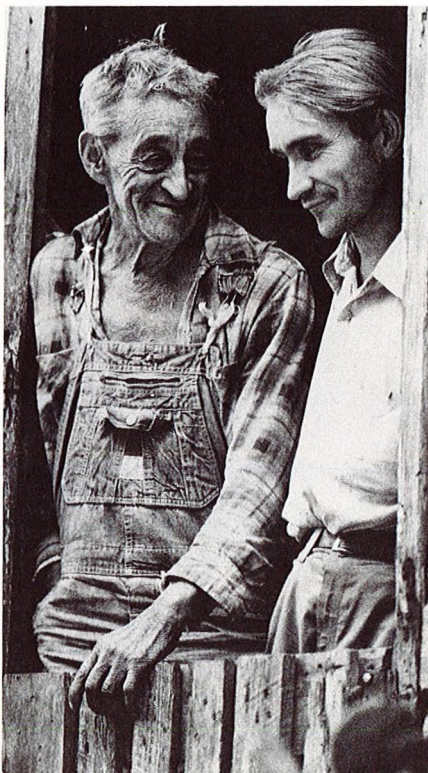
These are problems usually associated with the Third World, not with the United States in the last years of the 20th century.

Despite years of economic growth

and massive government spending, suffering and poverty persist in Appalachia. In the 1980s, those communities which benefited the most from the War on Poverty programs—the middle-class village and county seat towns, especially those along the perimeter of the region—continue to show economic growth, although at a much slower rate than in the 1970s. But conditions in rural areas and in the central coalfields have shown a marked decline.

In recent years, the economic recession which swept the United States in the early 1980s rocked Appalachia more severely than it did the rest of the country, and recovery from the recession has been slower and less obvious in the mountains. Also, future recovery may be complicated by the fundamental change taking place in the national economy as the U.S. shifts from an industry-based to an information-based society. The deindustrialization of the American economy promises to leave thousands of Appalachians permanently unemployed as capital shifts away from traditional enterprises and manufacturing shifts to cheaper labor in the Third World.

The tragic irony is that we live in a time that is content with the economic status quo, that accepts present



levels of poverty and unemployment as natural and unavoidable, and that assumes that the federal poverty programs have worked in Appalachia and now serve no viable role.

Twenty years after the War on Poverty, there is no mandate to fulfill the promise of 1964. Twenty years later we are willing to accept the existence of a permanent, two-tiered society—one with the skills and freedom to succeed in the post-industrial world, the other lacking the resources and the opportunity to negotiate the new order. Twenty years later we are still raising a generation of mountain youths who have little hope for employment, little control over their lives and little reason to think anyone cares. Twenty years later we Americans find ourselves embracing an economic philosophy which has little room for morality, community or basic human needs.

There are many reasons for the persistence of hunger and poverty in the mountains: the structures of our society, the greed of the rich, the bungling of government bureaucrats and planners, the cultural attitudes of indifference in our society. But until we can recognize the existence of suffering and inequality, until we can accept the fact that the problems of Appalachia are a product not of cultural deficiency but of a history of economic injustice, the region will most likely remain a pocket of poverty in a land of plenty.

I recall my preacher grandfather quoting the book of Amos: "Woe to those who lie upon beds of ivory,

---

*Twenty years after the War on Poverty, there is no mandate to fulfill the promise of 1964.*

---

and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat lambs from the flock, . . . but are not grieved over the ruin of Joseph! Therefore they shall now be the first of those to go into exile" (Amos 6:4-7, RSV). Until Americans can feel the moral outrage of injustice and the waste of human life that is poverty in the mountains, we are little better than Amos's Israelites.



Yet we must have more than moral outrage, more than the heartfelt sympathy that has so often characterized the mainstream American response to Appalachia. We must go beyond efforts at relief—beyond the

---

***Communities are built not out of guilt but out of righteousness, not out of charity but out of justice.***

---

boxes of secondhand clothes, worn-out shoes and staple food that periodically pour into mountain hollows and coves—and address the issues of economic injustice that limit the opportunities for independence, dignity and self-sufficiency among the poor. We must begin to recognize that economic activity is not an end in itself but exists to serve the higher purposes of community: the right to a job, the right to an education, the right to decent housing, adequate health care and nutrition and the right to self-respect. We must be about the restoration of community in the mountains, the rebuilding of the simple principle that people are interdependent and need each other.

Communities are built not out of guilt but out of righteousness, not out of charity but out of justice. The difference between charity and justice is an important one, and the Bible clearly distinguishes between the two. Charity is something that the rich hand down to the poor and requires no fundamental change in attitude or economy. Justice is the cry of the poor to the rich and requires a realignment of attitudes, assumptions and structures. The poor of Appalachia cry out for justice, not charity.

What is required in Appalachia and in America is a new vision. This vision must be based upon a recommitment to community, to a shared set of values and to the pursuit of an economy for the common good. It must be a vision which values the individual above profits, returns control to our lives and restores dignity to work. Such a vision, of course, will challenge the very definition of progress which has shaped earlier efforts at economic development and growth.

Fortunately, the seeds of a new vision may already be growing in Appalachia, emerging among small but committed groups and organizations which have been working for over a decade to relieve the suffer-

ing of the poor and to fight injustice and exploitation. Ironically, many of these community-based groups are a product of the War on Poverty itself and the short-lived philosophy of community action; others represent the awakening of a strong Christian consciousness or of a local community fighting some specific social wrong.

These groups have trained indigenous leaders and have brought poor families together in a common search for a better life. These groups represent mountain people helping mountain people and may be the only hope for the region's future, the only viable alternative to a dual society of haves and have-nots.

Throughout Appalachia, as in much of the Third World, mountain

---

***Justice is the cry of the poor to the rich and requires a realignment of attitudes, assumptions and structures.***

---

people are searching for control of their own communities, searching for an alternative to the oppressive patterns of modern life. Like the base communities of Latin America, these groups are helping people who have been the "objects" of history to become the "subjects" of history, the active shapers of their own destiny. What these groups need now is resources; what they seek most is justice.

It has been a long 20 years since Lyndon Johnson made his promise to the people of Martin County. The level of poverty in Appalachia is still a national scandal. Whether or not our generation has the courage to build a new vision for the region may have permanent consequences not only for Appalachia, but for the rest of America as well.

The Psalmist says, "the mountains shall yield peace for the people, and the hills justice" (Psalm 72:3). We shall see. ■

---

*Eller, a Baptist layman, is director of the Appalachian Center at the University of Kentucky, Lexington.*





# HUNGER & JUSTICE HERE AT HOME

## Responsible Political Action is Required To Confront Hunger on the Homefront

By Robert Parham

Southern Baptists have stood for the past decade as part of the chain of helping hands across a hungry America. But the time has now come for us to move beyond holding hands to lending our hands to the political process. We must enter the public square in defense of the poor and hungry. The challenge before us for the next decade is to make citizenship as commonplace as charity.

Since the mid-1970s Southern Baptists have made charity a core issue in the Baptist mission. We have increasingly supported the hunger ministry of the Home Mission Board, started food pantries and opened clothes closets. We have supported community soup kitchens, delivered meals to the elderly, built homes for the homeless and offered literacy programs.

By and large, however, Southern Baptists have engaged in the political process with great selectivity, focusing on traditional and self-interest issues. On one hand, we readily fight the menaces of gambling and liquor-by-the-drink. These are traditional Baptist moral concerns. On the other hand, we quickly enter the public area to ensure the government subsidization of church-related mail and to look after the tax status of ministers. These are self-interest issues.

Yet when it comes to participation in the political process to help poor and hungry people, we walk away. The irony in this is that the Bible speaks a clearer word on feeding the hungry than on fighting gambling, working against liquor-by-the-drink,

opposing the removal of government subsidy from church-mail and protecting clergy tax status.

Our selective political involvement registers indifference to hunger issues in Washington and in state capitols. As a result, U.S. representatives and senators from the South in general and those who are Southern Baptists in particular have some of the worst voting records on hunger

### CASE IN POINT

#### Getting Serious About Hunger

Parkwood Baptist Church, Annandale, Va., is serious about helping hungry people. The church has increased its world hunger giving from \$731 in 1979 to \$11,811 in 1985.

At the same time, Parkwood has also increased its missions support, contributing a church record \$12,823 to last year's Lottie Moon Christmas offering for foreign missions.

The church's dramatic increase in hunger giving began when it established a permanent hunger committee.

The committee has promoted awareness and provided channels for response through a variety of efforts. Hunger contributions are printed in the church bulletin each Sunday. World Hunger Day is observed annually. Hunger envelopes are provided for year-round use. Articles about hunger are published in the church newsletter.

The church has shown the Christian Life Commission hunger film "Give Us This Day," encouraged membership in Bread for the World and adopted needy families during Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons. Parkwood also participates in a sister-church food bank program with Columbia Baptist Church. ■

issues. Another result is that only one Southern representative requested a position on the House Select Committee on Hunger, a sign that Southern representatives fail to see the political benefits of being aligned with poor and hungry people.

The poor voting records of Southern elected officials is one reason the South is the poorest and hungriest region in the nation. Our politicians have not looked after the interests of their constituency and in some cases have constructed laws which work against the weakest members of society.

At a deeper level, the malnutrition and poor health of Southerners represent a failure of Southern Baptists to translate the biblical mandate to care for the poor and hungry into tangible public policy. We have failed to leaven our ethos.

Our moral selectivity is costing America dearly, for hunger is very expensive. It costs more to provide medical and long-term care for a premature, low-weight baby born with birth defects than it does to provide prenatal and nutritional care to a pregnant woman. It costs more to look after an unemployed, illiterate adult than it does to provide school breakfasts and lunches to ensure that a child learns to read. It costs more to provide care for someone in

---

***Our moral selectivity is costing America dearly, for hunger is very expensive.***

---

a nursing home than it does to provide congregate and home-delivered meals to a senior citizen.

Hunger is costing America. Sound fiscal stewardship would indicate that preventing hunger is cheaper than paying the high price for what it does to children, the elderly, the family and the nation's future. Yet in the era of Gramm-Rudman and Rambo, hardheaded compassion loses ground to shortsighted budget-balancing machismo. In such a time, Southern Baptists have the power to tip the scales of justice for or against the hungry.

Southern Baptists simply must become involved in the legislative process concerning hunger issues. One place to begin is with "The

Hunger Relief Act of 1986" (H.R. 4990 and S. 2495). This 12-point proposal strengthens the existing "safety net" in fiscal year 1987. It adds almost \$1 billion dollars to nutrition assistance programs, expands nutrition education efforts and creates a national nutrition

monitoring system.

Here are some of the specifics:

(1) Provide matching funds to give states the option to inform the elderly, unemployed or disabled persons about availability of food stamp benefits. This is an essential dimension to blunting hunger.

## FACT OR FICTION?

### Reviewing Some Lessons on Global Hunger

**Fiction:** People are hungry because food is scarce.

**Fact:** Enough grain is grown worldwide to provide every person every day with more than 3,000 calories. This estimate does not include calories available from vegetables, beans, fruits and nuts.

**Fiction:** People are hungry because they have too many children.

**Fact:** Hunger results from poverty, not family size. Indeed, poverty often leads to overpopulation. And without question, the rate of population growth places enormous stress on urban areas and creates poverty. Poor people have more children in order to provide more hands for the fields or social security for old age.

**Fiction:** People are hungry because they are lazy.

**Fact:** Contrary to widespread public opinion, laziness is not a significant cause of hunger. People, especially women, in the developing world often work from daybreak until late at night. Blazing tropical heat, chronic illness and inadequate diets do restrict productivity. But such restrictions are not a sign of laziness.

**Fiction:** People are hungry in Africa because of the drought.

**Fact:** The 17 straight years of below normal rainfall have caused serious problems. But drought has only accelerated the spread of hunger. Africa's hunger crisis results from poverty, economic stagnation, international debts, war and civil unrest, and bad decisions made inside and outside the continent.

**Fiction:** Hunger is not a problem in America.

**Fact:** America has a hunger problem. An estimated 20 million

Americans go hungry some time every month. Those most vulnerable to hunger are the children and the elderly.

**Fiction:** America is the breadbasket of the world.

**Fact:** The United States produces about 60 percent of the grain available on the international market. But this 60 percent represents only seven percent of the worldwide grain production. America's moral obligation is not necessarily to feed the world, but to help poor countries feed themselves.

**Fiction:** One person cannot do anything about worldwide hunger.

**Fact:** It is tempting when faced with an overwhelming moral problem to look for excuses to avoid our moral responsibility. Worldwide hunger can be an overwhelming problem. But the great scales of justice can be tipped by small actions. Throughout history, individuals and small groups have initiated events that have changed the world.

**Fiction:** Southern Baptists are not doing much about hunger.

**Fact:** One of the best-kept secrets in Southern Baptist life is what our mission boards are doing about hunger at home and abroad. Each year the Home and Foreign Mission Boards are significantly extending their witness for Christ through hunger ministries. Using 100 percent of every dollar given to world hunger on hunger needs, the Home Mission Board supported hunger ministries in over 30 states. The Foreign Mission Board has over 220 hunger relief projects in almost 50 countries. ■

From 1980 to 1985, the number of Americans living in poverty jumped from 29 million to 33.7 million. Yet the number of eligible people receiving food stamps dropped from 68 percent to 59 percent. One reason that participation decreased was the termination of outreach efforts in 1981.

(2) Increase funding for the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). More than seven million women and infants eligible for WIC fail to receive it and over 100 U.S. counties have no WIC program. This measure would increase the case load of 3.3 million by 280,000 in 1987.

(3) Increase funding for the nutrition programs designed for the elderly.

---

**Nearly 14 million or 41 percent of those eligible for food stamps do not receive them.**

---

The number of elderly have continued to increase, while the funding for congregate and home-delivered meals has remained static.

(4) Improve the nutritional quality of school meals programs. Almost 12 million poor children do not get breakfasts. Here the reimbursement rate to schools would increase five cents per breakfast and lunch, while lowering the price for reduced-price meals that children pay.

(5) Increase food stamp benefits through a realistic rather than theoretical food plan. Nearly 14 million or 41 percent of those eligible for food stamps do not receive them and those who do find it hard to live on food stamps.

Southern Baptists have the unique opportunity to use the legislative process to build bridges to or barriers around hungry people. "The Hunger Relief Act of 1986" is a good place to begin. ■

---

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



# WAYS TO OBSERVE WORLD HUNGER DAY

## Try These Seven Suggestions To Help Your Church to Make Advance Preparations

For the last eight years, Southern Baptist churches have observed World Hunger Day. This year the observance is set for Oct. 12 on the denominational calendar.

Observing World Hunger Day is an opportunity for churches to raise the level of awareness, to educate members about the biblical mandate for feeding the hungry, to report on the hunger ministries of our mission boards, to equip church leaders for action and to challenge all church members to live faithful lifestyles.

Here are some suggestions on preparing for the observance of World Hunger Day:

**1** Make sure your church has received a copy of the 1986-1987 *World Hunger Awareness/Action Guide*. A copy is mailed to Southern Baptist pastors, ministers of education, ministers of youth, Baptist Student Union directors, directors of missions, state executive secretaries, state Brotherhood secretaries, state WMU secretaries and state missions secretaries.

The guide reports to Southern Baptists about what their agencies are doing to help the hungry. It also offers numerous equipping pieces,

ranging from Bible studies and a sermon outline to action ideas and a hunger quiz.

**2** Conduct a Wednesday night Bible study series on hunger prior to Oct. 12.

**3** Place quotes and statistics about hunger in the church newsletter and Sunday bulletin.

**4** Clip articles from your Baptist state paper, back issues of *LIGHT* and the guide for a bulletin board display.

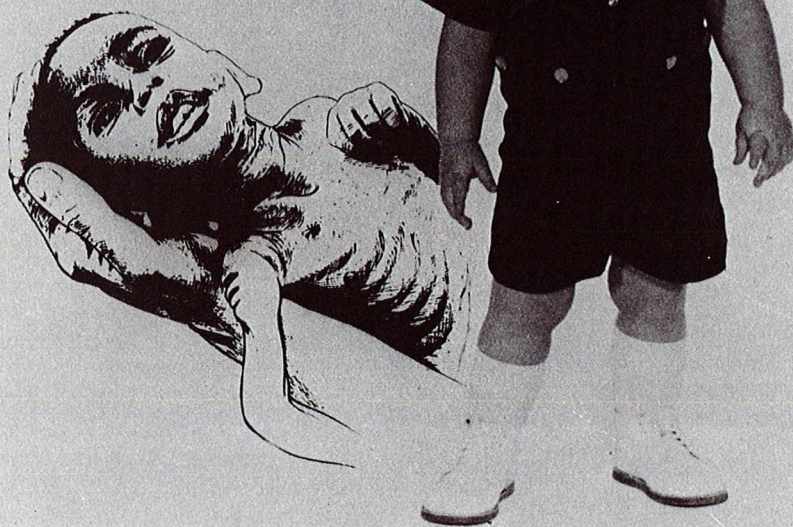
**5** Order copies of the CLC pamphlet "What Are Southern Baptists Doing About Hunger?" This pamphlet answers the questions most often asked about Southern Baptist involvement in a hungry world.

**6** Order world hunger envelopes from the Baptist Sunday School Board.

**7** Have a special hunger emphasis on Sunday morning, Oct. 12. Enlist the involvement of the Brotherhood and WMU.

Begin preparing now to observe World Hunger Day. ■

"Lift your hands to him  
for the lives of your children,  
who faint for hunger  
at the head of every street."  
(Lamentations 2:19)



Observe World Hunger Day  
October 12, 1986

Sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

### Hunger Resource

Additional copies of the 1986-87 *World Hunger Awareness/Action Guide* and the "What Are Southern Baptists Doing?" pamphlet are available at cost.

To order, send 75 cents per copy for the guide and 10 cents per pamphlet to the CLC, 901 Commerce, #550, Nashville, TN 37203-3620. Minimum order of \$2.



# TO DREAM AGAIN

## America Stands in Desperate Need Of Leaders Who Will Dare to Dream

By Larry Braidfoot

The dream has gone out of American politics. And I miss it. Twenty years ago, Lyndon Johnson's war on poverty was jettisoned by the politics of war and Haiphong Harbor and escalation in Vietnam. Less than 15 years ago the magic of the presidency was further eroded by the resignation of Richard Nixon.

From outside the "establishment" came two men championed by conservative religious groups. Jimmy Carter, who made "born again" a well-known phrase if not a widespread reality, saw his vision finally perish for want of one or two more helicopters. Ronald Reagan and his political advisors can continue to say that "America is back," but that will not produce the balanced budget which he promised in 1980 would be ours by 1984. And the United States is now a debtor nation, owing more to foreign nations than they owe to us. The future of our children has been tragically mortgaged in the last five years in a way that staggers the imagination.

Is there a word from the Lord in the midst of all of this?

If we listen closely to the many voices of today, we may conclude that there have been words, but not dreams.

Indeed, there have been many words from the Lord. Or so Christian groups have said. Into the arena of special-interest politics have moved Christians with special-interest moralities. The strongest voices have been those of conservative Christians who have championed an agenda familiar to those of us who have been observing the Southern Baptist Convention in recent years.

We have sought to see who is against abortion the most. We have expressed concern repeatedly about

gambling, alcohol, drugs, and pornography. Many of us are glad to be against those things. I think there are many compelling reasons to be against patterns of behavior which are destructive to society.

But **envision**, if you will, an America different than the one we know. Envision an America without abortion, legalized gambling, alcohol abuse, or pornography. Most of us would agree that this would be a better America.

But what then? Having curbed all of those vices, having achieved the goals of many conservative Christians for our society . . . what then?

Where is the idealism in our society today? Where are those who are dreaming about what our future will be?

The colleges are not hotbeds of idealism. The pragmatism of preparation for a well-paying job has consumed any energy earlier given to social activism. Gone are the picketing and the appeal of the Peace Corps and Vista.

The business community is not the source of idealism. Economic stress and competition have produced a scene that is chaotic. The stock market soars to all-time highs, producing huge profits for many, at a time when our federal budget deficits are crippling our capacity to dream future dreams. The specter of debt, both that of our nation and that of Third World nations to us, is frightening.

The political community is not a bastion of idealism. The problems have become so complex, the pressures so great, the difficulties so overwhelming that special interest influence is the order of the day. Many good, qualified persons abandon the world of politics like it is cursed with a plague.

Martin Luther King, Jr. had a

dream. His dream had not only to do with racial equality and with justice, but with "all of God's children . . . black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Catholics and Protestants" . . . and with men and women.

Where are those in our generation who dream that dream of racial justice and equality?

Anwar Sadat had a dream of a Middle East in which somehow Jew and Arab could coexist. Can we ever forget the excitement, the electricity, of his plane landing in Israel?

Where are those in our generation who dream that dream of peace, not of military escalation toward our possible annihilation?

Perhaps it was because King had been to the Birmingham jail that he could speak of his dream. In jail, he could say:

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.

Maybe the Birmingham jail did not have much to do with shaping King's dream of justice and mutuality. But maybe it was his willingness to be there that made many of his generation listen to that dream.

What is so terribly important is to dream a dream for today. I am re-

---

***Envision an America without abortion, legalized gambling, alcohol abuse or pornography. What then?***

---

minded of the movie "All the President's Men." Robert Redford was trying to solve a part of the puzzle, when he was chided by the informant who told him: "You're missing the big picture. Follow the money."

Well, it is possible for us as Christians to miss the big picture. We can do it by playing partisan politics. It is even possible to do it fighting legalized gambling. Information has been shared with dozens of individuals and



groups within the last few years about the effects of gambling upon poor people. And in newspapers and before legislative committees these concerns about poor people have been expressed.

**But I remember** a legislator in one state who turned and said, "If you people really cared about poor folks, you'd have been here when we were debating health care legislation."

The advice to Redford may be more important than any definition of justice: "Follow the money."

Where does the money lead?

- Away from America's children. About one child in five in America lives in poverty.

- Away from America's women. Pay inequities are but a small part of the picture. One child in four in America lives in a home with one parent, and in 90 percent of the cases that single parent is a female. Over half of those female-headed families are living in poverty.

- Away from America's Blacks and Hispanics and other ethnic minorities.

- Away from America's farmers, with one-third of the full-time farmers expected to go out of business in the next five years.

Where does the money go, then?

- To those in the military industries who compete eagerly for their share of the \$1 trillion spent annually by the nations of the world for weapons and military expenditures.

- To those special-interest groups who continue their favored position by lobbying extensively in the corridors of power.

Why should we not look at the world of politics with hope and expectation? Why should we not view the world through God's eyes? He created it. Does he not know best its capabilities for justice and compassion and mercy and hope?

**King concluded** his famous speech by quoting the old Negro spiritual, "Free at last, free at last, thank God Almighty, we're free at last."

Our Baptist ancestors came seeking freedom from many aspects of European life. They especially were concerned for religious freedom. We have found a measure of freedom. But we have yet to dream fully God's dream.

Baptists will not have true freedom of religion as long as religious persecution deprives Moonies or Buddhists or Moslems of their God-given right to believe as they choose.

Baptists will not be free as long as racial bias and animosity cut humans off from one another.

Baptists will not be free as long as economic injustice distorts the use of God-given resources intended to meet the needs of all humans, especially the weak and the orphan and the stranger and the helpless and the widow.

Baptists will not be free as long as the threat of war hangs over our

heads and encourages the nations to beat plowshares into swords and pruning hooks into spears.

**But Baptists will** not be the only ones who will not be free. These bondages affect all humankind. There has never been a time when the world had greater need of a word of hope, a dream from Baptists of the world as seen through God's eyes.

As always, having dreamed and prayed and hoped, let us act. That is the Baptist way. ■

*Braidfoot is general counsel and director of Christian citizenship for the Christian Life Commission.*

## ETHICS LIBRARY

### Reviews of Works in Applied Christianity

The following books are recent works on poverty and hunger. They are excellent resources for World Hunger Day.

**Africa in Crisis** by Lloyd Timberlake. *Earthscan, International Institute for Environment and Development, 1985.* Recipient of the 1985 Kenny and Marianne Rogers World Hunger Media Award for best book.

Timberlake believes the African crisis results from mistakes and mismanagement inside and outside the continent. He weaves statistical data, failure and success stories, history and seemingly unconnected issues into a tapestry of understanding. For Southern Baptists concerned about hunger and the convention's mission effort in Africa, Timberlake is mandatory reading.

**An African Journey** by Mark Patinkin. *Eerdman's, 1985.* At the crest of the news media's coverage of the suffering in famine-stricken Africa, this *Providence Journal-Bulletin* reporter traveled for a month through places with names like Korem, Khartoum, Fada N'Gourma and Timbuktu.

He writes about individuals, not incomprehensible statistics: parents' losing children, strangers mourning with one another, relief workers choosing from among thousands those who would be given a chance to live and those who would die. He captures the suffering, dignity and care of the hungry and the hunger relief workers. He helps us experience the pain yet also see a glimmer of hope.

**A Guide to World Hunger Organizations** by Louis L. Knowles. *Seeds/Alternatives, 1984.* Fund raising for the hungry of the world has become big business with intense competition and extensive advertising. Knowles' 104-page book raises the right questions and asks them of some 20 groups. It examines from whence contributions come and where they go. It should be a reference for every Southern Baptist pastor.

**The Gospel and the Poor** by Wolfgang Stegemann, tr. by Dietlinde Elliott. *Fortress, 1984.* Brief but provocative study of the poor in the New Testament by this professor at the University of Heidelberg.

Stegemann points out the most commonly used Greek term for the poor in the New Testament is *ptochos* which refers to the desperately poor, the beggars. The destitute represent a distinct class from those who are poor but eke out a living. It is the destitute that compose the first two generations of Christians inside Palestine and "the little people" who are the followers of Christ outside Palestine. The latter group defines their identity by looking after the poorest people of society, many of whom are thought to have been non-Christians.

Stegemann's book makes an excellent resource for sermons and Bible studies on World Hunger Day.

—Robert Parham

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



## Prime-Time Television Serves Lots of Booze

A study of 1986 prime-time TV programming concludes there is six times as much alcohol drinking on TV as in real life.

The study by the National Coalition on Television Violence found that alcohol is consumed an average of 4.6 times during every hour of prime-time TV.

TV leaders in alcohol consumption: *Cheers* and *Love Boat*, followed by *Miami Vice*, *Falcon Crest*, *Dallas* and *The Equalizer*.

"Television as a whole portrays an alcoholic style of drinking, but with virtually no harmful consequences," said NCTV research director Thomas E. Radecki, a psychiatrist. "Drinking is shown as a glamorous way of having fun and the normal, adult way of relaxing."

Radecki added that comparisons with earlier studies indicate "little progress has been made by the broadcast industry in its probably unintentional promotion of alcohol and alcoholism."

"You would never know from watching television that alcohol was our nation's most serious drug problem, resulting in 100,000 deaths and \$120 billion in economic losses each year, according to government studies."

NCTV's report supports the recent American Medical Association policy statement urging advertisers and broadcasters to cooperate in eliminating program content that depicts irresponsible use of alcohol without showing its adverse consequences.

—National Coalition on Television Violence

## Spouse Abuse Gets Increased Attention

Battered women are getting more protection because of increasingly

aggressive prosecution of domestic violence, a new study concludes.

But the study for the National Institute of Justice also calls on law enforcement to do more in getting as tough on family violence as it does violence by strangers.

The study cited grim statistics:

- More than 1.7 million people each year face a spouse with a gun or a knife.
- More than 2 million are beaten by their spouses.
- 8.4% of the 18,692 homicides in 1984—1,570 victims—involved one spouse killing another.

The federally financed survey of assault on women in the home says that until recently most criminal justice officials looked the other way when domestic violence occurred, treating it as a low-priority problem.

—The Tennessean

## Book Cites Dallas As Divorce Capital

Dallas is the divorce capital of the world.

That's the dubious distinction given to the Big D by a new book on statistics which found that Dallas has the world's highest annual divorce rate—8.4 per 1,000 people.

In the survey of 105 cities of the world, Dallas was ahead of 13 other U.S. cities.

Joining Dallas in the top five were Phoenix, 7.8 divorces per 1,000 people; Houston, 7.7; Washington, D.C., 7.0; and Leningrad, Soviet Union, 5.9.

Rio de Janeiro was lowest, 0.2 per 1,000 people.

The *Book of World City Rankings* relied on 1980 census data and 1979 figures from the National Center for Health Statistics. While the numbers are dated, "these things tend to be consistent," said co-author John Tepper Marlin.

The national divorce rate in 1985 was about 5 per 1,000 people, according to federal officials.

—The Dallas Morning News

## Americans Drinking Less Booze

For the sixth year in a row, hard liquor consumption in the U.S. dropped in 1985, according to a private marketing group's report.

Consumption of distilled spirits fell 1.6%. Domestic whiskey, down 7.2%, experienced the most dramatic decline.

Nicolas Furlotte, editorial director of the Jobson Publishing Co. report, attributed the decrease to health awareness, drunken driving crackdowns and higher liquor taxes.

Other surveys show that table wine consumption is down (although wine coolers continue to climb) and that beer sales leveled off two years ago.

According to the Jobson report, the nation's capital is also the country's liquor capital. Washington, D.C. is the leading hard liquor market at 4.93 gallons per person yearly.

In contrast, West Virginians are the most modest imbibers at .81 gallons.

—USA TODAY

## Cocaine Use on Campus Still Serious Problem

Marijuana and most other illicit drugs are losing popularity on college campuses, but cocaine use remains high—about 17%, a survey says.

"The myths that grew up around cocaine have yet to be shattered," said Lloyd Johnston of the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research.

Cocaine use in 1985 was about the same as in 1980.

About one in six college students used

(Continued on Page 12)

## SEND THE LIGHT

\_\_\_\_\_ The following persons would be interested in receiving LIGHT.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please remove my name from your mailing list.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Street  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Street  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City State Zip

Cut out and mail to Christian Life Commission, 901 Commerce, #550, Nashville, TN 37203-3620.



(Continued from page 11)

cocaine within a year of being interviewed for the report, researchers said in the study for the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Continued heavy use of cocaine among students, despite risks of addiction or death from an overdose, is "surprising and unsettling," researchers said.

"It's been a chic thing to do," said Johnston, a social psychologist. But, he added, "that's changing. I think [cocaine] will lose some of its social acceptability."

The study surveyed high school seniors and interviewed 1,100 of those who went on to college each year from 1980-85. Other findings:

- Marijuana use fell, from 51% in 1980 to 41% in 1985.
- Alcohol remained the No. 1 drug on campus, with 90.5% of students in 1980 reporting drinking and 92% in 1985.
- More than half the students said cocaine was fairly or very easy to obtain. Only a third saw it as dangerous.

—From news reports

### One in Five Babies Born to Unmarried

Twenty-one percent of babies born in the U.S. in 1984 had unwed mothers, the highest level on record, according to a government study.

At the same time, birth rates for teenagers and young women have declined, the National Center for Health Statistics reports.

There were 770,355 births to unmarried mothers in 1984, the latest full year for which statistics are available.

The 1984 figure—up 4% from the previous year—is the highest since 1940 when national statistics were first collected on this subject.

The increase in unwed births reflects both a growth in the birth rate among

unmarried women and a larger number of such women in prime childrearing ages, the study said.

"The growth in the population of unmarried women has outpaced that of all women because of the widespread tendency to delay marriage to increasingly older ages, as well as the increasing number of divorces," it said.

"Although the reductions in the rates were relatively small, the rates for teenagers 15-19 years dropped to the lowest levels observed in the U.S. since 1940, and for women 20-24 years, to the lowest levels ever observed," the report said.

Increasing out-of-wedlock birth rates for women in their 30s and 40s continued as it has over the last decade.

Leaders in percentage of babies born in 1984 whose mothers were unwed:

D.C.	56.8%
Mississippi	32.3%
Maryland	28.4%
New York	26.9%
Louisiana	26.5%

—From news reports

### Fewer Americans Are Driving Drunk

Fewer Americans are driving while drunk, according to a 15-state study by the national Center for Disease Control in Atlanta.

All but one state reported a decrease in drinking and driving last year compared to 1984. In South Carolina, 3.3% of those surveyed admitted to drinking and driving, up from 2.0%.

The CDC cautioned that some trends are too gradual to be positively identified in a one-year survey.

—USA TODAY

### Half of U.S. Cities Plagued by Red Ink

More than half of America's cities will end their fiscal year in the red, reports a

National League of Cities survey.

"We can't eliminate a \$200 billion federal deficit without it taking a toll," said Robert Reischauer of the Brookings Institution.

An added worry is that \$4.2 billion in revenue sharing is expected to end this fall.

"The knife is now cutting the bone and slicing into the vital sinews that make our cities work," said league's Alan Beals.

—USA TODAY

### U.S. Experiences Increase In Serious Crimes in 1985

The number of crimes reported to police was up 5% last year, according to an FBI report.

Fueling the increase was a significant jump in crime in the Sunbelt, the report said.

Population experts said factors contributing to the first year-to-year increase since 1981 were migration to the South and the West and an end to recent declines in the size of the young, crime-prone group of 16- to 24-year-olds.

Violent crimes of murder, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault were up 4% last year.

Meanwhile, a USA TODAY survey found that reports of serious crime are up again in many cities this year, contradicting the predictions of most criminologists.

The survey of top cities found increased reports of violence and property crimes for the first half of 1986 compared with the same period last year.

In some major U.S. cities, homicide rates for 1986 are soaring. Examples: Denver is 80% ahead of last year; Memphis, 62%; Atlanta, 53%; San Francisco, 51%; Dallas, 13%.

—From news reports

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



**Christian Life  
Commission**  
Of The Southern  
Baptist Convention

901 Commerce, #550  
Nashville, TN 37203-3620

Non-profit  
Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
Nashville, Tennessee  
Permit No. 518