

BULLETIN SEMINARY EXTENSION DEPARTMENT

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JUSTICE

It is superfluous to add "human" to this title, for justice involves man, his attitudes, and decisions. In original setting this word is indistinguishable from righteousness or righteous. The whole superstructure of Christian ethics is built upon this word. It is the word "straight" in relationships among people and between man and God. To the Greek mind, it meant what is proper in view of tradition and accepted decorum. In the Old Testament justice (or righteousness), when it is related to God, involves the essential quality of his character--straight, without crookedness or perversity. It relates to his judgments, covenant, and nature. It also involves his pronouncements and decisions.

When a man is just, he is most like his maker. In fact, godliness (or godlikeness) is often a synonym for righteousness. Man is just when he is faithful to carry out God's requirements or principles in all difficulties and circumstances. The meticulous manner in which religious leaders in the first century sought to conform outwardly and inwardly to the known pattern of righteousness actually resulted in injustice. They looked down on those who did not fit the pattern with such scorn that they failed to realize that in so doing they became unjust.

Justice in the New Testament is always understood to be a derivative of the act of God on the Cross and man's response by faith. Yet in this religious recognition we too are in danger of becoming so just on the one side of its definition that we miss it on the other side. Thus, one who states that he has been

"declared to be just" by God's saving act may abdicate his responsibility for developing right attitudes and for just and proper acts. Christian grace is a gift of God for the development of Christian qualities of life. This gift is not an endowment of all the virtues of Christ, but is a basis for developing these virtues.

In human relations, justice is the involvement of our total spiritual and mental qualities in right doing and right attitudes. It takes all factors into account. This is why judgment is the prerogative of deity only--only deity knows all factors. Paul points this out in Romans when he states in substance, "Do not look condescendingly upon your brother for we must all stand before God in judgment."

We stand in need of this element of living today. We need to correct our attitudes by the straight-edge of God's eternal justice and righteousness. We need to have a revolutionary experience that will help us to understand the significance of justice in all our relationships.

On the job with my father, once I asked if a certain measurement was "all right." He answered without looking up, "It's all right if it is right." In our human contacts we must not be content until JUSTICE--what is right--has prevailed.

STATISTICAL REPORT

Extension Center Students	3,497
Correspondence Students	<u>1,763</u>
Total	5,260

BITS FROM THE WORK SHOP

The work shop in Illinois April 9 and 10 was built around four messages by Dr. Gaines S. Dobbins, but in addition to his messages we had several conferences. Dr. Dobbins spoke on "Aims in Adult Education," "Adult Learning," "Adult Teaching" and "Opportunities in Adult Education." Conferences led by Associate Ray K. Hodge dealt with the work of the Advisory Committee and the local director. Associate W. A. Whitten led the conference on records and their importance. The Seminary Extension Director, Lee Gallman, discussed problems confronted in the work. The group heard discussions on enlisting preachers and church leaders in this extension program.

One director pointed out that their extension center had developed a spirit of comradeship, had made his church people become true learners and in general had lifted the level of church work in his whole area. It was pointed out that the program was all that many rural leaders have in the way of educational help. It has given a new evaluation to the whole study program of Southern Baptists and has made the rural leaders feel that they are partners with other pastors and church leaders in a way that has not been true until now.

A number of problems were brought to focus in the meeting that gave the directors a manifesto for improvement in all areas of the work. Our program was closed with an address by Dr. Noel Taylor, Executive Secretary of the Illinois Baptist Association. He spoke of the effectiveness of the program in Illinois. A committee was appointed to make plans for a similar work shop to be held next year.

BOOK REVIEW

HOW A SMALL CHURCH CAN HAVE GOOD CHRISTIAN EDUCATION, Virgil E. Foster, Harper and Brothers Price, \$2.00.

The author shows that a small church can be a good church, meeting human needs and developing a vital Christian community. Many activities are not even church centered and those that are can become creative provided there is proper care in planning and leading.

The real issue is not how small or how large is the church, but how thorough is the planning and involvement. Each chapter suggests principles and methods that would be effective in making the denominational (or interdenominational) plans effective in a small church.

His suggestions on church leadership training and on reaching the youth of the church are most helpful. Fellowship among leaders may be added to training by bringing the leaders to some home for the project. He places high evaluation upon regional conferences and encampments as aids in training and developing fellowship. Two calendars of activities, one for teachers and workers conferences and the other for youth meetings, are suggested. In addition, the author makes many suggestions on saving and using space, on building worship programs, on teaching methods, on visual aids and their use, and on the library that will prove invaluable.

There is a good chart showing the inter-relationships of various church agencies that will enable a pastor to lead in organizing for action. Some attention is given (but not enough) to adult education. Several sources for obtaining helps are mentioned, but the denominational presses and book houses are not given attention. Of course, a listing of these agencies might increase the size of the book, but it would also make this fine work more useful, especially for Baptists. Many Baptists might seek guidance through their channels of information, but they would possibly hesitate to turn to the National Council of Churches for help.

The author calls upon the homes and the church leadership to effect a good sound program all the week for the responsibility is theirs. I commend this book as worthy of attention. For Southern Baptists there are many spots that relate to organizational terms which would have to be translated in terms of our own organizations, but it is a fine work.

Associate Ray K. Hodge leaves April 30 on an extended trip through the west. He will visit centers and make new contacts.