

# Light

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMISSION OF THE SOUTHERN

BAPTIST CONVENTION

JULY-SEPTEMBER 1988

## Live Peaceably With All (Romans 12:18)



**Observe Day of Prayer for World Peace  
August 7, 1988**

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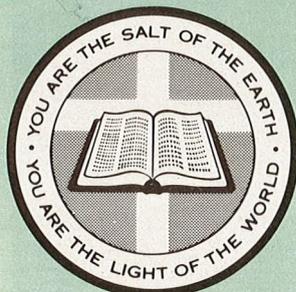
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## Apostle Paul as Model Peacemaker

A little Arab girl in the Baptist school in Beirut asked a Southern Baptist foreign missionary: "Are you a Christian?" Mrs. Leola Ragland replied, "I love Jesus." The little girl sighed with relief: "Oh good. I was afraid maybe you were one of those murdering Christians."

What kind of Christians are we? Are we murdering Christians or peacemaking Christians? Are we supporters of all wars, some wars or no wars? What kind of course do we take in the midst of conflict—conflict within the world and within the faith community?

Down through the centuries, Christians have answered in various ways. Some have supported the holy-war approach; others have practiced pacifism. Still others have placed parameters around the use of force. Today many Christians are unsatisfied with these options. If you are, consider the path Paul took.

Unfortunately, most of us have a hard time seeing Paul as a peacemaker. We think of Paul as a theologian, church planter, missionary and author. But we hardly ever think of Paul as peacemaker.

Easily forgotten is the warfare within the apostolic church. The Hellenists and Hebrews fought over the fair distribution of food (Acts 6:1-7). The circumcision party questioned Peter's association with the uncircumcised (Acts 11:1-3). Some believers spoke "the word to none except Jews," while others spoke only to Greeks (Acts 11:19-20).

In fact, the rift within the church was so intense that the apostles and elders in Jerusalem held a peace conference (Acts 15). The circumcision party extended the "right hand of fellowship" to Paul, but only after extracting a high price for peace: Paul was required to raise funds from among the Gentile Christians for the poor Jewish Christians (Gal. 2:9-10).

Paul said he was "eager to do it" (Gal. 2:10). He asked the Christians in Galatia and Corinth to set aside an offering on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1-4). He commended the churches in Macedonia for their generosity in the midst of "extreme poverty" (2 Cor. 8:2). To the Roman Christians, he wrote that his mission trip to Spain had to be postponed in order that he might deliver his collection to Jerusalem (Rom. 15:22-29). He also asked them to pray for his peace mission (Rom. 15:30-33).

Additionally, Paul outlined initiatives which made for peace. Showing honor, practicing hospitality, weeping with the suffering, keeping pride in check, associating with the poor, setting aside vengeance and feeding the enemy, were just a few practical suggestions (Rom. 12:9-21). Refusing to judge others, abstaining from whatever causes another to stumble and mutual upbuilding were other recommendations (Rom. 14:1-23).

Undergirding his peacemaking strategy was his genuine belief in the transforming power of Jesus Christ over sin. Paul believed that "all men, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin" (Rom. 3:9), yet he also contended that "while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Rom. 5:10). God through Christ had "broken down the dividing wall of hostility" (Eph. 2:14). And now, anyone in Christ was "a new creation" (2 Cor. 5:17), members of a new community in which was "neither Jew nor Greek" (Gal. 3:28). Christians were free "to walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4), part of which meant pursuing "the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:16-21).

Paul was a peacemaker. He sought to restore peace within the church that earlier he had sought to destroy. Outside the church, the Apostle from Tarsus challenged *Pax Romana*, the peace of force, with *Pax Christi*, the peace of proactive love.

In a world at war and a convention in conflict, Southern Baptists would do well to revisit Paul's theology and ethics. He offers us a model for why we ought to be and how we ought to be makers of peace. As new creatures in Christ, we are ministers of reconciliation who take the transforming initiatives to make peace before conflict erupts and before existing conflict consumes everything.

What kind of Christians will we be on the road ahead?

Robert M. Parham

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# ABORTION AND PASTORAL CARE

By Daniel Bagby

There is a definite need to focus on particular issues with which I think the ministry and the caring of the Christian church needs to be involved. I want to focus the concerns of pastoral care on the individual who has had an abortion. What are some of the experiences we need to address when we deal with the practical aspects of people who have undergone an abortion?

## Shock and Numbness

Most people who suffer through an abortion, whether it is spontaneous or induced, somehow do not anticipate the shock and numbness or other effects that come as grief experiences to the individual who has sustained the loss. Part of the church's teaching role is to help individuals understand this kind of impact.

Shock and numbness mean that very often people are not in touch with their feelings. That is why they frequently make very poor decisions. Part of the caring community's love is to help the individual understand which decisions need to be made and which do not need to be made. That is a very important contribution of the community of faith because things are so out of perspective. The individual is not only out of touch with her feelings but with the reality of the choices she is making and the impact of her decision.

The shock and numbness also mean that, more than in other grief situations, delayed grief is at hand. The feelings of many people in other grief experiences

do not parallel those of a female who had an abortion. Those feelings are immediate. The female after an abortion has shoved feelings out of the way. The experience is one of delayed distress.

## Physical Distress and Depression

The physical distress and the depression which soon follow the period of numbness also need to be dealt with by a minister or a caring community. As a pastor who deals with people in a hospital or who deals with people after surgery, I am constantly ministering to persons who deny some of the after-effects of surgery. We are dealing with a traumatized body. We are dealing with a traumatized individual, and we begin with physical symptoms which have emotional and spiritual ramifications.

Often the person does not understand the kind of physical distress she is facing. There is great privacy to what the person experiences and wishes. There is physical withdrawal from the church community. This withdrawal relates to guilt and shame. But along with it there is the unpredictability of physical circumstances. The person is not absent just because of fear of the community. She also has a very unpredictable physical response and is not quite sure how things will go. She needs to understand that in her physical pain she is also cared for by the body of Christ. She needs interpreted to her the trauma a body experiences when surgery takes place in an induced abortion.

Depression comes with this. She withdraws from community at a time when she most needs care and support. She now faces almost exclusively her own thoughts. Most feelings of depression come from what we say to ourselves. When she withdraws, she focuses on her self-worth, on mistakes she has made. She wonders with whom she can share feelings she has kept private. An abortion is so very private and is fraught with so many emotional overtones and so many negative emotional responses.

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***If the female has assumed, as some have after abortion, that she will find relief, she finds that it is a very temporary feeling and is almost immediately followed by a deep depression.***

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Caring for a person and securing friends who will be a support to her, without breaking confidentiality, is a major ministry for the church. That part of the church community which is already aware of her decision and its repercussions can be of most help. We need to be alert to the fact that confidentiality needs to be maintained. But, at the same time, a small handful of people who are trusted can mean a lot to her.

(continued on page 4)

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## Abortion . . .

continued from page 3

People who have undergone that kind of experience and who have volunteered to help can, in a very private and caring way, be the kinds of friends this female most accepts and most appreciates. The bond with someone who has been through a similar experience will give hope that one can survive. As a pastor, I need to keep reminding myself that I am always a secondhand person speaking of what is going on in this person's life. It would be very arrogant of me to suggest that I understand how she feels, for I cannot understand that completely.

Depression needs to be understood because people expect to move quickly beyond these feelings. If the female has assumed, as some have after abortion, that she will feel relief, she finds that it is a very temporary feeling and is almost immediately followed by a deep depression. She oscillates between relief and

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***Feeling that God has not adequately punished them, they feel the need to make some decisions to punish themselves appropriately.***

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depression. She may feel mostly relief for the first few weeks after the abortion, and this fact gives her the misperception that she will begin to feel better. But heavy depression usually follows after periods of relief.

To be aware of that and to interpret to an individual that this will occur often relieves the individual of anxiety in understanding herself. Also, it can be helpful if she becomes potentially suicidal. That is when the caring fellowship of the church can help again. Having assumed that she will first feel relief, she also expects an uninterrupted increase in that relief. The deeper depression and the potentially suicidal feelings come when she is most isolated, sometimes even months after the event.

### Guilt and Shame

Guilt and shame need to be dealt with. A person, emotionally and even spiritually, may have thought through and understood for herself the implications of having an abortion. But there is unfinished business which continues for the next few months. It is the kind of trauma that raises theological questions and is one of the favorite nominees for the role of unforgivable sin. I have heard people wondering if they can be forgiven for having an abortion. Guilt is enormously powerful.

Shame is more characteristically designated as a psychological or emotional feeling. Shame has to do with being found out, being uncovered, being known, and feeling inferior. Dealing with guilt and shame, both theologically and psychologically, is part of the caring and redemptive ministry of the church.

With shame and guilt, low self-esteem is a major issue. As I have talked with people who have had abortions, I find they have a very fragile sense of self-worth. The experience of abortion has triggered their limited self-esteem. I am thinking now of two particular persons who years later are still dealing with self-perceptions which are very low. They need both reassurance and constant care from a congregation that calls them to remember all that God intended them to feel and understand about themselves because they lose sight of this vision.

I have sat for periods of time with people who need to talk about what this child would have looked like and, depending on the progression of the pregnancy and the extent of it, whether it would have been a boy or a girl. In some cases they had even named the child.

We may go through our life and live redemptively, but if we are involved in one major sinful event, it tends to become universalized. It seems to become the sum total of our being. That is a major issue in pastoral care because human beings tend to be very selective. That may come out of a deep sense of guilt occasioned by our awareness of sin. Low self-esteem is a major problem for people who have nightmares and bad dreams, who in day-to-day experiences see babies and children and are

reminded by stabbing memories of having lost a child. These experiences are powerful when the woman considers having another child.

### Extended Anger

Extended anger is another issue in pastoral care. Anger at one's self for hav-

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***. . . forgiveness deals with fallibility and sin and the struggle and complexity of life and decisions that were made.***

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ing become involved in a circumstance is mingled with anger for having made the decision to have an abortion. Anger is then directed to family or community. There is deep anger that sometimes is diffused. There's really no way to avoid it. It will simply need to take its course. It is extended because of the delay and denial the individual undergoes in regard to her own feelings. Usually, this means that anger is spread out over a long period of time. That, of course, is aggravated by the fact that the church as a community has never really known very much about what to do with anger anyway.

Part of the redemptive role of the church is to help a person who has had an abortion to deal with her anger. Some people compound the anger. Already feeling badly about themselves, they will punish themselves by making decisions which are very short-term. They may decide not to have children again. Or they may decide they are not supposed to feel good about themselves ever again.

A different way of saying this is that people make decisions for God. Feeling that God has not adequately punished them, they feel the need to make some decisions to punish themselves appropriately.

Extended anger needs to be dealt with so it does not multiply the pain and the anguish of the individual. Already feeling anger over a decision, she begins to anticipate how she will punitively deal

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with herself in the future. As I understand the Bible, one's sin does not need to be multiplied by another sin.

## Forgiveness

Forgiveness needs to be the release that calls one to a redemptive way of life. To be able to forgive self for the decision one has made is a constant reminder that God can forgive all sin.

The Bible shows us the chinks in our armor and the clay in our feet. Scripture underscores for the woman who has had an abortion that she is part of a loving community of faith, forgiven and called to walk again in newness of life. That kind of forgiveness is not premature or quick. But forgiveness deals with fallibility and sin and the struggle and complexity of life and decisions that were made.

I have yet to meet someone who got pregnant in order that they might have an abortion. That is not the way it starts. The intention, sometimes, was shortsighted. Understanding and ignorance, of course, are so much a part of this experience. But to deal with the reality of forgiveness is to deal with the redemption that God intended. This is something of which we need to be reminded.

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***... the experience of coming to terms with the psychological consequences of an abortion and its aftereffects by confession and forgiveness is prelude to any potential power of living freely.***

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## Rituals

Religious rituals can be most significant in the redemptive and healing process of those who face the consequences of abortion. I do not use the word "ritual" in an empty or formal manner. Rather, a ritual is an act, a practice, a step of faith which helps pull the person beyond the inner shell of her feelings.

What are some of the religious rituals that can be useful?

The Scripture read carefully can be a guide to those who hurt. It can focus thoughts and emotions on the presence and love of God.

The experience of prayer, which deals with the reality of sin and the reality of forgiveness, can be very helpful in making God real and in overcoming personal isolation and loneliness.

I am impressed with the importance of the sanctuary as a building and as a holy place. I have often entered our own sanctuary, in the quietness of a moment that has been prearranged, with someone who is struggling, so we can sit and kneel together, confess, hear, share moments of God's forgiveness, and sing a hymn of redemptive love. Then we quietly leave in an atmosphere in which God's presence is felt.

Another ritual I recommend I call a rite of passage. Even people who do not have strong Christian backgrounds still find it very significant. I offer it as an option, and nine out of ten people take it. It gives a concrete and tangible way of feeling they have dealt with the Creator in the midst of the issue of human life and its creation. I think it is a ritual which provides opportunity for confession, for forgiveness, and for renewal of life. It is an issue of resurrection.

For one who has experienced a miscarriage, after a period of several months thoughts often turn to the possibility of having a child. If the person has undergone an abortion in previous years, this may be the first time I hear about it as a pastor. She may now be married and may have come to talk about feelings that have emerged that she did not know were there. So I will hear for the first time about something that happened six, seven, ten years ago. It is at this point that she begins to deal with the opportunity that God provides in a life hereafter which we call resurrection but which is also a present reality for us here and now today.

For some people, the experience of coming to terms with the psychological consequences of an abortion and its aftereffects by confession and forgiveness is prelude to any potential power of living freely. Living in the power of the

resurrection and forgiveness may open her to the fullness of giving birth and of becoming a mother again.

That is a very individualized issue. It is part of the theological conversation which is very real to human beings. Can she also "rise again" in this life? This is part of the question which we can help her decide. The body of Christ needs to be very sensitive to people in these circumstances. But a community can be part of the experience of sharing the hope of resurrection for one who has had an abortion and seen dreams and her sense of who she is die.

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***To give birth to a new sense of identity and image is part of the process whereby the church becomes a redemptive instrument of God's work.***

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Part of what is dying is the self-concept people have carried sometimes for 20 and 30 years. They have been modified. They are no longer who they thought they were. To give birth to a new sense of identity and image is part of the process whereby the church becomes a redemptive instrument of God's work.

That is part of what I speak of as resurrection. They can rise from their knees from confession and walk in newness of life. ■

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*Bagby is pastor of Seventh and James Baptist Church, Waco, Texas. This article is adapted from a presentation at the Christian Life Commission Consultation on the Psychological Implications of Abortion and the Need for Pastoral Ministry at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Missouri, April 30, 1988. He served as chaplain at a juvenile detention center for four years, at a mental hospital for two years and at a women's prison for four years. Three of his pastorates have been around a university community.*

# 'MINORS' LEGISLATION PASSES

## Citizens Were the Key

By John Yeats

On May 9, 1988, Kansas Governor Mike Hayden signed into law a statute protecting minors (under 18) from the open display and sale of pornographic materials. The passage of this law is a major victory for the families in Kansas and other states which pass similar legislation.

The new law is a clear illustration of what can happen when a few people work hard, pray diligently, write positive letters, make strategic phone calls and participate in the legislative process. Sometimes Christians have an inappropriate, fatalistic attitude about the work of elected officials. The result is that too often Baptists and others become reactionary and defensive and are labeled as single-sin-issue groups.

The entire process for passage of the "Harmful to Minors" legislation began in the early 1980s with several Southern Baptist pastors and other Christian leaders meeting with elected officials in Wichita. Their purpose was to develop a constitutionally viable city ordinance to "clean up" the family marketplace. The result was a municipal ordinance that the 10th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld as constitutional. This ordinance allows for tighter definitions of obscenity and pornography for minors than for adults. When the ordinance was enacted, groups like the ACLU and the magazine distributors attempted to block its effect through the courts.

As soon as the "Wichita Ordinance" was ruled constitutional, other groups in the state encouraged their city governments to establish the same or similar ordinances to protect the family marketplace. The group in Topeka, the state

capital of Kansas, met with some stonewalling by the City Council. Instead of investing the energy in a single municipality, the group worked on a legislative bill to make the concepts of the "Wichita Ordinance" operational statewide.

The legislation was introduced in January of 1986. It followed the normal channels and challenges but passed the House by a two-thirds vote even though only a simple majority was necessary. Some of the House leaders expressed the opinion that it would never clear the Senate's Judiciary Committee.

When the bill was introduced in the Senate, it was referred to the Judiciary Committee. In times past bills relating to social issues were simply not dealt with. The chairman would sit on the bill until the "Sunset Law" took effect. The "Sunset Law" is a provision that allows a bill to live only two years in the Kansas Legislature. After the second year it dies, and you must start all over with the next session.

Rather than working directly with the chairman, supporters worked diligently with the remainder of the Senate Committee. Through the leadership of the vice-chairman, a committee hearing was granted.

At the hearings there were no "soapbox" sermons. The citizens lined up the District Attorney from each of the three most populous counties to support the bill and to respond to questions asked by the Senators. Several Christians spoke favorably, including a housewife, an attorney, a real estate broker, an industrial representative and two pastors who had experience in legislative affairs.

When the sole lobbying voice of the pornography industry spoke, most of his

arguments had been previously countered by prior testimony.

The bill passed Committee and went to the full Senate. A few amendments were added (i.e., lower the age of a minor, loopholes to protect store proprietors who unknowingly sold or displayed the material). When the Senate voted, once again an overwhelming majority was in favor of protecting children, one of our nation's most vulnerable group of citizens. Since the bill was amended, it had to go to a Conference Committee. This is a small, select group of legislators, three from the House and three from the Senate. Two of the senators were attorneys who didn't have a history of supporting social legislation.

The Committee did not finish its work during the regular session, and the "Harmful to Minors" bill seemed destined to die. It had come so far only to be silenced by the political maneuvering of the opposition.

A call for prayer and phone calls was made throughout our State's Southern Baptist ranks. There is no way of knowing who called their elected officials. There is no way to report who or how many people fell on their faces and called on the Lord in behalf of our children. But somebody did.

When everything seemed lost, the Conference Committee met, acted and sent their report to each legislative body during the "wrap-up" session. When the votes were tallied the Senate was unanimous. And in the House only five representatives cast negative votes. One of the greatest benefits of the passage of "Harmful to Minors" is to show how perseverance and positive dialogue by a handful of people can make a substantial impact on the lives of all the citizens of our states. The flip side of that is true also. A few of those who oppose our Lord Jesus and his church can enact subtle laws and ordinances to substantially affect our local churches and their ministries in the communities.

These are days to rejoice, but days to be alert.

1 Corinthians 16:13-14. ■

*Yeats is Senior Pastor of the Shawnee Heights Baptist Church, Topeka, Kansas.*

# MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY RACES AHEAD OF ETHICS

By Robert Parham

Medical technology has moved into a new frontier, moving beyond the world of research and into a world without firmly fixed and widely accepted ethical parameters.

In January, the *New England Journal of Medicine* reported that doctors in Mexico had successfully transplanted human tissue from a spontaneous abortion (miscarriage) into the brains of two patients suffering from Parkinson's disease, a disease which destroys part of the brain causing loss of muscle control. Both patients experienced significant relief from symptoms of the disease.

The pioneering efforts in Mexico and elsewhere have raised hopes that the tissue from spontaneous abortions can be used to cure neurological disorders and other diseases, since the tissue is less often rejected and regenerates faster than adult tissue.

The report of the Mexican operation was followed by news of women who wished to become pregnant, have an abortion and harvest the human cells for transplants in relatives or themselves. A California woman wanted to follow such a course to help her father who has Alzheimer's disease. A Minnesota woman wished to follow the same path, but hoped to use the cells to cure her own diabetes.

Also in the news were reports of the work of the Loma Linda medical center with anencephalic infants—those born with a genetic birth defect which leaves a baby without most of its brain. A majority of anencephalic children are stillborn, and others die within a week. No anencephalics survive without life-support systems, and many are aborted.

The first Loma Linda case revolved around the Winner family. They wanted to carry their anencephalic child to term so that its organs could benefit other newborns. The plans failed, however, because their child was stillborn and organs had deteriorated beyond use.

The second Loma Linda case concerned the successful transplant of a heart into a newborn from Baby Gabriel, who was anencephalic but whose organs had not deteriorated. After the successful operation was reported, the hospital was deluged with calls from parents with unborn anencephalic children who wanted to donate the organs of their infants to help other children live.

Whether the issue involves the use of tissue after a spontaneous abortion or the use of organs donated by the parents of anencephalic newborns, medical technology has raced ahead of ethics. Technological advances have spawned a host of good intentions. People want to do whatever they can to help others.

People want to turn their own tragedies into something good.

The danger is that once again technology will determine society's ethics, rather than for ethics to shape technology. The ability to accomplish certain objectives makes neither the method (transplants) nor the goal (to help ill persons) morally right.

"The use of fetuses as organ and tissue donors is a ticking time bomb of bioethics," warns ethicist Arthur Caplan.

If he is right, then Southern Baptists and other Christians should take the leadership in developing ethical guidelines for these medical issues.

Consider these questions:

- Should we create human life and then terminate it to preserve human life? Should women become pregnant, have an abortion and use the tissue to aid an ill relative or themselves?

- Should we end human life simply because death is near? Should an anencephalic infant be denied life simply because all anencephalic newborns are terminally ill? If so, where do we draw the line with other terminally ill persons?

- Should we treat women as objects to produce tissue and/or organs for use by others? Should the sheer number of people with Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and other illnesses justify the commercialization of the womb?

Drawing from the Bible, we can identify certain moral guidelines which enable us to speak to these issues. First, human life is sacred. It is a divine gift which must be viewed with reverence. It must never be viewed as an object to use or to abuse. Second, human beings have been given the responsibility to care for all of creation. Such care requires that we protect and preserve human life. Third, we should not end human life to harvest cells or organs in order to sustain another human life. Fourth, we must never let technology become a golden calf. Technology should be the servant, not the master of ethics. ■

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*Parham is the Interim Executive Director of the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention.*

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# DON'T MISS THE ANNIVERSARY

Ten years ago Southern Baptists opened a new world of caring and helping and responding. World Hunger Day was born on the denominational calendar after hours, even days, of agonizing study and planning. Leaders felt that Southern Baptists had to have a way to respond to the needs of people in the world. Individuals and churches needed a channel they trusted, a channel that could deliver the resources to the needs.

Sixty-four million dollars is a lot of money. Its results are great. Through the

Home Mission Board money has flowed from individuals to individuals. The accounting is accurate. The results are proven.

Southern Baptists in the next ten years will be even more active in observing World Hunger Day and giving hunger gifts through our tested mission channels.

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Carolyn Weatherford, Executive Director  
Woman's Missionary Union  
Southern Baptist Convention  
Birmingham, Alabama

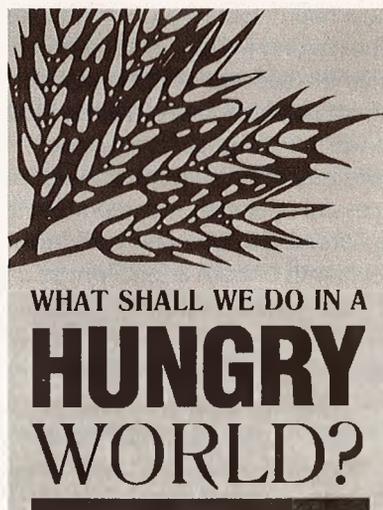


Carolyn Weatherford

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## NEW RESOURCES For World Hunger Day

The 45-minute production entitled "What Shall We Do in a Hungry World?" focuses on how Southern Baptists are responding to domestic and overseas hunger. Hunger continues to ravage the lives of millions of people. Unfortunately, Southern Baptist hunger gifts have declined from a high of \$11.8 million in 1985 to \$8.9 million in 1987. Copies of the videotape have been sent to directors of associational missions, state convention ethics workers, state convention WMU and Brotherhood directors. Copies of the production can also be rented or purchased from the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission.

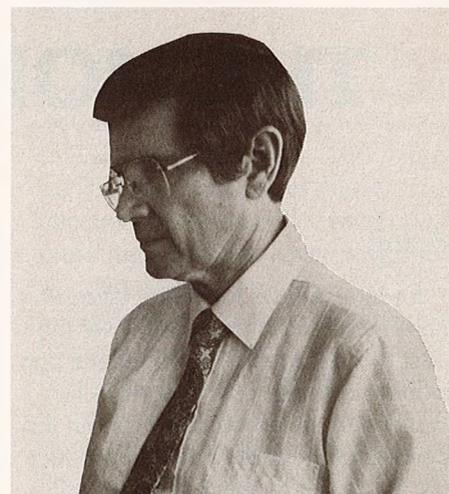


*What Shall We Do in a Hungry World?* By Robert Parham (Birmingham, Alabama: New Hope, 1988, \$4.95). While Southern Baptists have a heritage of caring for the hungry, the 1970s brought a new commitment, fueled by TV pictures of starving infants with swollen stomachs and matchstick arms and legs. Parham gives the biblical and moral basis for this commitment, and suggestions for combating hunger both in the United States and abroad. Parham directs hunger concerns for the Southern Baptist Christian Life Commission. (A Round Table Book Club selection for October.)

# OCTOBER 9 MARKS TENTH WORLD HUNGER DAY

Have you ever been involved in a meeting that lasted until 2:00 p.m.? Remember the vague rumblings in your stomach? You probably heard at least one person say, "Let's get some lunch. I'm starving." Thank God, this is the closest most of us come to hunger. True hunger is a way of life—an existence where our most urgent daily chore is finding food. Hunger is searching a trash dumpster for your child's breakfast. Hunger is standing for hours in the soup line of a downtown mission. Hunger is dividing three eggs five ways and hearing your child beg for just a little more food. Hunger is hopelessness, apathy and even death. And hunger is a reality in our own land.

From our abundance Southern Baptists are required to give to those in need (Luke 12:48). And for those of us who give, a host of hunger problems vie for our money. One program is unique. The Southern Baptist hunger ministry uses 100 percent of our gifts to feed the hungry. No hunger relief funds are ever used for administration or promotion. To me, the choices are clear: I am compelled to give, and the most effective avenue for my giving is the Southern Baptist hunger ministry.



Larry L. Lewis

Larry L. Lewis, President  
Home Mission Board  
Southern Baptist Convention  
Atlanta, Georgia

## World Hunger Resources Order Form 1988 Releases

Quantity	Resource	Unit Price	Total
	Film: "What Shall We Do in a Hungry World?"—16mm, 44 min. Purchase ____ \$275 or Rental ____ \$25 Show Date: _____		
	Videotape: "What Shall We Do in a Hungry World?"—1/2" VHS, 46 min. Purchase ____ \$ 25 or Rental ____ \$10 Show Date: _____		
	Book: "What Shall We Do in a Hungry World?" by Robert M. Parham \$4.95 per copy.		
Total (for prepaid orders only)			

Pay Cash and Save Delivery Costs

\_\_\_\_\_ Payment enclosed (no charge for postage)

\_\_\_\_\_ Bill to address below (actual postage charge will be added to bill)

Ship to \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person placing order \_\_\_\_\_

Mail This Order Form To:

The Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention  
P.O. Box 25266, Nashville, TN 37202-5266  
FOR FASTER SERVICE CALL: ORDER DEPARTMENT (615) 244-2495

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# THE MORAL SCENE

## Aging

Federal outlays for senior citizens have increased dramatically over the past two decades. In 1965 federal pensions and health care programs for senior citizens amounted to about 4.5 percent of the gross national product (GNP). By 1985, these outlays had doubled to about 9 percent of the gross national product. (*The Washington Post*, 3/4/88, p. A23. Source: Congressional Budget Office.)

## Alcohol/Drugs

A recent Gallup survey indicated that 28 percent of those companies with over 5,000 employees are using drug tests to screen job applicants. About 10 percent of firms with 500 to 1,500 employees are presently testing prospective employees. But growth in the number of firms testing applicants for drugs is expected. Almost 50 percent of the firms with testing programs initiated them in the past year. Within five years, drug testing is expected to be a \$1 billion industry. (*The Washington Post*, 6/10/88, A18.)

America's drug problem has become a hot political item as the 1988 elections near. Sixteen percent of respondents in a *CBS News/New York Times* poll identified drugs as the nation's number one problem, double those selecting the federal deficit and unemployment for the top spot.

One thing is certain. Drug traffic is a lucrative business. Organized crime

grosses an estimated \$20 billion annually from the sale of cocaine and marijuana alone. About \$2 billion in revenue is generated for Latin American supply sources.

In countering this high-dollar business, all levels of government—federal, state, local—spend about \$8 billion annually on enforcement. Only about \$500 million is spent on education and rehabilitation.

Alcohol and other drugs exact an enormous cost in lost productivity. A 1983 estimate put the lost productivity related to alcohol at \$65 billion and for other drugs at about \$33 billion. (*Time*, 5/30/88, pp. 12-19.)

## Economics

Change continues to be the order of the day for America's labor force. America's workers increasingly are working in the service sector of our society as opposed to manufacturing. In 1970, 47 million workers were employed in the service sector. In 1987, the number was 78 million and by 2000 the number will be almost 97 million. The growth has occurred primarily in jobs which require higher levels of education, skill and training than those jobs disappearing.

Income for families headed by younger males has declined (when adjusted for inflation) since the early 1970s. Income for a family with children headed by someone under age 25 had declined 43 percent between 1973 and 1986. For families with children and a family head between age 25 and 34, the decline has been seven percent.

These shifts in economic realities are also seen in the decline in the median wage of full-time male workers. The median wage increased from about \$17,000 in 1955 to about \$28,000 in 1973. But this figure declined to about \$25,000 in 1986. (*The Washington Post*, 6/2/88, pp. 1, 18-19. Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of the Census.)

The military turmoil in Nicaragua is consistent with what is happening to that country's economy. Under the Sandinista rule, Nicaragua's foreign debt has risen from \$1.6 billion to \$7 billion, real wages have fallen by 90 percent and inflation for 1987 was an astonishing 1800 percent. (*Time*, 2/29/88, p. 55.)

Corporate profits for 1988 are projected to be near an all-time high. Forecasters predict that 1988 earnings for 500 of the nation's leading companies will be 30 percent higher than last year. (*USA Today*, 6/16/88, p. 3B.)

## Environment

The ozone depletion of the atmosphere appears to be occurring at a rate greater than previously feared. Ozone is an atmospheric gas that blocks harmful ultraviolet rays that cause skin cancer. A decrease of one percent in the ozone level is estimated to cause an increase of 500,000 cases of skin cancer. Since 1969, the ozone level in the atmosphere above the Northern United States has declined by three percent. A halt in the use of the chemicals causing the decline would not replenish the ozone level in the atmosphere. Natural processes would require several centuries to do that. (*U.S. News & World Report*, 3/28/88, p. 10.)

"The Greenhouse Effect" is moving from technical journals into our newspapers as concern for change in climatic conditions grows. The term describes a warming effect of earth's temperature which will result from build-ups of nitrous oxide, methane, and chlorofluorocarbons in the atmosphere. These gases trap incoming sunlight, which raises the temperature of the earth's atmosphere. If present levels

continue, the world's temperature would increase about one-half a degree per decade. This would have its greatest impact in Africa, where semi-arid regions would become hotter, and in tropical Asia, where higher sea levels would increase the risk of flooding. Thus the twin threats of flood and famine would intensify their assault on the human inhabitants of such regions. (*The Washington Post*, 6/7/88, p. A10.)

## Family

Child sexual abuse appears to have increased dramatically over the past decade. Substantiated cases of sexual child abuse have increased approximately 2000 percent in nine years. The number of cases rose from 6,000 in 1976 to 113,000 in 1985. Although there is always uncertainty as to whether an increase in statistics indicates a growth in actual numbers or only in reporting, the statistics are so dramatic they almost certainly indicate a horrible growth in an assault on America's children. Some experts estimate that one female child in five has been sexually abused. (*U.S. News & World Report*, 6/13/88, pp. 22-23)

## Gambling

Las Vegas bills itself as the number one resort city in the world. In 1987 16.2 million persons visited the city, continuing a trend of growth of one million visitors annually. Each visitor stays about four days and spends \$600. Hotel occupancy rates average 83 percent. These figures justify to the industry the expansion which is occurring. Billions of dollars will be spent to add perhaps 25,000 more rooms as well as gambling, convention and sports facilities. (*U.S. News & World Report*, 5/16/88, p. 46)

## Pornography

The last of the company-owned "Bunny" clubs has been closed. It lost its casino license and is out of the gambling business. But the Playboy Corporation is bouncing back. A new strategy of diversification is complementing a streamlined continuation of the sex empire

established by Hugh Hefner. Hefner's daughter Christie is now at the head of the empire.

In 1987 Playboy Corporation had revenues of \$162 million, with \$98 million of that coming from the *Playboy* magazine. Paid circulation last year was 3.6 million, indicating that it has not been devastated by the Attorney General's Commission on Southland Corporation. Although its cable channel is not holding subscribers well, the burst of popularity of VCRs offers promise for its production of home videos.

In 1987 Playboy turned a profit of \$11 million. With its entry into ventures other than sexual entertainment, the company hopes to diversify its revenues. One of the first efforts at diversification was the purchase of Sarah Coventry jewelry. (*Albuquerque Journal*, 5/15/88, p. D8).

## Sex

In 1987 the U.S. had the most dramatic increase in the rate of syphilis infection than at any time since 1950. The Centers for Disease Control reported 35,398 cases of early-stage, contagious syphilis in 1987, an increase of 30 percent from the previous year.

The increase occurred primarily among women and heterosexual men. California, Florida and New York accounted for 56 percent of the cases. Syphilis continued to decrease among homosexual men, apparently because of changed behavior resulting from the AIDS epidemic. (*The Washington Post*, 1/19/88, p. A14)

A survey conducted of 1,700 Rhode Island students in grades 6 through 9 found that one-fourth of the boys and one-sixth of the girls said a man has the right to have intercourse with a woman without her consent if he has spent money on her. (*Las Vegas Sun*, 5/2/88, p. 3-A)

## Television

Prime-time television viewing continued its decline in 1987-1988. Prime-time network ratings fell nine percent. The number of households watching networks during prime-time viewing

declined to 43.3 percent, down from 47.8 percent a year before. NBC's viewer numbers dropped 10 percent, ABC's dropped three percent, and CBS's dropped 15 percent.

## Tobacco

The Reagan Administration has come under fire for its efforts to increase exports of American tobacco products to developing countries. Both American and international health experts have attacked this trade policy which involves pressures related to advertising and warning labels.

Aggressive American marketing of tobacco is one reason cigarette smoking is increasing faster than the population in developing countries. Governments in Hong Kong, Taiwan and South Korea have been pressured to lift or modify bans on television and print advertising of cigarettes. This has opened the door for American and British companies to promote brands with advertising designed to appeal to women and teenagers, two groups with low smoking rates.

Among the most offensive practices is the omission of warning labels which are required for domestic sales. Such labels are not required for cigarettes which are exported. (*The Washington Post*, 2/19/88, p. A6)

The tobacco industry has to be concerned about several other developments. After 30 years and perhaps 300 lawsuits, the tobacco industry has lost an injury suit resulting from death by lung cancer. The \$400,000 in damages appears small in comparison to the \$3 million spent by the plaintiff's law firm. But apparently the research has been done to lay the foundation for future such efforts. (*U.S. News & World Report*, 6/27/88, p. 11)

Equally bad for the industry was the report of Surgeon General Koop which detailed the evidence supporting his medical labeling of tobacco as addictive. Koop noted that smoking kills 350,000 people a year, almost three times as many as alcohol and far more than the 6,000 killed by cocaine and opiates such as heroin. (*Time*, 5/30/88, p. 56) ■

# AIDS UPDATE

## AIDS Continues to Spread in U.S. Population

AIDS cases in the United States are being reported at the rate of one new case every 14 minutes. At this rate, the total number of AIDS cases will reach 365,000 by 1992, according to Dr. James Curran, director of the AIDS program at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

Although the feared explosion has not occurred, an increasing number of people are contracting AIDS through heterosexual contact. It is not yet clear whether the numerical spread of AIDS is leveling off or still growing. (*The Washington Post*, 6/14/88, p. A14)

## WHO Projects 50 Million Infected by 1990

The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated in 1986 that 5 to 10 million people worldwide were infected with the virus causing AIDS (HIV). By 1990, that number will have increased dramatically so that between 50 million and 100 million persons worldwide will be infected. If 30 percent of those (probably an optimistically low estimate) develop AIDS within five years, 15 to 30 million persons will die of the disease by 1995.

To put the AIDS epidemic in perspective, it can be compared with other major health plagues and causes of death:

- **Bubonic plague** killed between 17 and 28 million people (one-third to

one-half of Europe's population) between 1347 and 1350.

- **Influenza** killed 22 million worldwide in 1917-18.
- **Polio** killed 22,000 Americans (of the 400,000 infected) between 1943 and 1956.
- **Tuberculosis** kills 500,000 persons worldwide annually.
- The **Ethiopian famine** killed 1 million persons during 1984-85. (*Worldwatch*, Jan./Feb. 1988, pp. 19-27)

## New York, California Lead Nation in AIDS Cases

New York City (13,425), San Francisco (5,181), and Los Angeles (4,558) were the leading metropolitan areas in numbers of reported AIDS cases as of April, 1988. These three cities accounted for almost one-half of the diagnosed cases of AIDS. Houston (1,967), the District of Columbia (1,762), Newark (1,680), Miami (1,516), Chicago (1,416), and Dallas (1,220) are the leading metropolitan areas. (*The Washington Post*, 4/7/88, p. A3)

## President Proposes \$1.9 Billion for AIDS Research, Education

President Reagan's proposed fiscal 1989 budget includes almost \$1.9 billion for research and education related to AIDS. \$588 million was proposed for the National Institutes of Health to conduct

biomedical research. Another \$1.3 billion was proposed for the Public Health Service for behavioral research, epidemiology and AIDS education. (*The Washington Post*, 6/7/88, p. A21)

## Porno Movie Star Dies of AIDS

John Holmes, 43-year-old star of more than 1,000 hard-core films, apparently has died of AIDS. The porn world hero of two decades had bragged of having sex with more than 14,000 women. Holmes had been linked with four murders which occurred in California in 1981.

No official confirmation of the rumors was given by the industry, where his illness was described as colon cancer. (*The CDL Reporter*, May/June 1988, p. 5)

## Surgeon General's Report on AIDS Still Draws Comment

Surgeon General C. Everett Koop issued his report on AIDS well over a year ago, but it continues to invite comment. A recent article in *Focus on the Family Citizen* illustrates the very real tension associated with his task of informing the American public—all of us—about the threat of AIDS.

The article notes the twofold approach which has characterized Koop's treatment of AIDS. His first emphasis has constantly been on sexual abstinence prior to marriage and faithful monogamy within marriage. His alternative emphasis, for those who do not practice abstinence and faithful monogamy, has been to recommend the use of condoms as the best way of minimizing the likelihood of contracting AIDS. Koop has been careful to say that condoms may minimize the danger, but not eliminate it.

The article commends the report for doing a credible job of presenting medical and scientific information but criticizes it for including as resources some organizations which are gay organizations with experience in dealing with

AIDS. Koop, in responding to this criticism, noted his concern to provide resources which would include different options for the different groups of American society. (*Focus on the Family Citizen*, May 1988, pp. 10-11. Note: The Christian Life Commission reprinted the Surgeon General's Report and omitted these organizations.)

## Sider Sets Forth Evangelical Perspective on AIDS

Ron Sider continues to be a prolific and expansive voice within the evangelical community. One of his better offerings is a short treatment of AIDS from an evangelical perspective.

While rejecting the theological view that AIDS was created as a special punishment for homosexuals, Sider notes that empirical data supports the factual claim that much of the transmission of AIDS occurs homosexually. He points to studies indicating many AIDS patients reporting having as many as 1,000 sexual partners during their life, and one-third of male homosexuals having as many as 50 to 70 sexual partners annually.

Sider also reflects the finest instinct of Christian ethics by maintaining the tension between rejection of the sin of homosexuality and acceptance of and ministry to the sinner suffering from AIDS. (*The Christian Century*, 1/6-13/88, pp. 11-14)

## AIDS Threat to America's Children Growing

AIDS is a threat to a growing number of America's children. The House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families recently released a report which describes this threat. The following highlights illustrate the gravity of the threat:

- The number of children with AIDS increased 60 percent (from 420 to 691) between January and November of 1987.
- Over 20,000 women, most of them of childbearing age, are expected

to have AIDS by 1991. In New York City, about 3 percent of women of reproductive age (approximately 50,000) are infected with the AIDS virus (HIV).

- Hospital care for infants born with AIDS can cost more than \$200,000 per year per child.
- By age 20, 70 percent of girls and 80 percent of boys have engaged in sexual intercourse at least once. Sexually active teens have the highest rate of sexually transmitted diseases among heterosexuals of all age groups.
- Only 15 percent of sexually active youth surveyed reported changing their sexual behavior to prevent contracting AIDS. (*A Generation in Jeopardy: Children and AIDS*. A Report of the House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families. 100th Congress, 2nd Session. Report 100-588. April 27, 1988.)

## AIDS Affects Women More Adversely Than Men

Research from New York, Florida and California indicates women with AIDS are sicker and die more quickly than men who have AIDS. In one study, women survived approximately 6.6 months after diagnosis, while men survived 12 to 14 months after diagnosis. Women likewise had several opportunistic infections associated with AIDS, whereas men usually had just one. In all studies, the AIDS infection worsened in women who were pregnant. (*The Double Helix*, Feb. 1988, p. 5. Published by the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases.)

## Presidential Commission on AIDS Presents Diverse Recommendations

The Presidential Commission on AIDS brought in a report with 579 recommendations. Some of those recommendations run counter to the views of the administration, including a

recommendation that Congress enact legislation to prohibit discrimination. Such federal action is deemed necessary to encourage openness in testing and notification.

The Commission, however, sided strongly with conservative groups in calling for the adoption of criminal penalties against AIDS-infected persons who knowingly engage in high-risk behavior involving sex, intravenous drug use or donation of blood. (*U.S. News & World Report*, 6/13/88, p. 8)

## Infants Threatened by AIDS

One of every 61 babies born in New York City in December of 1987 carried antibodies to the virus that causes AIDS. These antibodies meant that the mothers were infected with the virus. During the month-long test, of 9,047 babies born in New York City, 148 (1.64%) had antibodies to the AIDS virus in their blood. (*The Double Helix*, April 1988, p. 4. Published by the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases.)

Rates of maternal infection in a Massachusetts study were lower. Infection rates in inner-city regions were 0.8 percent and in rural-suburban areas 0.09 percent. (*USA Today*, 3/3/88, p. 1A)

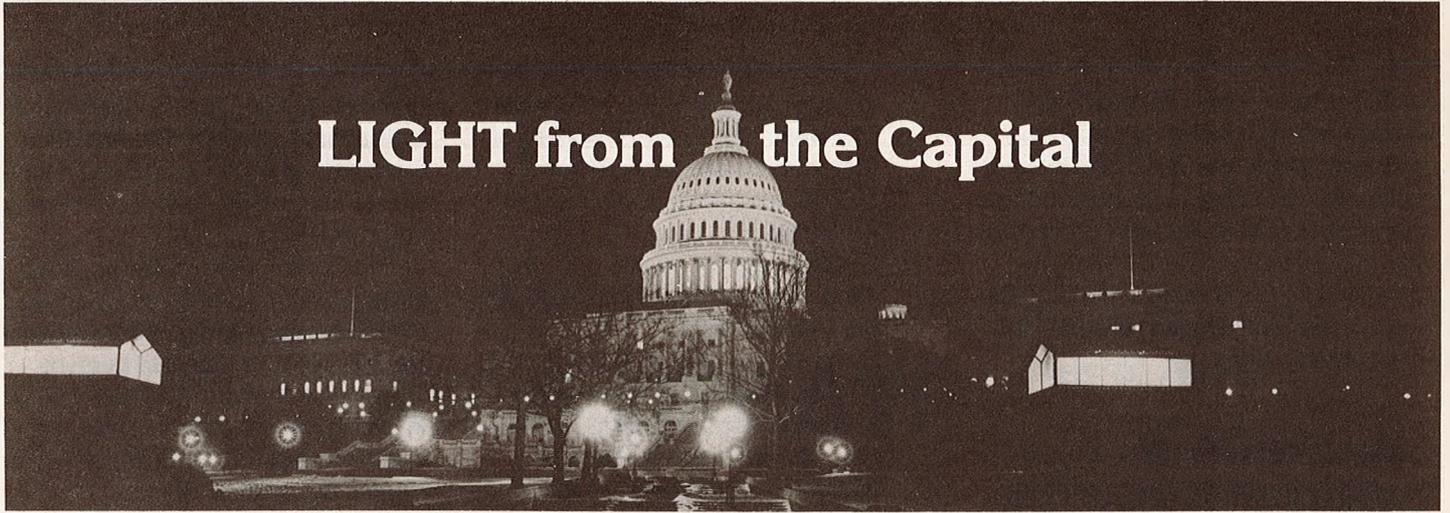
## Defective Condoms Pose Threat of AIDS Transmission

If columnist Jack Anderson's data is right, greater anxiety about AIDS transmission is called for among those who feel that the use of condoms makes sex safe. Random testing of 54,000 batches produced failure rates of 20 percent (which means that for that batch, 4 percent failed the test.) Failure rate among foreign batches was 30 percent.

A passing grade for a batch was not a sign of total safety, however. Among those batches passing, the average failure rate was 3.3 percent.

Americans buy 375 million condoms annually. (*The Washington Post*, 4/4/88, p. D17)

# LIGHT from the Capital



By Larry Braidfoot

As Congress winds its way toward the fall elections, a surprising candidate for hottest item of the second session of the 100th Congress has emerged. It isn't abortion; the Danforth Amendment to the Civil Rights Restoration Act passed. It isn't the Civil Rights Restoration Act. That passed also. It isn't arms control. The Senate overwhelmingly ratified the INF Treaty. It is—child care.

The subject of child care is an important one because it is intimately tied to the changing nature of the work force. Sixty-six percent of mothers 18 to 44 years of age work outside the home. More than half of all women with children younger than six are in the work force, including 51 percent of women with children less than a year old. By the mid-1990s, two-thirds of all preschool-age children are expected to have mothers who work outside the home.

In 1985 about 40 percent of day care for children under five was provided by relatives. Only about one-fourth of child care took place in organized centers. The nation has about 63,000 licensed child-care centers.

Most child-care workers are poorly paid. Average salaries range between \$10,000 and \$12,000 annually. Low pay results in high turnover that keeps costs down but hurts quality.

Parents pay between \$2,000 and \$3,000 a year per child.

The Bush Center of Child Development at Yale estimates the cost of high-quality child care—requiring more, better-paid and better-trained staff—at \$7,800 a year for infants (one and

under) and \$6,500 for toddlers (two to four). Child-care expenses at these levels would eliminate most of the extra income for the working wife, since the full-time working woman's median salary is about \$16,200.

The federal government spends almost \$7 billion annually in a variety of child-care programs. Research for the House Select Committee on Children, Youth and Families indicates that the federal government saves about \$6 for each dollar it spends on high-quality preschool programs. Such programs increase academic success of participants, leading to greater employability and less likelihood of welfare dependency.

Not all recent research supports full-time child care. Researchers at the University of Texas at Dallas have found that full-time child care (defined as more than 30 hours per week) is associated with poorer study skills, lower grades and diminished self-esteem. This was especially true of extensive child care during the first year of life. Quality of care may prove to be a major factor in long-term outcomes.

A number of pieces of legislation are being considered in Congress at this time. The most discussed, and controversial, is the Dodd/Kildee bill, also called the ABC (Alliance for Better Child-care) Child Care Bill. The bill would provide for a federal program of financial incentives and grants to the states to establish new child-care services and require some minimum regulations by the state relating to training and ratios of children to child-care employees.

Several criticisms of the bill have been offered. First, a Labor Department Task

Force concluded that there is not a general, national shortage of child care. Thus, whatever approach to undergirding child care might be needed should focus on those geographical regions with insufficient child care.

A second criticism is directed at the income level of possible beneficiaries of federally subsidized child care. The target set for eligibility is the income range extends up to 115 percent of state median family income. Thus a family in New Jersey earning \$46,920 would qualify for what is in effect federally subsidized child care. Critics rightly point out that this hardly qualifies as aid targeted exclusively to those at or near poverty levels.

A third general criticism is that the program discriminates against families who choose child care by relatives or who have only one working parent with child care provided by the other.

Assume two families with a working husband making \$20,000 per year. In one family, the mother also works and makes \$10,000. Child-care expenses are \$4,000. The government would, in essence, pick up \$2,000.

An organization called the National Child Care Association feels that Dodd/Kildee will increase child-care costs about \$1.2 billion which will, in essence, displace several hundred thousand children at the borderline of poverty, with many of them going into unlicensed and unregulated situations. ■

Braidfoot directs the program of Christian citizenship development for the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention, Nashville, Tennessee.

# DAY OF PRAYER FOR WORLD PEACE

Day of Prayer for World Peace presents the opportunity and challenge to hear the call of God to live peaceably with all humans. Few teachings from the ethics of the Bible have been so little emphasized among Southern Baptists. Yet being a peacemaker is at the heart of biblical ethics.

There are several reasons why Southern Baptists have underemphasized the call to be peacemakers. In the minds of many, the word suggests pacifism, a political position which opposes all war. The different debates about eschatology, or understanding of "last things," have focused on questions about when peace will be attained. In this nuclear age, there is a great fear about the consequences of war, of being unprepared. These factors, combined with many others, have made us reluctant to hear Paul's admonition to live peaceably with all.

Day of Prayer for World Peace provides an opportunity to challenge some of the barriers we have allowed to keep us from committing ourselves wholeheartedly to this biblical mandate.

Being a peacemaker means emphasizing **attitudes** which precede actions. Paul was not just describing a system of ethics which he wanted followed. He was describing the character and lifestyle of a Christian. He called believers to be certain kinds of people. Focusing too exclusively on actions misses the radical demand of Paul to be certain kinds of people. Being a peacemaker not only

involves our actions but also our attitudes and emotions and desires and thoughts. Being a godly person means being transformed into a peacemaker.

Living peaceably with all humans means living in the power of the Spirit of God. The demand Jesus made of his disciples was so radical that only a spiritual transformation could make peacemakers out of his Jewish followers who were taught to detest and hate Romans. Going the second mile, turning the other cheek and returning evil with good are not acts of unchanged life. A split between the spiritual and the political cannot lead to peace with all. Only constant spiritual renewal and strengthening can sustain the peacemaker.

Living peaceably with all humans means looking at others as created in the image of God, as brothers and sisters. Humans not yet brothers and sisters in Christ are still children whom God seeks to redeem. We commit a great sin when we become so worldly and callous as to view others as enemies. Loving our enemies transforms us internally and changes the way we view those the world calls enemies.

Living peaceably with all means seeing life as an opportunity of working for peace. We tend to think of peace issues as political issues, only affecting governments. Peace is a quality of relationship which seeks well-being in personal, family and economic as well as political relationships. Peace among

humans is a realization of that which God wants with and for each of us.

Living peaceably with all means working for peace in the political realm. Southern Baptists, with our emphasis upon soul competency, have a marvelous opportunity of talking about peacemaking. Each individual has the privilege and responsibility of deciding what actions he or she can take as peacemaker. No one tells us what official position to accept or for which to work. We can read and gather information, pray and seek God's voice as we listen patiently. We can then act humbly with a sense of God's grace about doing the best we can understand as servants living in a broken world.

If we observe the Day of Prayer for World Peace in a Baptist way, prayer and Bible study and preaching will unite in focusing concerns and commitments on peace. Some very real spiritual changes can result.

We can be reminded that the world belongs to God, and he is ultimately in control.

We can hear the voice of Jesus calling us to be his kind of people, to become godly people, to become peacemakers.

We can be challenged to see our individual responsibility not for the whole world, but for the opportunities of influence God has given us.

We can see a vision of action growing out of our willingness to take a first step. ■

## Planning Your Church's Observance

Day of Prayer for World Peace is a Sunday on the denominational calendar which provides a special opportunity for Southern Baptists to join together in praying for world peace. It is a day to:

- Celebrate the Lordship of Jesus Christ as the Prince of Peace.
- Emphasize the centrality of peace as God's desire for humans and the urgency of his servants working for peace.
- Search with other believers, with whom we may disagree politically

or theologically, for paths to peace.

- Encourage the formation and active ministry of Christian Life Committees within the local church and association as a means of applying the gospel to moral issues.

Some suggestions for planning your observance of Day of Prayer for World Peace include the following:

- Use the photograph from the front cover as a poster for display.
- Sunday School lessons and

assemblies, sermons, literature distribution and special studies can focus on peace during the regular activities of the local church. The "Theme Interpretation" and "Observing Day of Prayer for World Peace" will provide some resource information for these activities.

- Plan a time for reflection and meditation which will lead to some commitment to a particular action of peacemaking by the individual worshipper or class member. ■

# “Live peaceably with all”

**Romans 12:18**

Praying and working for peace is at the very heart of the biblical mandate for Christian living. The apostle Paul, who commanded us to “present your bodies as a living sacrifice,” only a few verses later spelled out one of the implications of sacrificial living: “Live peaceably with all” (Romans 12:18).

Paul did not proclaim generalities allowing Christians to accommodate the gospel to their own personal preferences. He was specific in telling the early Christians—and us—to let love be genuine, bless those who persecute, live in harmony, and “live peaceably with all.”

The command about peaceable living did not assume that peace with all persons is always attainable. But Christians have the responsibility to be peacemakers “so far as it depends upon you . . .” Failure to achieve peaceable living should result, not from the actions, attitudes, or words of Christians, but only from others.

Paul’s command was painfully specific. We are not to repay evil with evil. We are not to take vengeance. We are to give food and drink to the enemy. We are not to overcome evil with acts of greater evil, but rather with good (Romans 12:14-21).

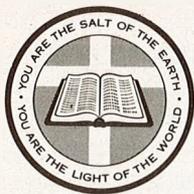
To the first-century Christians, this meant living peaceably with Jews who would reject them, with Roman officials who would become their persecutors, and with Gentiles who would view with disdain the Christians’ faith in a crucified and risen Lord.

These demands are perhaps no easier to attain today than they were 19 centuries ago. Our world is a world of nations and governments and ideologies and economic interests that cause us to see other people as enemies or strangers. The struggle for peace among peoples and nations offers no promises of easy resolution.

But the responsibility of Christian living remains. The language, “so far as it depends upon you,” is clear and plain. Each of us is to be committed to working for peace. Such a commitment must be sustained by an inner spirituality that sensitizes us to God’s redemptive purposes for all humankind and keeps us in tune with God’s desire for peace among all persons.

Day of Prayer for World Peace is a reminder that as we commit ourselves to the many gospel tasks to which we are called—evangelism, missions, discipleship, family living—we must not forget to pray and work for peace. ■

—Larry Braidfoot



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