

Light

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN

BAPTIST CONVENTION

MAY 1987

'GRAND NEW OPPORTUNITY'

N. Larry Baker Takes Commission Helm

An age of moral crisis and dissatisfaction "is a marvelous time to step into the ministry" of the Christian Life Commission, N. Larry Baker said during his installation as the Christian Life Commission's fourth executive director March 23.

"Our nation is in crisis," Baker told participants in the commission's annual seminar in Charlotte, N.C.

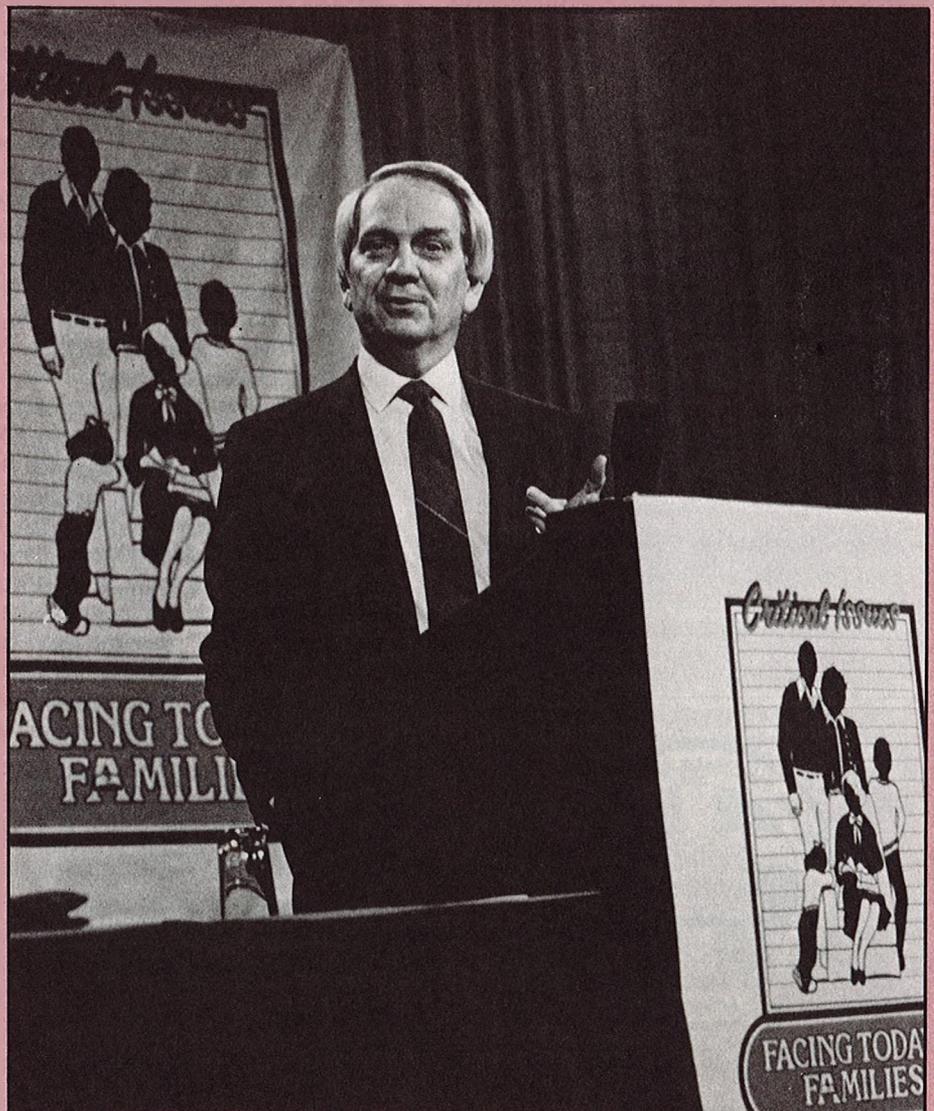
"Dishonesty, duplicity and deception are in epidemic proportions. Integrity is a lost commodity. The social problems that plague us are complex and comprehensive."

But the commission "will not join the religious handwringers who say nothing constructive can be done for or with our world," he insisted. "God calls us to see the possibilities, seize our opportunities in faith and to act aggressively. God wants us to take hold of the problems of our day with faith, hope and love—and plunge in to do what we can with him to solve them."

Baker begins his tenure "with a clear sense of God's calling," he reported. He also expressed gratitude for the "shaping vision and nurturing life of Southern Baptists and reported a sense of indebtedness to family, friends and fellow believers in Christ who have shared his Christian journey."

The new ethics leader cited as a model for ministry the life of Jesus Christ as "the way to which we are called in our living." The source of

(Continued on Page 3)



N. Larry Baker delivers installation address during Christian Life Commission annual seminar in Charlotte, North Carolina.

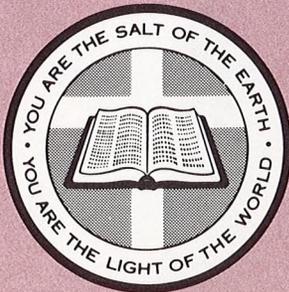
AIDS: A Challenge to American Families

SOUTHERN BAPTIST HISTORICAL
LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES
Historical Commission, SBC
Nashville, Tennessee

- 2 Baker's Viewpoint**
- 3 Baker Takes CLC Helm**
- 4 Challenge of AIDS**
- 6 Koop's Response to Critics**
- 7 Church and the Family**
- 9 Moral Scene**
- 10 Passion for Action**
- 12 Seminar Tapes and Proceedings**

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.

©1987 Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention
 Larry Baker, Executive Director
 Tim Fields, Interim Managing Editor



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

P.O. Box 25266
 Nashville, TN 37202-5266

Beginning

This is a marvelous time to step into the ministry of the Christian Life Commission. Paul's word applies, "A wide door for effective service" is open to us.

We have a grand new opportunity. The day in which we minister differs from others before. We will strike out in new directions in response to our call and under the impetus of God's Spirit. We give thanks for what God has done in the past, but we will not settle there or enshrine that; rather, we commit ourselves to be our best in pursuit of God's dream for us. We will not be enslaved to a past, its approaches, or its style; rather, we will do our best to live in faithfulness to God in our new day, to deal with issues current, and to forge approaches that make it possible for Southern Baptists to respond effectively and to act responsibly in our world.

I come to this time with a clear sense of God's leading. I come to this task—like Moses on the backside of Horeb, Isaiah at worship in the temple and Simon Peter on a fishing boat—with a profound sense that the God who calls has called me. I take the reins of leadership as a sacred trust and pledge to pursue the task with joy and without reservation as an expression of my allegiance to God's call.

I come to this time with an overwhelming sense of gratitude. I am grateful for the shaping vision and nurturing life of Southern Baptists, our churches and schools and our shared life. As I take the reins of leadership, I pledge to be a faithful steward of that heritage and that investment as an expression of my allegiance to God's call.

I come to this time with a powerful sense of indebtedness. I am indebted to my parents who have walked the way before, to my wife, friends, and fellow believers who have made the journey beside me, to those who wait and watch, who pray for and encourage me, and to my children who come behind me. I am unable to pay them back, but I can pass on that which I have received. As I take the reins of leadership, I pledge to give as I have received, as a joyous expression of my allegiance to God.

Undergirding my commitment is the belief that the Kingdom of God offers the highest view of human destiny known to the human family. Giving strength to my service is the belief that the way of life exemplified in Jesus Christ and made possible through his saving grace is the way to which we are called in our living. Providing power for my action is the belief that the God who calls us to himself in grace also empowers us by his Spirit to live the life of faith during all the days of our lives.

Empowering my ministry is the belief that life is stronger than death, that love is more powerful than hatred, and that light dispels darkness. Encouraging my labor is the belief that lives invested in the works and ways of God and in pursuit of the will of God do not "labor in vain in the Lord." Giving direction to my living and my service is the belief that God's word, the Bible, is able to make us wise for salvation and to equip us thoroughly for every good work.

On this day, I pledge to Southern Baptists:

- To stand for, speak in behalf of, and call for a recovery of biblical morality;
- To stand for, speak in behalf of, and call for moral righteousness in every sector of our nation's life;
- To speak out against the evils that plague our age, that thwart the purposes of God for his world and destroy the lives of persons;
- To help Southern Baptists amass our strength and align our power in the cause of right and righteous living;
- To call Southern Baptists to be aggressive, to seize the initiative and to give strong leadership in the moral arena; and
- To give my best energies to developing ways and means for Southern Baptists in all walks of life to put their faith to work.

Larry Baker

BAKER TAKES CLC HELM

Continued from page 1

direction for his life "is the belief that God's Word, the Bible, is able to make us wise for salvation and to equip us thoroughly for every good work."

Baker's response to the task he began when he succeeded Foy Valentine March 15 was the conclusion of "a special, sacred moment," said C.W. Brister, professor of pastoral ministry at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

"God wants us to take hold of the problems of our day with faith, hope and love—and plunge in to do what we can with him to solve them."

The installation service featured a covenant, led by Patricia Ayres, commissioner from Sewanee, Tenn.; scripture reading by Don Wideman, executive director of the Missouri Baptist Convention; introduction of Baker by Charles Wade, past commission chairman and pastor from Arlington, Texas; greetings from Jere Mitchell, pastor of First Baptist Church of Fayetteville, Ark., where Baker served, Tim Fields of the Christian Life Commission staff and Milton Ferguson, president of Mid-

western Baptist Theological Seminary, where Baker has been academic vice president; prayers by C.W. Scudder and Vernon Davis of the Midwestern Seminary faculty and Jerry Hopkins, commissioner from Paducah, Ky.; and music by Elaine Rogers and Hal Shoemaker, both of Charlotte. Commission chairman Lynn Clayton, Baptist newspaper editor from Alexandria, La., presided.

Also during the installation service, Brister presented Baker with a list of challenges in his new task. Brister urged Baker to "arouse new interest in the moral development of children and youth," develop "ethical initiatives in all structures of American society," fight evil and "challenge humankind toward righteousness," set up a network that utilizes Baptist resources and the aid of other Christians, protect and nurture his own marriage and family, "keep faith with your friends and be kind to your foes" and work hard with faith in God and confidence of Baptist support.

Baker will need such faith and confidence for tackling the "integrity crisis in the American church" described by Bob R. Agee, president of Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee, who delivered the installation address.

Agee cited recent surveys that reveal the decline of morality in America. "Studies show that there is

very little difference in the opinions and behavior of the church and the unchurched on a wide range of items," he said. And although Christians are "the only Bible some people will ever read," he claimed the behavior of many of those Christians is sending "conflicting signals" to non-Christians, with negative results.

He called for a "new agenda for the church" to correct America's integrity crisis.

The first point on that agenda is a "rediscovery of what the Bible says about the nature and function of Christians in the world." This includes a priority on evangelism, growth in Christ-likeness, application of scripture to all areas of life and ministry in Jesus' name, he explained.

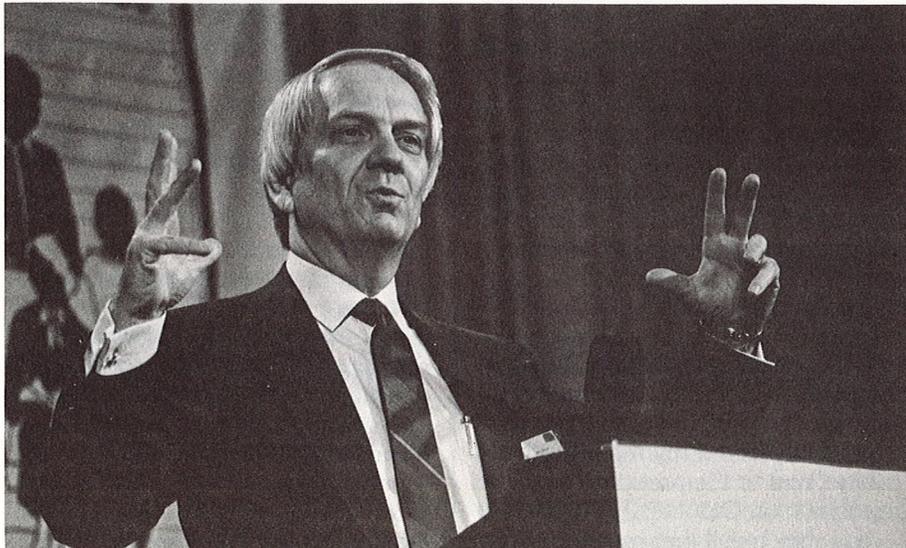
Second, he urged reaffirmation of the fundamentals of the Christian faith. "I call upon all of us to get back to the basics of our faith—commit ourselves to an honest, thorough exegesis of scripture, willing to let the Bible speak, willing to stand with one another in brotherly love, striving to restore integrity and credibility to the gospel we preach," he said.

He also called on seminar participants to "renew our zeal, our commitment to be a strong, clear voice as representatives of our Lord in the midst of our nation's moral and ethical confusion."

"The stakes are too high and the time is too short for us to expend our emotional and spiritual energies attacking Christian brothers," he insisted. "We need each other."

Speaking directly of the Christian Life Commission, Agee said: "We as Southern Baptists are at a major crossroads. The Christian Life Commission can play a strategic role in helping us get on with the business of communicating a gospel with integrity to this lost and dying world. God has led this commission to elect Dr. Larry Baker as your leader.

"It will be a tragedy of the highest order if we do not join hands and hearts with him, his staff and the rest of our brothers as Southern Baptists, with the commitment to pray for each other, love each other, work diligently with each other to tackle the tough issues based on a sound 'Thus saith the Lord.' " ■



AIDS: A CHALLENGE TO TODAY'S FAMILIES

The Surgeon General Outlines a Plan To Fight a Deadly Contagious Disease

C. Everett Koop

Since the president made me the country's surgeon general, I've been no stranger to controversy. It is not by design. But the public health problems that really matter today are very complex. They generate a great deal of discussion; some of it helpful and some of it not too helpful; some of it friendly and some of it not so friendly.

Throughout this time, however, the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission has been a support and a comfort to me. Now, I need your support and your comfort once again. We have another issue before us and before the country that is

By this time next year, we will have added another 23,000 new cases of AIDS. By the end of 1990, a quarter of a million people will have contracted AIDS.

testing our moral fiber like no other. The new issue we face together is the issue of AIDS. What is it? And what should we do about it?

AIDS is a mysterious, contagious disease. It is caused by a virus. It is passed either in blood or in semen, and as a result, the disease has been most prevalent among homosexual and bisexual men and among drug abusers who borrow intravenous needles or other drug paraphernalia from other addicts who have AIDS. Lately, however, AIDS has been ap-

pearing in heterosexuals who are not drug abusers. Apparently, they contracted the disease through heterosexual relations with a carrier of the virus.

But science still doesn't know the true nature of the AIDS virus, and until we do, we have no way of developing an effective vaccine against it. In addition, the disease is spreading. The number of victims is doubling every 13 or 14 months. As of a year ago, we had 16,000 cases of AIDS reported to the public health authorities since the first reports of AIDS in June of 1981. Today that overall five-year total is 32,000 cases. Over half of those victims have already died of the disease, and the other half will. By this time next year, we will have added another 23,000 new cases of AIDS; by the end of 1990, a quarter of a million people will have contracted AIDS.

The situation we have today is very much like the situation in Europe several centuries ago when smallpox and bubonic plague destroyed hundreds of thousands of lives and changed the course of history. Collectively as well as individually, we need to do things that have to be done. Right at the very top of that list is we need to become informed of what this threat really is.

That was what motivated President Reagan to direct me, in February of 1986, to gather everything we knew about AIDS and to put it into a report to the American people. During the preparation of that report I met with individuals and groups from across the whole spectrum of our society. After eight months of listening and writing, I delivered my report to the cabinet and to the president; I released it on October 27, 1986.

You may recall that my report was

not very long. I only devoted fewer than 200 words to the topic of education, AIDS education in particular, and sex education in general. But those few words have captured most of the attention of the media, parents, educators and public officials at all levels of government.

The reason people have become so interested in my views on education is that the issue goes to the heart of each person's own system of moral and ethical values or lack thereof. I introduced the subject in my report: "Education about AIDS should start in early elementary school and at home so that children can grow up knowing the behavior to avoid to protect themselves from exposure to the AIDS virus. The threat of AIDS can provide an opportunity for parents to instill in their children their own moral and ethical standards."

Some people were unduly alarmed by that phrase, "elementary school." Now I recognize that early education is more difficult to do, and I would be willing to make that single change in the report; to take out the word, "early," and let the sentence read, "Education about AIDS should start in elementary school."

I concluded that report with another statement along the same lines:

"Education concerning AIDS must start at the lowest grade possible as part of any health and hygiene program. There is now no doubt that we need sex education in schools and that it must include information on heterosexual and homosexual relationships. The threat of AIDS should be sufficient to permit a sex education curriculum with a heavy emphasis on prevention of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases."

I would not change any words in that paragraph.

Before some of my critics even knew what sex was, I was decrying the kind of sex education that somehow has gotten off the track and teaches sex technique without responsibility and without morality. Sex education can and should be non-threatening. It can teach good values. It can help develop the child's own sense of personal responsibility, and it can strengthen the concept of the family. This kind of sex education



Surgeon General C. Everett Koop delivers his address on AIDS to more than 550 participants at the Christian Life Commission national seminar in Charlotte, North Carolina.

should unfold according to the developmental age of a child and to his different levels of awareness and curiosity. If the curriculum is well

Yes, it is true, the single weapon in the fight against AIDS is education . . . especially of our young people.

planned and thoughtfully carried out, then it will be possible to bring to the attention of junior-high-school-age children information about sexually transmitted disease, and AIDS in particular. If this makes us uncomfortable, if it is awkward to do, those are problems that we as adults have to resolve in a way that enables us to tell our children what they need to know and what I believe they have a right to know.

I have a straightforward message for young people. Don't do drugs, of course. Then as you grow up, remain abstinent until you find someone who is worthy of your respect and your love, give that person both, and stay faithful. Short of total abstinence, the best defense against AIDS is to maintain a mutually faithful monogamous relationship in which you have only one continuing sexual partner and that person is faithful.

I have a second message for

young people who don't yet have a faithful, monogamous relationship: Proceed with extreme caution. It's important that you know with absolute certainty that neither you nor your partner is carrying the AIDS virus. Now, how can you be absolutely certain about your partner? I'm afraid that has to do with your trust and faith in him or her. The first step, perhaps, should be a frank discussion and, if indicated, a blood test for the antibodies against the AIDS virus. But bear in mind that it takes weeks to months for a test to turn positive. Until you are absolutely certain, then you must take precautions, and the best one available—though far from perfect—is the use of a condom from start to finish.

This information is clear enough and straightforward enough to tell children. Yet many adults, parents and teachers alike, are having trouble coming to terms with it. The difficulty is not in the facts concerning sexuality, human reproduction and AIDS; the difficulty is in the significance of those facts relative to the totality of a sensitive and affirmative human relationship. There is much more to a loving, caring, respectful and tolerant human relationship than just good sex. Young people ought to be advised of that.

Without a compassionate understanding of the imperfect nature of many human relationships, a child's education will be itself very imperfect. Parents are not very good about talking about their sexuality. Nevertheless, I want parents to try. I want parents to do this with compassion, with respect and love and with some

understanding. It remains my wish that parents will be the primary teachers of sex and human relations to children. The task should not be left by default to movies, television or the street corner. We can't do that and still protect the millions of young lives who are at risk of AIDS.

America's children don't live in a vacuum; therefore, we must all work together to help our children grow up and cope with the real world of pleasure and danger. That is the reason why our schools, churches, synagogues and other community institutions must provide our children with the best available information—physical, sexual, emotional and psychological—to help them negotiate their own way through the human condition.

In today's world, which is run by a generation of adults who can at times be disappointing, children have a right to all the help they can get.

I believe much of what needs to be done because of AIDS also needs to be done because of other problems we face. For example, nothing is a more powerful weapon against pornography than the honest truth about human sexuality. That's not the only answer, of course. But a child who is given the facts about sexuality is a child who will feel more secure as an evolving adult and will have only contempt for pornography. Similarly, girls given the facts about their own sexuality in a way that stresses caring, personal responsibility, what goes into parenting so that the concept of the family is strengthened might go a long way toward reducing unwanted teenage pregnancies. Fewer pregnancies would reduce the 400,000 abortions which plunge those girls and their families into such an abyss of personal tragedy.

Yes, it is true the single weapon in the fight against AIDS is education, education and more education, especially of our young people. But we should be providing this information not only because of AIDS; we should be providing it because knowledge of sexuality is a child's best defense against many of the most hateful and exploitive phenomena of modern society. ■

Koop is surgeon general of the United States.



C. Everett Koop Answers Critics of Surgeon General's AIDS Report

During a question and answer session following his address on AIDS at the Christian Life Commission national seminar in Charlotte, North Carolina, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop responded to critics who imply he has compromised his Christian beliefs by advocating stepped-up sex education in the face of the country's growing AIDS problem.

"I have not changed a bit," Koop, a conservative Presbyterian said. "I have not changed one single principle which I brought to Washington. I have not in any way altered my Christian faith. I have not changed my views about abortion or infanticide or sex education or promiscuity or anything else.

"I don't think many people who criticize me recognize that I am surgeon general of men and women, of white and black, homosexual, heterosexual, moral, immoral, Christian and non-Christian. I am the surgeon general of the country. I am not afforded the luxury of giving moral treatises when I have been asked to give a health report," he said.

Responding specifically to criticism from Phyllis Schlafly, founder and president of the conservative activist organization Coalition for Teen Health, Koop drew sustained applause when he said, "I am not here in this government to make people like Phyllis Schlafly happy. I'm here to keep you people alive."

MORAL SCENE

One-fourth of Low-income Families Lack Telephones

Telephones cost too much for more than one-quarter of America's low-income households, according to a survey by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group.

The group charged the Federal Communications Commission's policies "are failing to make available to all Americans affordable basic telephone service."

The survey, of 816 households with annual incomes less than \$15,000, revealed 26.5 percent of those homes did not have telephone service.

—Associated Press

Country Added 2.2 Million Citizens During Last Year

Americans added 2.2 million people to their population during 1986, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The bureau estimated the U.S. population on New Year's Day to be 242,085,811.

That amount includes 3.7 million births during the past year, 2.1 million deaths and a net migration of 554,000.

The country probably will add another

2.2 million people in 1987, the bureau predicted.

—USA TODAY

Honesty Not Practiced As Much As It Once Was

People who apply for jobs are not as honest as their counterparts were 20 years ago, according to the Stanton Corp. of Charlotte, N.C.

Stanton gave written honesty tests to almost 3 million job applicants. It discovered that 18 percent to 31 percent were untrustworthy, compared with 10 percent to 12 percent in the mid-1960s.

Although the tests are controversial, the company claims an 87 percent accuracy rate and claims the tests can help companies reduce theft.

The tests showed:

- Women are more honest than men, 56 percent to 48 percent.
- Older people are more honest than younger people.
- Minorities are more honest than whites.
- Busboys, dishwashers and waiters, at 88 percent, are among the most honest people. At the bottom are sales people, 61 percent.

—USA TODAY

Television Overload Decried As Harmful to Youngsters

Television is a "stranger" that invades homes and teaches bad lessons to children, charged Dr. Victor C. Strasburger, director of adolescent medicine at Bridgeport (Conn.) Hospital and a member of the task force on children and television of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Although public TV and periodic specials on commercial television present positive messages, Strasburger and other experts contend television is having a powerful effect on the health and minds of American children.

Those children will spend 15,000 hours watching TV by the time they graduate from high school, compared to only 11,000 hours in the classroom.

And those hours are filled with improper messages, Strasburger and others say: commercial messages for unhealthy food and other products not conducive to health, presentation of sex without affection or regard for the risk of pregnancy or disease, consumption of alcohol and drugs, misrepresentations of women, minorities, the elderly and handicapped, "easy" solutions to complex problems and almost ceaseless violence.

—New York Times News Service

THE CHURCH AS A CONTEXT FOR THE FAMILY

The Church Is Context for Family Discussion, Decision and Commitment

Robert N. Bellah

Marriage is difficult. The intention of indissolubility seems beyond us. A recent *New Yorker* cartoon showed a clergyman celebrating the marriage service and saying to the couple, "till death do you part or the going gets hairy." And how is one to bring children into a world such as ours? How can we transmit to them a sense of moral responsibility and a religious understanding of life? How can we create within the family a moral and religious atmosphere that can withstand the pressures of the larger world in which we live?

The family is too small and too vulnerable to sustain the moral life of

The church will be of decisive importance . . . as context for discussion, decision and commitment.

its members unassisted. If it is to succeed in providing meaning and coherence, it will have to be included in and supported by larger social structures. I want to emphasize the church in particular as a context for family life, but it is not the only institution that is necessary for the immediate support of the family. We must include the school, the neighborhood and the larger public realm as well.

Much in the way our society is organized makes us think the pressures we feel in our family life are beyond our capacity to resist.

Competition and survival are powerful motives. And how can we control what our children are doing? Do we have authority? Can we set guidelines on the television they watch or the music they listen to? How do we know what they are up to anyway? Powerful outside pressures fragment and atomize the family so that each member goes his or her own way, and the home is only a temporary stopping point between lives that are deeply unconnected.

There are three ways of dealing with this situation, in ascending order of difficulty, and I will advocate the third. The first is to surrender and allow the family to be buffeted by whatever waves from the larger society sweep over it. The second is the fundamentalist response; it attempts to create a separate culture in the family with as little penetration from the larger society as possible.

The third response involves a much more active process of discussion and discrimination, one which involves certain basic understandings and then a great deal of negotiation about particular cases. Because this alternative is so difficult, the family alone is not likely to be able to sustain it. Here, as in the second response, the church will be of decisive importance, but not the church as absolute authority so much as the church as context for discussion, decision and commitment. I can only suggest some of the things that third alternative means to me.

To begin with, the idea of Christian marriage is not very well understood. Love is a central word in the Christian vocabulary, and it is a central word in the vocabulary of romantic love in our society. But

though the meaning of the term overlaps in the two contexts, it is certainly not identical. In the culture of romantic love, love is primarily a feeling, indeed an overwhelming feeling, that sweeps one away. But, unfortunately, it is fragile. Without beginning to exhaust the idea of Christian love, we can see it involves intention and will that are largely absent in romantic love. Love intends the good of the loved one. It is more focused on the other than on the self. Love is prepared to persist in the face of adversity.

If we think of love as the basis of marriage, then these two conceptions will imply different conceptions of marriage. If marriage is based only on romantic love, then when the

Forgiveness, acceptance, understanding are essential components of Christian marriage.

intensity of the feeling begins to diminish, as it inevitably does, the basis of the marriage is threatened. In the ideology of romantic love, not only is it all right to leave the original partner and go off with the new love, it is actually immoral not to. This ideology has much to do with the high divorce rate in our society.

The idea of Christian marriage is quite different. For Christians marriage is a contract to enter a non-contractual relationship. Its intention is indissolubility—not for as long as excitement lasts, but "till death do us part." Forgiveness, acceptance, understanding are essential components of Christian marriage.

However, a marriage requires more than the commitment of two individuals. A tradition and a community that embody these ideals, such as the church, is ultimately indispensable. This is all the more the case when the marriage fulfills itself by becoming a family, by bringing children into the world.

All I have said about relations between the spouses applies to the relations between parents and

children. The only way for the family to have a formative influence is for the family to create a common

What is learned in Sunday School will not be retained if it is not reflected in family life.

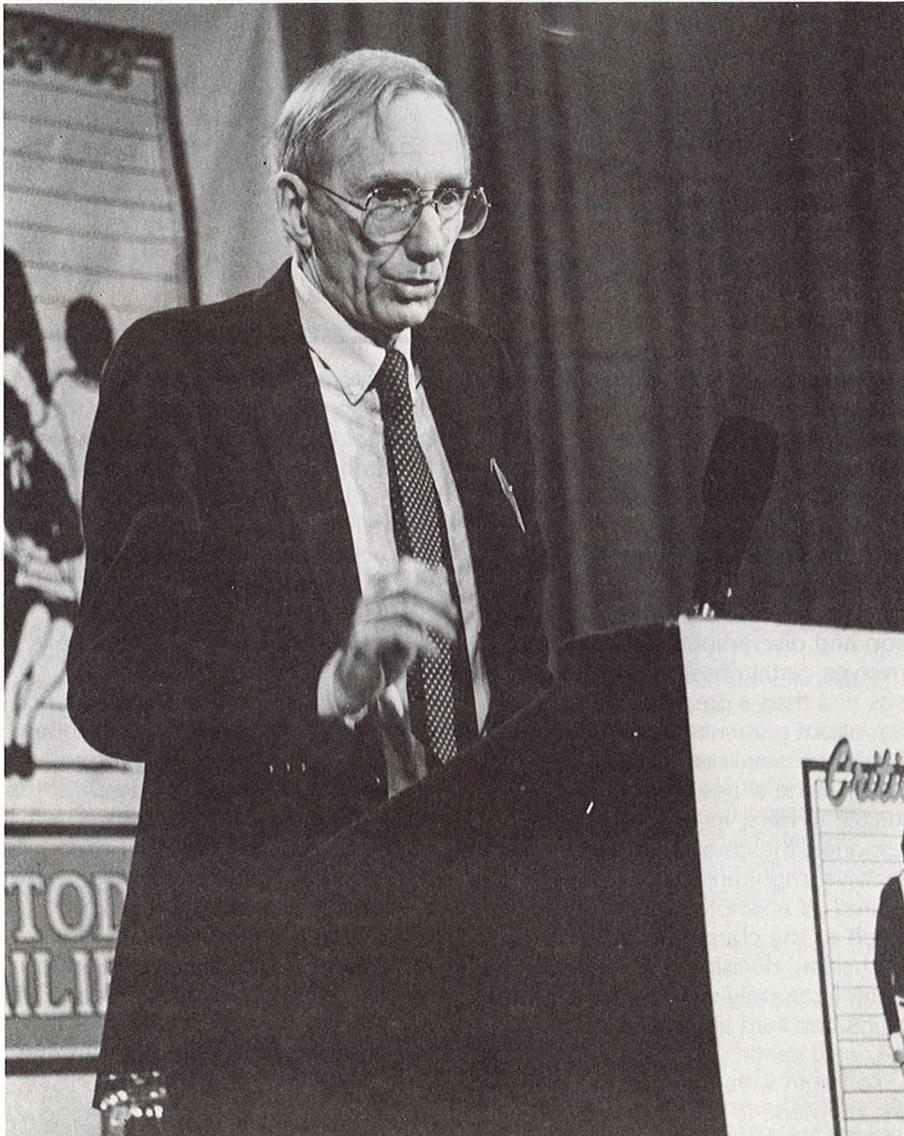
culture with common symbols and practices. The core of common practice is ritual, what we might call family sacraments.

Perhaps the most central family sacrament is the common meal. Yet today when everyone is so busy and schedules do not mesh, it is very easy to abandon the common meal altogether. One should try to have a common meal at least once a day and at least several common dinners a week. Family meals are not always pleasant, but they are one of the few places where family members can find out what each other is doing and thinking. It is on such occasions that children learn to listen respectfully to others and to express what is important to them.

In a Christian family it will be normal for the meal to begin with a prayer. It may be possible to have

common prayer, perhaps including a Bible reading, at some time other than meals, perhaps at the children's bedtime. Parents should consciously try to bring in Bible stories and Bible verses, perhaps some lines from a psalm or a parable or saying of Jesus, not only on solemn occasions but as part of the daily discourse of family life. What is learned in Sunday School will not be retained if it is not reflected in family life.

Other family rituals include recreation and holidays. Trying to make time for family outings, picnics or shared sports strengthens the family culture. On these occasions, as well as on Sundays, family observances ought to be combined with church observances. The family should understand itself as a cell in the body of Christ, mirroring the local congrega-



Robert N. Bellah delivers his address on "The Church as a Context for the Family" to participants at the Christian Life Commission national seminar in Charlotte, North Carolina.

The family should understand itself as a cell in the body of Christ . . .

gation as the local congregation mirrors the whole of God's people.

The church as a context for family life as well as the church as a vital point for the transformation of the world cannot operate without what the Mennonites call discernment. We need to know what is in scripture, tradition and history, but we also need to think together about what that means to us here and now in this confusing and rapidly changing world. We need the church not just as passive listeners but as an active community of interpreters able to carry the message into the whole of their lives. And the family too should be, as a microcosm of the church, a community of interpreters.

It is this notion of the church as a community of interpreters that makes the third response to the challenge of culture different from the second, or fundamentalist, type. The

fundamentalist response to all the problems of life is "Christ is the answer." In practice this means relying on very uncritical reading of the Bible or on the words of an authoritarian pastor. But if Christ is the answer, he is also the question. If the answer to our problems is to follow him, then we find if we are serious that there is Christ challenging us very hard to think about what following him actually means under the difficult circumstances of our lives. He does not expect us to sink into passivity, but to take up our cross, to take up the way of the servant, and to discern in the midst of all our suffering and confusion what to do. And mercifully he has given us his church to help us in that task. We need to uphold and sustain each other, and we need all the wisdom we can gather from our brothers and sisters in Christ.

But let us try to be a bit more specific in thinking about the process of discernment.

Richard Mouw, the evangelical theologian at Fuller Theological Seminary, called attention to guidelines for "biblically faithful steward-

. . . the family is terribly vulnerable to pressures from the larger society that the church itself cannot control.

ship." Christians must attempt to be gentle in the ways we treat the environment; just in the way we treat our fellow workers; wise in the use of the creation's resources; sensitive to the needs of our neighbors as they pursue their vocations and tasks; careful in the way we use technology so that we use it as a way of serving legitimate human goals; frugal in our patterns of energy consumption so that we do not waste the building blocks of the good life; vigilant in the prevention of waste; fair in the determination of prices; honest in the way we promote the sales of products; and equitable in the earning of profit.

Actually, that could be the be-

ginning of quite a few good discussions in the family. How do we in the home, as well as in the church and the larger world, show the gentleness, the justice, the wisdom, the sensitivity, the care, the frugality, the vigilance, the fairness, the honesty, the equity, which God requires of us?

If we think of the family, it will take more than the church to nurture it, even though I have tried to argue for the church as the primary context for the family. But the family is terribly vulnerable to pressures from the larger society that the church itself cannot control. This situation places an even heavier burden on the church. Not only must it defend and strengthen the family, it must also lead us into a vigorous discussion of public life. It will not always be easy. We must expect to be rejected and persecuted as Jesus was. But if we follow his way, we also know that we are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, that we have lost our lives in order to find them in the most joyous fellowship of all. ■

Bellah is Ford professor of sociology and comparative studies, University of California at Berkeley.

MORAL SCENE

America's Homeless Children Face Difficult Plight

For every 10 homeless adults in America, eight children are affected, according to a report by the Child Welfare League of America and Travelers Aid International.

The new report said the average age of a homeless child is 6. The average age of a homeless mother is 29.

The study was based on data collected in eight cities across the country. It found that among homeless children:

- 43 percent who were school-age did not attend school.
- 10 percent needed health care.
- 10 percent were suspected of being abused and/or neglected—three times the national average.
- 27 percent spent the previous night with friends or relatives, 21 percent had stayed outside, in a car or at a bus or train station, and 25 percent had been in an emergency shelter.

The report comes at a time when Congress is considering bills to provide aid for the homeless.

—USA TODAY

Interest in Ethics 'Booming' Among Fortune 1000 Companies

Prompted by recent scandals such as Wall Street's insider trading and defense contractors' price gouging, interest in business ethics is booming.

A survey of 279 Fortune 1000 companies by the Center for Business Ethics at Bentley College in Waltham, Mass., revealed 80 percent of them are establishing an ethics code for daily operation.

Primary reasons cited for such a code: social responsibility, 34.1 percent; to provide guidelines for employees' behavior, 27.8 percent; to comply with government guidelines, 15.7 percent; to improve management, 15.7 percent; to establish better corporate culture, 15.2 percent; to reduce white-collar crime, 2.7 percent; to improve public image, 2.7 percent.

Industry insiders claim good ethics is good business. "I think it is absolutely the case that ethical behavior is pro-business and pro-profitability," said Ed Hood, vice chairman and executive officer of General Electric. "Ethical

behavior means doing the right thing for a wide range of constituencies. No business can succeed over time unless it does the right thing for the constituencies it serves."

—USA TODAY

Restrict Smoking, Not Ads, Respondents Tell Pollsters

Almost all Americans think smoking in public should be restricted, but a minority believe print ads for cigarettes should be banned, according to a poll of 1,025 smokers and non-smokers by the American Cancer Society, the American Heart Association and the American Lung Association.

The survey also revealed:

- 94 percent feel public places should have designated "no smoking" sections.
- 84 percent say employers should limit smoking at work.
- 33 percent believe cigarette ads should be banned.

The latter figure contradicts an American Medical Association survey that showed 64 percent of people questioned favor an advertising ban.

—USA TODAY

PASSION FOR ACTION

Carolyn Weatherford Challenges WMU To Tackle Social and Moral Issues

By Karen Benson

Carolyn Weatherford is a woman with a passion—for the hurting, for the hungry, for the masses worldwide hit or haunted by war, for children and spouses who have been horribly abused, for the victims of pornography and the horrendous underworld machine that exploits them and profits from them.

But she's no single-issue person, nor does she try to solve the world's problems single-handedly.

Her concerns have led her to join the Baptist Peace Fellowship and to serve on the board of Baptist Peacemakers newsletter, to chair the

The Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission will award her its 1987 Distinguished Service Award.

Baptist World Aid Committee, to participate in national conferences on world hunger and pornography and to tutor refugees.

But that's just Carolyn Weatherford, the person.

As Carolyn Weatherford, the executive director of the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union, she's a driving force in mobilizing 1.2 million women, girls and preschoolers in missions education, mission support and mission action.

Under her leadership, WMU organizations nationwide will tackle

social and moral issues through churchwide programs of mission action through their churches.

For her involvement in social and ethical issues—both personally and professionally—the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission will award her its 1987 Distinguished Service Award at the Southern Baptist Convention in June.

But while Weatherford is honored by the award, she confesses feeling a bit frustrated that Baptist women are not yet doing all they can to practice personal witnessing and mission action at home and abroad. Too often, she says, women in today's world claim they don't have time—that they're too busy to get involved.

Nevertheless, she's committed to helping change those attitudes.

"Woman's Missionary Union is something that's worthy of the busy woman of today," she insists. "I have no apology to that woman when I say, 'You ought to be involved.'"

"I'm not satisfied to get her consciousness level raised about the people in Japan and not be concerned about the people in Birmingham, Ala. There is no logic to having your heart ache for the hungry in Ethiopia and not ache for the hungry poor next door."

The practical application of Christian faith comes when people are willing to say, "Where I am I will do something to try to help," Weatherford says.

As a national Southern Baptist agency, WMU has planned programs and materials that lead women and girls to experience mission action and personal witnessing, she reports. Although WMU was not founded



solely for mission action, the organization's history has shown that personal service always has been a distinct part of what women and girls did through the organization.

Even Annie Armstrong, the first executive director of WMU in 1888, worked with the seamen in the ports of Baltimore, Weatherford notes.

Today, mission action is one of the four primary tasks of WMU.

But tackling that task calls for some attitude changes, for a greater willingness on the part of women to get involved, for a commitment to consistent Christian ministry rather than an I'll-do-it-when-I-have-time commitment, she says.

"There is a mood in our country and in our convention that sees evangelism—the preached word—as

"We have diminished the meaning of the word 'ministry' by equating it with 'preaching' and ignoring the service aspect."

the most important. But if you do only that, you're ignoring Christ's example in his ministry," she stresses. "We have diminished the meaning of



the word 'ministry' by equating it with 'preaching' and ignoring the service aspect.

"Mission action pays tribute to the way we've been taught in the Bible. I don't sense, in Bible study, that Jesus ever preached to the hungry people without feeding them, or that

"We have kept the fires burning in the churches. Without question it is my deepest sense of pride."

he preached to the lame without healing them. Spreading the gospel around the world includes 'giving a cup of cold water.' "

Southern Baptist women really do want to minister to people in need, Weatherford insists. "In my heart, I feel they really do want to do this and will respond, but somehow, we haven't trained them. I think a missing link is that consistent going back to the same people until you see results. It's more than taking them a Thanksgiving basket. It's sticking with them and helping them find work and continuing to minister until they start getting a regular paycheck."

But WMU allows for both types of



involvement—the mission action project that is more of a one-time something-I-can-do-even-with-an-erratic-schedule effort as well as the mission action group that is geared to consistent, continual mission action to the same people until results come about, Weatherford explains.

"My greatest pride and joy is in that mission support. I really do believe deep down that we are the missions denomination we are because of the consistent emphasis WMU has placed on missions and ministry," she says.

"We have kept the fires burning in the churches. Without question, it is my deepest sense of pride. But that pride would be empty if we weren't developing women in the churches who are missionary in their focus—women who are 'missionary women.' "

That's also Weatherford's deepest concern. "We have been ineffective in getting the masses of Southern Baptist women involved in WMU," she laments.

Surveys show that lack of involvement comes not from any feeling of antagonism toward the organization, she says. "We've found they like what we're doing, but they're just not interested, or they don't have the time. Our deepest concern is that their priorities don't include WMU. Their attitude is almost 'I'm too tired to care.' "

"My biggest concern is that we at the national headquarters find a way to reach the already committed



Christian woman and get her to become involved in mission action, mission support and missions education."

If ways can be found to do that, Weatherford will have accomplished some personal and professional goals.

"I would like to be remembered as a woman who did not step over the

"I would like to be remembered as a woman who did not step over the needs in Birmingham on my way out to the whole world."

needs in Birmingham on my way out to the whole wide world. I would be happy if I were remembered as a caring person," she says. "But beyond that, I would like my leadership of WMU to be characterized by leading WMU members in the strong return to mission action and personal service.

"I'd like that more than anything else." ■

Benson is communications group manager for the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union.

Critical Issues Facing Today's Families 1987 Christian Life Commission National Seminar Proceedings and Audio Cassette Order Form

Please send me _____ copies of the PROCEEDINGS at \$3.00 each.

Single cassettes are \$3.50 each, a complete set of 14 tapes is \$42.00.
A cassette binder will be included with purchase of 12 or more cassettes.

CHECK FOR COMPLETE SET _____ (a complete set of 14 tapes for \$42.00)

CHECK INDIVIDUAL TAPES BELOW:

- Cassette 1 _____ Keynote Address, Joel Gregory
- Cassette 2 _____ "The Challenge of AIDS to American Families," Everett Koop
- Cassette 3 _____ "A Layman Talks about Marriage and the Christian Home," Jerry Clower
- Cassette 4 _____ "Government and Public Response to Issues Affecting Our Children," Bill Bradley
- Cassette 5 _____ "Understanding and Dealing with Domestic Violence: A Personal Pilgrimage," Carolyn Koons
- Cassette 6 _____ "The Church as a Context for the Family," Robert N. Bellah
- Cassette 7 _____ "The Visible and Invisible Homeless," Millard Fuller
- Cassette 8 _____ "We Can Do Something about the Mounting Tide of Pornography and Obscenity," Paul McCommon
- Cassette 9 _____ "Teaching and Cultivating Christian Values in the Home," Mahan Siler, Jr.
- Cassette 10 _____ "A Winning Combination—Teenagers, Parents, and the Church," Merton Strommen
- Cassette 11 _____ "Aging: Improved Understanding and Help from a Christian Perspective," Don Blazer
- Cassette 12 _____ "The Game America is Losing: Sports, Values, Family," Kyle Rote, Jr.
- Cassette 13 _____ "Youth at Risk: Teenage Suicide Crisis," John Baucom
- Cassette 14 _____ "Building Families: Consult the Architect," Larry Baker

Total number of cassettes _____ at \$3.50 each.

Bill me \$ _____ / Total amount enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Bill to (if other than above) _____

Address _____ Phone _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

**MAIL ORDER FORM TO
CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION, P.O. BOX 25266, NASHVILLE, TN 37202-5266
OR CALL (615) 244-2495.**



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

P.O. Box 25266
Nashville, TN 37202-5266

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

008137
HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MSN 100

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

00001