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"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord'"

Isaiah 40:3; John 1:23

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Karla Faye and Capital Punishment

By Joe E. Trull, Editor

On January 3, 1998, Karla Faye Tucker was executed, the 145th person put to death by the state of Texas since 1982 and the 436th execution in the United States since then. At that moment 3355 persons were on death row (447 in Texas) awaiting execution.

Witnesses to her execution said she looked at them and said, "I love you all. I am going to be with Jesus." She also apologized to the victim's family, asking for their forgiveness.

Her case brought again into the spotlight the moral question of capital punishment. The details of her crime were horrendous. Yes, she was young. Yes, while an adolescent her mother had forced Karla into prostitution. Yes, she was in a drug stupor when she and an older companion killed a man. Yes, the man turned evidence on young Karla Faye—he received prison time, she the death penalty. But she was guilty of murder.

While awaiting her execution, an amazing thing happened. Karla Faye Tucker became a follower of Jesus. Prison officials who watched her over the years swear her conversion was real. Her life changed. To be in her presence was to experience God, testified guards and prisoners alike. One of the chaplains who led her to faith in Christ, arranged for her baptism by his brother, then pastor of FBC, Temple, Texas.

At the time of her execution, David Crosby was now pastor of FBC, New Orleans. He spoke to our faculty at New Orleans Baptist Seminary. As a doctoral graduate in Christian ethics, he thought he had developed a rational defense of capital punishment. When Karla Faye was executed, he had to rethink his belief, for now capital punishment had a face—and it was the face of a Christian who ministered behind prison walls.

Televangelist Pat Robertson pleaded for the Texas governor to commute her sentence to life imprisonment saying, "Because of her Christian faith, she is a totally different person than the one who committed the crime." But in Texas the Parole Board must first recommend commutation, and since that meant eventual parole, they didn't.

The Baptist Director of Missions in New Orleans countered with the Bible. Quoting Numbers 35:30, "The murderer shall be put to death," he told the television interviewer that whoever takes a life, forfeits his own. She should die.

Sister Helen Prejean, minister to prisoners on death row

and author of *Dead Man Walking* argued, "What value is there for the state to execute this woman? What good will it do? Is it revenge? Will society be better off with Karla Faye dead?"

The issue of capital punishment, like other life-death issues (abortion, war, poverty, euthanasia), is one no ethicist can avoid. I have struggled to develop for myself and for students a response that is Christian and consistent.

In his *Consistent Ethic of Life*, Cardinal Bernardin introduced a helpful idea: the need for a "seamless garment ethic." The phrase, utilizing the analogy of Jesus' seamless undergarment (Jn. 19:23), underscores the need for consistency in moral deliberation. For example, a Christian cannot at the same time be pro-capital punishment and pro-life, or pro-choice and pro-euthanasia, without being inconsistent. In the opening article one of our brightest and best Baptist ethicists, David Gushee, explains this approach.

Both sides of this issue have favorite biblical passages. Fuller seminary professor Glen Stassen notes, "Those who support the death penalty take Genesis 9:6 as their authority: 'Who sheds man's blood will have his blood shed.' This becomes their hermeneutical key . . . Those who oppose the death penalty take Jesus as Lord guiding their interpretation, Jesus' teachings and cross become their hermeneutical key." [See the full article "The Ethics of Execution" on Sojourners Online: www.sojo.net]. Noted Lutheran theologian John Swomley addresses biblical teachings in his article inside: "An Eye for an Eye?"

Messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention in 2000 approved their first ever statement supporting capital punishment. Bishop Michael Pfeifer, president of the Texas Conference of Churches called capital punishment a "morally flawed, broken legal-social system." The Governor of Illinois stopped executions in his state when DNA evidence indicated many on death row were innocent.

On January 10 in the Texas death chamber the first execution of 2001 took place. Last year Texas carried out a record 40 executions. The governor claims the death penalty deters, but the evidence contradicts that claim. My state leads the nation in police officers killed and number of inmates in prison—160,000 in 111 facilities. Ardent defenders now appeal to ret-

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The Consistent Ethic of Life

By David Gushee, Graves Professor of Moral Philosophy

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Editor's Note: *The article was originally delivered for the Staley Lectures at Cumberland College in April, 2000.*

Paths to the Consistent Life Ethic

What moral vision shall Christians bring into our nation's public square? Is there a way to sort through the rich but multifaceted moral witness of the Scripture and of later Christian tradition and end up with a coherent moral vision? Can Christians get beyond our current moral divisions and offer at least a core moral witness to church and society upon which most or all can agree?

I want to propose today that what has been called the consistent life ethic (or consistent ethic of life, or seamless garment approach) is the best single statement of Christian moral vision currently available on the landscape of Christian thought. It is a perspective that emerges from Scripture, has strong roots in Christian tradition, and is quite relevant to contemporary experience. It is a moral vision that speaks effectively to at least those open to hearing the Christian voice in the public square. And, while it is not a recipe for ending the scandalous divisions that afflict the church's moral teaching and public proclamation, it is an approach that does extract the best moral commitments of the "left" and the "right" in American church life.

There are many paths that can be taken into the consistent life ethic. What I mean by that is that Christians from a variety of spots on the theological/ethical spectrum seem to be feeling their way toward—or directly embracing—a consistent life ethic. African-American Christians, feminists, the Catholic Church, white evangelicals, and some in the mainline or liberal churches have been making their way for some time toward a consistent life ethic.

Consider the following striking comments from the late Spencer Perkins, a black Christian leader who died suddenly just a few years ago. In 1989, Perkins wrote:

Abortion—and the pro-life movement—present black evangelicals with a dilemma. It is not that we question the evil of abortion; Jesus clearly would have condemned it. But for me, a black man, to join your demonstrations against abortion, I would need to know that you understand God's concern for justice everywhere....

It is not a simple, glib response, then, when I must counsel an unwed black teenager against an abortion, even though I believe with all my heart that abortion is morally wrong. I feel that if the love of Christ compels me to save the lives of children, that

same love should compel me to take more responsibility for them once they are born." (quoted in Clark and Rakestraw, *Readings in Christian Ethics*, vol. 2, 268, 270)

Perkins was struck by what he called a "pro-life credibility gap." Those Christians who led the pro-life movement and were most visible in it were, in his view, not at all interested in issues of justice for African-Americans. Instead, as he put it, "Ever since I can remember, it has been almost axiomatic that if we blacks took a stand on an issue, conservative [white] evangelical Christians would line up on the opposite side of the street, blocking our way." What is the meaningfulness of the term "pro-life" if those who use it are not interested in advancing the well being (the "life") of a suffering black population here and now? That is Perkins' question, and it's a good one.

Ron Sider, president of Evangelicals for Social Action, made his way in the direction of the consistent life-ethic through questions such as these:

Why do many liberal and radical activists champion nuclear disarmament . . . and then defend the destruction of one and a half million unborn American babies each year? Are affluent lifestyles and sexual freedoms finally more important than helpless, inconvenient babies? Why does Senator Jesse Helms, one of the most visible advocates of the pro-life movement, support government subsidies for tobacco [despite] the fact that smoking kills 350,000 Americans a year. . . . Why do members of the National Right to Life Committee score far lower on other pro-life issues like opposition to the arms race, handguns, and concern for the poor than members of the National Abortion Rights Action League? Don't handguns and poverty obliterate precious human beings as surely as abortion? (*Completely Pro-Life*, 11-13).

If life is what you are concerned about, says Sider, then any assault on life, any threat to the dignity of life, ought to merit your moral concern. If not, you demonstrate not that you are pro-life but that you are pro-certain kinds of life, or pro-life at certain stages.

This is the way the late Cardinal Bernardin of Chicago put it: "Nuclear war threatens life on a previously unimaginable scale; public executions are fast becoming weekly events . . . and euthanasia is now openly discussed and even advocated

[and today, practiced, in Oregon]. Each of these assaults on life has its own meaning and morality; they cannot be collapsed into one problem, but they must be confronted as pieces of a larger pattern” (*Consistent Ethic of Life*, 14).

The larger pattern has been named by Pope John Paul II, as a “culture of death.” He elaborates as follows:

It is possible to speak in a certain sense of a *war of the powerful against the weak*: a life that would require greater acceptance, love and care is considered useless . . . and is therefore rejected in one way or another. A person who, because of illness, handicap or, more simply, just by existing, compromises the well-being or life-style of those more favoured tends to be looked upon as an enemy to be resisted or eliminated. In this way a kind of *conspiracy against life* is unleashed. (*The Gospel of Life*, 22)

The demand for a consistent ethic of life, then, has emerged as an outcry, not always fully coherent, from those who have noted—or experienced—gaps in the church’s moral vision and practice or who have paid attention to dangerous trends in the culture. Women notice a concern for babies but not for their mothers or for abused or exploited women in general. Blacks notice a concern for abortion but not racial justice. Those who work with the poor notice overall complacency toward that field of misery and degradation, while those concerned for the ill and elderly watch with shock as the acceptance of euthanasia grows. What is needed is a moral vision big enough to encompass the full range of moral problems that Christians face both in their own lives and in a confused culture. The consistent ethic of life is the best answer I have yet seen.

Fundamentals of the Consistent Life Ethic

A definition of the consistent life ethic could be crafted as follows: *a moral commitment to respecting, protecting, and enhancing human life at every stage and in every context*. This moral commitment is grounded in a particular reading of Scripture and a particular understanding of Christian theology

that goes back deep into the history of the church. Michael Gorman describes the roots of a consistent life ethic this way:

The earliest Christian ethic, from Jesus to Constantine, can be described as a consistent pro-life ethic. . . . It pleaded for the poor, the weak, women, children and the unborn. This pro-life ethic discarded hate in favor of love, war in favor of peace, oppression in favor of justice, bloodshed in favor of life. The Christian’s response to abortion was one important aspect of this consistent pro-life ethic. (*Abortion and the Early Church*).

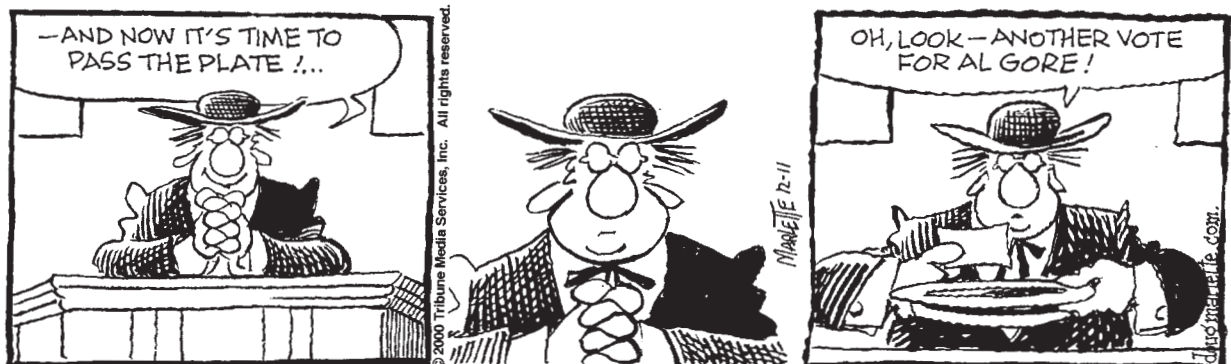
Let us consider for a few moments the biblical underpinnings of this historically important perspective.

1. God is the author of human life.

Genesis 2:7 reads as follows: “The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”

The Bible tells us that God was directly and personally responsible for making the first man, Adam, and the first woman, Eve. The Scripture repeatedly harkens back to God’s role as originator of the human race. As the potter shapes the clay, so God shaped us. This is a fact not only to be respected, but also to be celebrated, as the psalmist does: “For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be” (Psalm 139:13-16).

The Bible affirms that we exist by God’s will, that we are the creatures of a loving creator God. The consistent life ethic is grounded here. It is impossible to sustain it with full vigor outside of a theistic worldview that includes a belief in God as Creator.



2. God made us “in his image” and “likeness.”

Gen. 1:26-27 reads: “Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

While God created all forms of life, only humans are described as being made in his image (*selem*) and likeness (*demut*). To be made in the image of God probably means two things. One has to do with the *attributes* that we share in common with God. Our capacities reflect his in a small way—our ability to think, to love, to create, to relate to others, to make choices. To explain “image,” various central God-like attributes have been proposed at different stages of Christian thought. It used to be that our reasoning capacity was lifted up for emphasis. These days it is relationality that is often described as most God-like or God-resembling. But whatever is emphasized, in various ways God made humans and only humans to be like himself. How remarkable that we were designed to share certain attributes of God our Maker.

The other dimension of meaning here has to do not with human attributes but instead human *responsibilities*. Bruce Birch has argued that this is actually the right way to understand the meaning of the *imago dei*—“*adam* is God’s own special representative, not simply by designation . . . but by design” (*Let Justice Roll Down*, 87). To be made in the image of God is to share in the tasks of God, the work of God on this earth. We will “image” God—represent God—to the rest of creation. We see the theme already in this passage, where God commands us to take responsibility and represent his rule over the fish and the birds, the livestock, and all the creatures.

Whichever aspect of the *imago dei* is lifted up for emphasis, it is a designation that confers awesome responsibilities on all who relate to human life—that is, all of us.

3. God has declared human life worthy of honor, glory, and respect.

Ponder the majestic language of Psalm 8: “When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor” (Ps. 8:3-5).

Despite our many obvious faults—our deeply embedded sinful nature—Scripture tells us that God has crowned humanity as a whole, and each human life in particular, with glory and honor. We are declared to be just “a little lower than the heavenly beings”—some translations say, “than God himself.” Thus that is what we are, by God’s decree—even when we don’t look like it, even when our unworthiness of such a designation seems all too clear.

Thus far we have seen that God is the author of each and every human life. God made us in his image, his like-

ness. God has declared human life worthy of honor, glory, and respect. These are the theological truths that undergird the concept of the “sanctity of human life,” which itself lies at the heart of the consistent life ethic.

To speak of the sanctity of human life is to claim that God has declared both by action and by his word that every human life is of immense value to him. Sanctity comes from the Latin *sanctus*, which means holy. Christians believe that God has declared every human life sacred, even holy, not because of our own moral goodness but because of the value that he himself has placed upon it. God sees each human life however humble or flawed as special, set apart; not to be trifled with, dishonored, or disrespected.

In addition, the immense value that God places on our lives has tremendous moral implications. Let’s consider three of these moral implications:

1. We must value human lives according to God’s standard not our own.

Listen to James 2:1-4: “My brothers, as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ, don’t show favoritism. Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, ‘Here’s a good seat for you,’ but say to the poor man, ‘You stand there’ or ‘Sit on the floor by my feet,’ have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?”

If God sees human beings as of extraordinary importance, we must as well. If God loves people, we must too. Many have noted the way in which human beings establish varying rings or boundaries of moral obligation. This is an issue I discuss in *The Righteous Gentiles of the Holocaust* (Fortress Press, 1994). We draw invisible but very momentous circles of moral concern, including those within while excluding those without from the range of our care, protection, and sometimes even respect.

Yet a large part of the burden of Jesus’ teaching, not to mention key elements of the rest of the Scripture, is to teach us to shatter those boundaries. With stories like the Good Samaritan, or Lazarus and the Rich Man, or the Sheep and Goats Judgment (Mt. 25), for example, Jesus makes it impossible for Christians in good conscience to confine the boundaries of moral obligation to a narrow few. Whatsoever we did to the *least of these*, we did to him.

The consistent life ethic is rooted in this moral claim: that human beings are to be valued according to God’s standards rather than our own. This eliminates the possibility of embracing any mere instrumentalism in Christian ethics. We cannot value lives according to their perceived usefulness or attractiveness or “value added” to us. God bestows value on each life and that value remains constant from conception until death.

We are to treat each other accordingly. Indeed, we must treat our own selves in this way—which is the reason why suicide has always been ruled out in the Christian tradition. Even the individual is not free to assign value to his own life. God makes that call, not us.

2. A second moral implication: **we must work to prevent murder, violence, and other direct assaults on the sanctity of life.**

Exodus 20:13 reads: “You shall not murder.” This text, the Sixth Commandment, is a critical cornerstone of the consistent life ethic. The sacredness of human life implies reverence for life at every stage from conception to death. It implies that the right to life is the first and fundamental human right. It requires that believing Christians be on the front lines of efforts to prevent or end the shedding of human blood wherever this occurs.

Christians, especially in our own violent society, often forget or fail to notice early biblical statements of God’s revulsion at the violence we do to one another. It is no coincidence that the primordial sin of murder is lifted up for such emphasis: “What have you done? Listen! Your brother’s blood cries out to me from the ground. Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother’s blood from your hand” (Gen. 4:10-11). These words from God to Cain are fully consistent with God’s later decision to send a flood upon the earth and start over with Noah and his family. Listen—“So God said to Noah, I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth” (Gen. 6:13).

Cardinal Bernardin, and the Catholic moral tradition generally, grounds the moral piece of the consistent life ethic right here at this point: the “prohibition

against direct attacks on innocent life” (*Consistent Ethic of Life*, 16). Such direct attacks—in abortion, murder, genocide, bombing of noncombatants in war, and so on—are ruled out by the prohibition of murder, which itself is grounded in the sacredness God has attributed to human life.

3. **Finally, we must seek the flourishing of each other’s lives.**

Matthew 22:39 reads, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” The sacredness of human life means not only that we refrain from killing each other (a negative prohibition), but also that we take positive steps to see others flourish. We have not exhausted the moral demands placed upon us as human beings by merely avoiding direct harm. We must also, at times, render direct aid. And we must support various institutions and initiatives in various spheres of life that contribute to the flourishing of human life. I think that this is fundamentally what is meant when we are called to “love one another” or to “love your neighbor as yourself.”

Nuances, Criticisms, and Applications

I believe that the consistent life ethic does apply, as its name indicates, from womb to tomb. In a longer presentation of this material I walk through such issues as personal relationships, sexuality, race, poverty, genocide, divorce, war, suicide, capital punishment, euthanasia, genetic engineering and other biotech issues, and abortion, all as issues to which a consistent life ethic is directly applicable. Here, by way of conclusion, let me identify several nuances that must be built into the consistent life ethic for it to stand up to critical scrutiny. Addressing these concerns will give me a chance to offer a few issue-oriented examples.

Our responsibility to *defend innocent life* is more easily grasped and undertaken than the broader task of *enhancing*



life. If a murderer is about to kill someone on the street, and I protect his intended victim, I have done my duty on the “defending innocent life” side. It would be a more difficult and open-ended commitment to work for the full flourishing of the intended victim’s life in all its complexity. Yet this is supposed to be a basic moral commitment of Christian people under the consistent life ethic. It shows that the moral work of the Christian is never exhausted, though sometimes we Christians get exhausted!

Not every moral issue undermines or threatens life in the same way. Abortion is the *direct taking of human life* (in my view) right now; nuclear, biological, or chemical war may happen and must be prevented, but is not happening now. That makes it a *threat* to life at this stage. Generally, the more direct and immediate is the life-taking, the more direct and immediate is our moral obligation to address it.

In war, a distinction is drawn between the taking of innocent life and combatant life. Unless one is a pacifist, it is assumed that combatants will die in war and that this is morally permissible (though tragic) if the war is just. A consistent life ethic may lead one to pacifism; for me, it leads to a very strict application of just war theory and the desire for a culture and an international order that cherishes peace and life rather than reveling in death. But under no legitimate Christian approach to war is genocide or other intentional taking of noncombatant life morally permissible.

Some threats to life are subtle, long-term, and chronic rather than obvious, direct, and immediate. Poverty, for example, slowly “grinds the face of the poor into the dust,” as the Bible puts it, rather than immediately ending life in most cases. Racism is the same way. Environmental degradation frequently poisons the planet in ways we don’t even notice at the time. These subtle and chronic issues are all relevant to a consistent life ethic and must not drop off the radarscope.

Capital punishment poses a serious test case to the consistent life ethic because when rightly applied it is inflicted on the guilty rather than the innocent. This does make it a different

species of issue than most other life issues. However, I think the Catholics have it right these days as they make this argument—while the State has the right to take life in defense of the innocent, it may do better in a violent culture to communicate its respect for human life by refraining from executing criminals at this time.

It may be argued that God takes plenty of lives in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. To this we must answer that first, there are dimensions of God’s activity that Christians are not called to imitate, God being God and humans being humans. Second, all theological and ethical work involves a sorting through of biblical texts and themes and an arranging of them into a pattern that must then be defended. That is what I am trying to do here. Finally, Christian ethics, if it is to be truly Christian, assesses all Scripture in terms of Jesus Christ. His character, person, and work are the final court of appeal.

Finally, there is the question of the church’s public witness especially as it relates to politics. The consistent life ethic offers a coherent Christian framework for thinking about party platforms, candidate perspectives, public policy agendas, and so on. It can help save Christians from unthinking partisanship or candidate loyalty. It helps us be proactive rather than reactive, and gives us something to stand for rather than against. My next lecture will take up the whole issue of the place of politics in the church’s public witness. Let me end this one by saying that any public moral witness we offer will have about as much impact as the integrity of our living right now.

That is, it is only if we live out a consistent life ethic or something close to it that we will be able to speak it to the world. If in the church—let’s just begin there—we treat each other as sacred, made in the image of God, fully worthy of value and respect, from womb to tomb—then we might have something to say to politicians about what they should do. As Ron Sider put it: “It is a farce for the church to ask Washington to legislate what Christians refuse to live.” (*Completely Pro-Life*, 25). So let us live it. ■



An Eye for an Eye?

By John M. Swomley, Professor Emeritus of Social Ethics
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The “pro-life” slogan and its political agenda set forth by the Vatican and adopted in the United States by some Protestant groups as well as the Catholic bishops, has seldom been examined as a whole. Abortion, for example, has taken center stage, and capital punishment has been largely neglected. My interest is to examine the death penalty in depth after contrasting it with other aspects of “protecting life” such as self-defense and war.

The state permits certain forms of self-defense, but actually engages in the direct killing of convicted killers, apparently unaware that it is killing people to prove that killing people is wrong.

The pro-life doctrine, by contrast, permits a person’s self-defense and the defense of his family or friends, even if it results in killing one or more people. It is only women who have no right to self-defense in a conflict of nascent life with their existing lives. They are denied the right to use contraceptives to prevent a pregnancy that would endanger their lives or health. They may not have an abortion even to preserve their lives or health if damage to health would lead to an early death.

Pro-life doctrine does not apply to killing in war, as evident in Vatican concordats with war-making states. Its agents in Argentina even gave consent to the killing of civilians suspected of being Communists or sympathetic to them. (Emilio Mignone, *Witness to the Truth: The Complicity of Church and Dictatorship in Argentina 1976-1983*, Orbis Books)

Although pro-life doctrine is selective, its absolute opposition to the death penalty has a completely rational and ethical validity. There is no conflict of life with life in the sentencing of a person for murder, since the state has the power to isolate the convicted killer from society and even from other prisoners. There is no obvious discrimination such as occurs against women in a patriarchal religious or social system. Men and women can receive similar sentences and similar treatment in prison.

An ethical examination of the death penalty should include a biblical analysis. The Bible provides no clear justification for capital punishment in spite of statements that an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, and life for life are justified. In practice, society has rejected the first part; we would consider barbaric the taking of a person’s eye for causing the loss of an eye, or a tooth for the loss of a tooth.

The Bible also is not consistent in providing a death penalty for those responsible for the death of others. The book of Hebrews, for example, praises murderers such as Gideon,

Samson, and David as “men of faith.” And in the book of Acts David is called the “servant of God.”

The Bible, however, not only includes statements excusing killing, it also describes some important acts against the death penalty. The first murder in the Bible, of course, is that of Cain killing Abel. In this instance, God did not kill Cain. His punishment was to make him a wanderer with a mark on his forehead so that no one will kill him. To kill in revenge or to permit killing a murderer would have justified killing as such.

Although David engaged in killing, his punishment from God was a refusal to let him build the Temple because his hands were stained with blood. In the scriptures the penalty for a woman caught in adultery was death, but Jesus rejected that penalty with the admonition, “Sin no more.”

When Paul was in prison with a runaway slave who could be killed for such flight, Paul sent him back to his master with a strong plea to the master to accept him as a brother.

In other words, the penalty of death is not a result of religious or moral values, but a simple act of vengeance exercised by government and supported vociferously by some of its citizens.

The chief basis on which any severe punishment can be morally justified is the encouragement of expiation, or making amends for wrongdoing. Punishment that does not permit the possibility of expiation or a change in character or attitude is inherently wrong. Execution does not permit atonement or any future action to make amends for the crime committed. The death sentence automatically precludes earning respect or commutation of sentence either by working to finance or support victims of the crime or by performing an extended public service as a means of public acknowledgment of a changed life.

From the standpoint of society, punishment without a social effort to reform or educate the prisoner is an acknowledgment that the general public is unconcerned about the value of life and the possibility of changed lives. The state, by taking life in revenge, sets no higher standard than the person who also kills in an act of anger, hate, or revenge. In effect it thereby says human life is not inherently valuable or worth saving, that life is judged by a crime or crimes, not by earlier good conduct or the possibility of repentance.

Does the state have any responsibility for the social conditions of poverty, exaltation of power, or a culture that glorifies violence and makes weapons easily acceptable, a culture that permits corruption in high places or by wealthy corporations with little if any punishment?

Emil Brunner, a German theologian, wrote: “In every

crime the first and the chief criminal is—society. For it breeds crime by the brutality of its economic ‘order,’ by the paucity of its provision for those who grow up in morally impossible conditions, by the harshness with which it throws upon the street all those who are less talented and successful in life, by the lovelessness with which it meets those who are least adapted to its requirements.”

Then Brunner adds, “A society which invents the most horrible technical devices for war” and indoctrinates “every member of a nation” regarding “the use of these methods in order to employ them against his brother man . . . has no moral right to wax indignant over the individual criminal, but it should be horrified at his crime as our own.” (*The Divine Imperative*, 476).

Moreover, the death penalty is often wrongfully applied to innocent victims who cannot afford a costly legal defense. It is also unjust in both state and federal jurisdictions when innocent suspects are tried, convicted, and sentenced without appeal because politicians want to appear tough on crime, or courts are too crowded with other cases to hear appeals.

Churches also share responsibility for a culture, especially when women are not treated with complete equality with men and unable to make moral choices about their lives, vocations, and future. Even those concerned about domestic violence, out of which so many murders occur, should doubt the value to surviving children or society as a whole, of the killing of the surviving parent.

Now that recent studies have pierced the silence about racism in the sentencing of black citizens far in excess of whites, there is even less excuse for taking the lives of those on Death Row.

It is, of course, impossible to write about the death penalty as if the entire system of criminal administration short of capital punishment is humane. Prisons have long been known as breeders of crime, where prisoners are brutalized both by guards and by other prisoners. Reforming the entire system is another challenge for society, but the place to begin is by acknowledging that the state must set an example. If it is wrong for individuals to kill people, it is wrong for the state itself to justify killing by making it legal to kill. ■

The Gardener

By Hal Haralson
Attorney in Austin, Texas

Judy and I walked in our garden before going to work this morning.

Serious gardeners would smile at our use of the term. It is the rocky slope of the hill on which our house was built 20 years ago.

The “soil” on this hillside west of Austin is very shallow. We had an agent from the County Agricultural office come out and test our soil.

She returned after walking the property and smiled. “You don’t have any soil.”

But there are flowers. Some plants we have introduced. Others are native.

I noticed two plants this morning that had small green leaves peeking out from the dead ones. They had died because of the intense heat of the summer.

I’m glad I left them alone. They were not dead at all.

A rose bush we set out has struggled to produce two blooms.

The Texas Bird of Paradise, one of the most beautiful plants I have ever seen, will take two years to reach its full potential. It will die back to the ground in the winter.

A small white flower pokes its head out from behind a rock. It’s almost as if it was afraid someone might see it and expect more.

The brilliant yellow of the wild ragweed dominates the garden. This plant is a “weed” most of the year.

There are times when I feel I’m not meeting anyone’s expectations, especially God’s or my own. Dormant is a good word.

I’m glad God does not expect year-round blooms. He’s patient. He knows there is a time and a season for everything.

At times I feel like the little white flower peeking from the rock. I’m afraid someone will see me and ask why I’m hiding.

There is a place in God’s garden for little white flowers.

I hear Roger Paynter [Hal’s pastor] speak, or I read the writing of Paula D’Arcy and find myself wishing I could be like them.

There are plants with brilliant blooms in God’s garden. He gives each of us a place to bloom at our own pace and in our own way.

As I walk down the steps to leave the garden, I notice a group of dead plants. Leave them alone!

The Texas gardener recognizes the Bluebonnet that paints our hillsides in April. These are times when I’m dormant. It seems I’ll never bloom again. I’m glad God is patient.

I’m thankful that God gives us all a place in His garden. It would not be nearly as beautiful if we all bloomed alike. ■

An Old Friend and a Lesson in Grace

By Bob Lively,

Teacher/Counselor at Riverbend Church, Austin, Texas

Editor's Note: Bob Lively writes a bi-weekly column in the Austin-American Statesman, where this article first appeared September 30, 2000.

I first met Bobby Wayne Graham as he passed me on a sidewalk at the liberal arts college in Arkansas where I was campus minister. My initial impression on that September morning in '73 was that this kid was scarcely taller than a fence post and possessed a face as round as a pie tin. His chestnut hair and full, bushy beard gave him the appearance of a mountain man from some bygone era. But he was no more mountain man than the Ozarks were real mountains.

Bobby Graham was born with the soul of a poet and the heart of a prophet. His creator gifted him with an uncommon sensitivity to the pain in this world. He hid a deep sadness behind an easy smile that rolled into contagious laughter. But more times than I found comfortable, I witnessed pain in his dark eyes.

Only two students attended the last worship service I conducted at that little college—Frank Ehman and Bobby Graham. After the benediction, the three of us piled into my beat-up Chevrolet and drove to a greasy spoon, where we chased enchiladas with chocolate pie and laughter. The next morning I would move to Dallas to begin a new chapter of my life, and the last person in Batesville, Arkansas, to bid me farewell was Bobby Graham.

Both Frank and Bobby went on to Austin Seminary, where in three years they earned degrees and completed the requirements for ordination in the Presbyterian Church. Frank served with distinction for more than a decade in Austin, while Bobby moved to Little Rock, where he founded a soup kitchen.

In time, alcoholism ravaged Bobby. Eventually, he left his parish and did his best to make peace with his myriad demons, but the pain persisted. There was a disappointing pastoral stint in Oklahoma followed by a time of healing again in Little Rock.

Early one-morning years ago my phone rang and I picked it up to hear a vaguely familiar voice. This caller was eager to inform me that he was sober. All I recall saying was that I'd had people call in the past to tell me that they were drunk but never before had anyone interrupted my sleep to declare sobriety.

A laugh revealed the caller as Bobby Graham. He then surprised me with a tale that I later recorded in a book. This story concerned his first experience with Alcoholics Anonymous. He told me that he had stumbled into his first meeting drunk. He bumped into a man who seemingly possessed the power to stare a hole through his soul. Months later, he asked that same gentleman to be his sponsor. This recovering alcoholic was quick to inform my friend that he had once been a regular at Bobby's soup kitchen. He followed that announcement with words that knocked my friend's legs out from under him: "I'll sponsor you, but you don't know God. You think you do, but you don't." Years later, Bobby would say those were some of the most healing words he would ever hear.

Three years ago my telephone rang again. The voice said, "If you're not too important, you can drive downtown right now and pick me up and buy me a cup of coffee." Within minutes I had Bobby Graham in the cab of my pickup, and for the next two hours we laughed as we marveled at the power of grace to heal both of us.

It was during that brief visit that I experienced this man at peace for the first time in 25 years. His demons had been accepted and even blessed by an inner grace that had taught him an attitude of gratitude.

Last Sunday evening, my friend, Bob Shelton, president of Austin Seminary, preached at a Presbyterian church in Helena, Arkansas, where Bobby was installed as pastor. Bobby Graham had been discovered by some "salt of the earth" folks who were willing to give him another chance. At the conclusion of the worship, he stood and turned to face his new congregation. He raised his hands and pronounced a blessing over people he was not only willing but now also able to love. As he stepped toward the congregation to kiss his mother, he collapsed and died.

Upon receiving word of his death, I hung up the phone, wiped tears from my eyes, and thanked God for allowing my good friend Bobby Graham to exit this life in much the same way he came into it—on the wings of a prayer. ■

Equal in Being—Unequal in Function: The Gender Hierarchy Argument

By *Rebecca Merrill Groothuis*,
Freelance Editor, Writer, and Author

Editor's Note: *This article is taken from material in the author's book Good News for Women: A Biblical Picture of Gender Equality (Baker) and first appeared in Pricilla Papers, Spring 2000.*

The debate over biblical teaching on gender roles has focused primarily on the exegetical intricacies of a handful of controversial texts, with neither side able to answer completely every objection or difficulty with their position. After more than two decades, it seems clear that this approach is not exactly moving the discussion toward resolution. Perhaps there are other perspectives from which this disagreement may be assessed more productively.

If we look not only at the controversial biblical texts, but also at the philosophical assumptions and theological implications of the doctrine of gender hierarchy, we find inherent difficulties that seriously undermine the traditionalist belief system. This, then, offers a compelling cause to favor egalitarian rather than hierarchical interpretations of the controversial texts.

Being and Function

Problems within the traditionalist belief system are both logical and theological. The biggest logical problem is with the assumption that woman's inferior status does not entail an inferiority of woman's essential nature. How often have we heard it explained that the subordinate female role is only a matter of "function" and does not mean that women are inferior to men? "Equal in being, unequal in function" is the theoretical construct to which traditionalists appeal in order to assert female subordination to male authority and, at the same time, to affirm the biblical teaching that men and women are spiritually equal.

This is a crucial point, because the entire traditionalist agenda turns on the assumption that women's subordination to men does not violate the fundamental biblical equality of women with men. If it can be shown that the subordination traditionalists prescribe for women entails an inferiority not merely of function but also of being, then, the traditionalist agenda as currently expressed is internally incoherent; it contradicts itself.

I agree that it is possible for a person to be justly placed in a position of functional subordination without being fundamentally inferior as a person. Yet I disagree that this is what is happening with the traditionalist subordination of women. Female subordination is very different from functional subor-

dination. In functional subordination, roles are assigned and accepted for the purpose of accomplishing a certain function, and with a view to individuals' differing abilities in performing particular tasks. For example, someone may serve on a committee under the direction of a coworker who is otherwise her equal in a particular organization. Or, a person who wants to learn how to play the piano will accept a role of subordination to her music teacher.

In female subordination, the criterion for who is subordinate to whom has nothing to do with expediency or the abilities of individuals to perform particular functions. Rather, it is determined entirely on the basis of an innate, unchangeable aspect of a woman's being, namely, her female sexuality. Her inferior status follows solely from her essential nature as a woman. Regardless of how traditionalists try to explain the situation, the idea that women are equal in their being, yet unequal by virtue of their being, simply makes no sense. If you cannot help but be what you are, and if inferiority in function follows necessarily and exclusively from what you are, then you are inferior in your essential being.

There are other ways in which female subordination differs significantly from functional subordination. Functional subordination is limited in scope to the specific function that is at issue, or it is limited in duration to the time it takes for the function to be accomplished or for the subordinated person to "outgrow" his limitations. Often, it is limited in both scope and duration. For example, a committee member is subordinate to the committee chair only with respect to the task of the committee and only until the committee has completed its task. The music student is subordinate to her teacher only when it comes to playing the piano and only as long as her piano-playing skills are inferior to those of her teacher. By contrast, the subordination of a woman to her husband's authority covers all her activities, and it endures throughout all her life. She never outgrows it, and it never ends.

Although functional subordination can coexist with essential equality, female subordination cannot. Male superiority and female inferiority are very much implicated in the doctrine of male authority and female subordination. Merely to assert that women are equal despite their inferior status does not dismiss these clear implications. Historically, women were kept in an inferior role because they were believed to be inferi-

or in their essential being. This position at least made sense. The only sensible alternative to it is that neither gender is inferior to the other and that men and women ought, therefore, to have equal opportunity to serve in whatever capacity each one is gifted, called, and qualified. Because traditionalists claim to affirm both female equality and male authority, their position is internally incoherent, grounded in a contradiction.

Servant Leadership

Another key traditionalist assumption is that a husband's spiritual authority over his wife can (and should) be exercised in a way that benefits and serves her. The husband's role is thus described as "servant leadership." But the nature of the authority that traditionalists assign to husbands differs at every point from actual servant leadership. The ideal of servant leadership among competent adults is apropos only for situations in which: (a) a group of people need a leader in order to act in a united and effective way, and (b) the leader has earned his authority and is accountable to the people for his leadership. In traditionalist male "headship," a man's authority is neither earned, necessary, beneficial, nor accountable to the one he governs.

A man's exercise of spiritual authority over his wife would be a service to her only if she were, in fact, less spiritually and psychologically mature than he and, therefore, in need of his guidance and governance. But if this were the case with all wives and husbands, then women would not be essentially equal with men, spiritually, mentally, or emotionally.

The Bible teaches that women and men stand on equal ground before God, and that in Christ there is no spiritual distinction between male and female. Yet traditionalists insist that a woman (at least in certain contexts) obeys and hears from God by hearing from and obeying a man, while a man is never required to submit and be obedient to a woman in order to know and do God's will. How can this be consistent with spiritual equality?

The Godlike Gender

This observation brings us to the theological contradictions inherent to the traditionalist doctrine of gender hierarchy. If different and unequal spiritual roles arise necessarily from sexual differences, then it follows that the sexual nature in some sense defines and determines the spiritual nature. Once spirituality comes to be grounded in sexuality, the gendered imagery for God in Scripture ceases to be metaphorical and instead becomes literally descriptive of God's essential, spiritual nature. Because the gendered imagery for God is more often masculine than feminine, God's nature comes to be characterized primarily by the spirituality of maleness. It then becomes impossible to regard woman and man as imaging God equally; the man is clearly more like God than is the woman.

The idea that women are equal in their being, yet unequal by virtue of their being, simply makes no sense.

It also follows that the maleness of Christ is theologically necessary. An essentially masculine God must be incarnated as a male; he must have the physical sexual nature that reflects and corresponds to his metaphysical sexual nature. From here it follows that members of the godlike gender have a divine right and responsibility to represent God authoritatively to those whose nature is but a dimmer image of the divine.

Notions of an essentially masculine God, of men bearing the divine image more fully than women, of Christ's maleness as spiritually significant, and of the

ordained ministry as a uniquely male role of divine representational (priestly) authority are unavoidable entailed in the doctrine of women's universal and God-ordained subordination to the spiritual authority of men. But such notions are antithetical to the biblical principle of women's essential equality with men.

The truth of the biblical equality of all persons under God is grounded in Creation. According to Genesis 1:26-27, both male and female are created in God's image. James 2 and Acts 10:34 state that God shows no favoritism for one group of people over another. Galatians 3:26-28 says that in the New Covenant all believers are "sons," or heirs, of God in Christ, so there is no longer any distinction in spiritual privilege or status between Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. First Peter 2:5 and 9 tells us that all believers are priests unto God, and 1 Timothy 2:5 makes it clear that Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and human beings.

If all believers are equally sons (or heirs) of God, then every believer has an equal right—and responsibility—to represent the Father and to hear from, obey, and stand directly accountable to God apart from any merely human mediator. These rights of sonship, and the irrelevance of gender to the determination of these rights, necessarily rule out the notion that male believers should have some sort of unique access to God through a divine representational ministry. The traditionalist agenda, whereby a man in some sense mediates his wife's relationship with God, is more akin to the Old Covenant than the New Covenant.

According to the New Testament, there are only two types of priestly ministries: the priesthood of all believers and the high priesthood of Christ. The introduction of a priesthood of Christian manhood divides the members of Christ's body—solely on the basis of physical criteria—into two spiritual roles: one group is removed a step away from direct access to God through Christ, while the other group is moved up into a role of imitating, or supplementing, the mediatorial ministry of Christ. Situating a third category of priests between the high priesthood of Christ and the priesthood of all believers detracts from the priestly ministries of all believers and presumes upon the unique mediatorial ministry of Christ.

In the debate between gender hierarchy and gender equality

ty, we are not dealing merely with questions of social order or the exact meanings of two or three ancient Greek words. We are debating the theological legitimacy of defining manhood as priesthood, of imputing to the Christian man a divine representational authority that, in one way or another (and however unintentionally), undermines the priestly ministries of Christ and the members of his body.

In brief, then, the biblical doctrine of the fundamental equality of all persons before God—in particular, the spiritual irrelevance of group distinctions such as race, class, and gender (Gal. 3:26-28)—is not logically or theologically compatible with the doctrine of a universal hierarchy of female subordination to male spiritual authority.

The Traditionalist Proof Texts

Yet traditionalists insist that gender hierarchy is clearly and incontrovertibly taught in a handful of biblical proof texts. Does the Bible then contradict itself? No. A careful look at these texts reveals that they all stop short of teaching the spiritualized and universalized chain of command that traditionalists see in them. None of these texts requires that female subordination to male spiritual authority be regarded as a creational, God-ordained mandate. The submission exhorted of women in the New Testament was not a spiritual subordination necessitated solely by reason of their essential female nature (as in traditionalist teaching today). Rather, depending on the particular text, it was either an expression of one aspect of the mutual submission that should exist between equals in Christ, or a social subordination that followed from what women were able and expected to do the cultures of that time. Traditionalists go beyond the legitimate scope of the biblical texts in their efforts to render women's submission universal and unilateral, and spiritual as well as social.

Apart from logical and theological scrutiny and in isolation from the rest of Scripture, the traditionalist proof texts can be understood to be teaching either a universal principle of female subordination to male authority, or specific applications of general moral principles such as civil obedience, social propriety, respecting and submitting to other believers, or requiring those who teach or lead to be adequately prepared. Because any biblical text is properly interpreted only in light of the teaching of the entire Bible, an egalitarian interpretation of these texts is clearly the more reasonable alternative.

The traditionalist claim that Scripture universally mandates women's subordination to the spiritual authority of men contradicts the clear biblical teaching that men and women stand on equal ground before God; it effectively denies that Galatians 3:28 has any significant meaning, and it imputes to the texts on women's submission a scope and import that is by no means demanded by the texts themselves. In other words, the assertion of a universalized and spiritualized gender hierarchy in the home and church goes beyond what is clearly stated in these particular passages, and goes against the teaching of Scripture as a whole. ■

Karla Faye and Capital Punishment

(continued from page 2)

tribution as an adequate justification. Christians are uncomfortable with that.

Add unjust trials, inadequate representation in court, and errors in the criminal justice system, and you understand why 2 of 3 death penalty cases now get set aside. However, the continuing result is that only the poor get executed.

After Karla Faye's death, I presented three case studies to my students: (1) A man with political influence who murdered a person for beating up one of his relatives; (2) a high government official who ordered the death of a military officer to cover up his affair with the officer's wife; and (3) a religious leader who was an accomplice to the killing of a member of a cult-group. The majority of the students said if they witnessed the murder, they would report the crime, would testify against the assailant, and supported the death penalty for each.

You already know the answer: the three are Moses (Exod. 2:11-15), David (2 Sam. 11:14-17), and Paul (Acts 7:54-8:1). My exercise did not intend to justify the crimes of each, but to remind the students of the power of forgiving love. God transformed and redeemed these three murderers, even as he did Karla Faye Tucker. It is not too simplistic also to ask, "What would Jesus do?" After all, we are His children.

"Baptists and Religious Liberty"

Have you ever read George W. Truett's classic sermon preached from the steps of the U.S. Capitol on May 16, 1920? Now you can, in its entirety. To our knowledge, seldom if ever in the last eighty years has the entire sermon appeared. Be sure to read it.

Quote of the Month

In response to the new Fox television drama "Temptation Island," which tempts "committed couples" to stray from their romantic partners by surrounding them with seductive singles, Rabbi Kenneth Roseman in the Washington Post said: "Every human being is faced with moral choices, but we're not faced with people who deliberately set out to undermine or distort our morals, particularly for ratings and profit. This is really offensive." — Feliz Nuevo Anno, J.E.T. ■

Two Cultural Addictions: Tobacco and Prayer

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By Dwight A. Moody, Dean of the Chapel
Georgetown College, Georgetown, KY

It is not easy being a minister in a tobacco state. A month after I became the pastor of a west Kentucky church, a well meaning member sidled up to me and said, "Be careful what you say about tobacco; we have some prominent tobacco farmers in our church."

Such warnings give pause; they slow down a preacher's headlong pursuit of the prophet's mantle.

The truth of the matter is this: churches in Kentucky are addicted to tobacco, tobacco money, that is. I grew up in such a church. Tithes and offerings from the sale of tobacco funded the budget that included my father's salary. While youth leaders lectured us about smoking, and lighting up was certainly taboo in our youth group, the congregation as a whole went right on preaching and singing, building and borrowing based on the substantial flow of money from the sale of tobacco.

It wasn't just the growers. It was landowners who rented ground, warehousemen who hosted sales, investors who bought stock, and merchants who stocked shelves. It was night clerks at convenient stores eking out a living selling packs and cartons to one and all. Banks loaning money, governments collecting taxes, hospitals treating tobacco addicted patients and billing insurance companies and Medicare: it touched every arena of life.

The entire economy, the whole of our culture is addicted, in this sense, to tobacco.

The public sign of sickness is, of course, smoking. And smoking, as we know, is pervasive; it is an epidemic. Every year, in Kentucky and Indiana, 52,000 children and teenagers begin smoking. Every year, 18,000 residents of Kentucky and Indiana die from tobacco related causes. Public health officials contend it is one of the chief preventable causes of illness and death in America.

What can we do?

Our strategy has been shame. Years ago, it was shaming the individual, pointing a finger and speaking of the immorality of the smokers life. "Your body is the temple of God; do not desecrate it with the deadly poison."

These days, it is shaming the companies who market the stuff, holding press conferences or launching law suits to say, "You are deceiving the children and filling the earth with death."

There is nothing wrong with such shame; and speaking to these two groups (individual smokers and tobacco compa-

nies) is entirely appropriate. But they represent only a small percentage of the American public that is caught up in this web of addiction.

One reason this two-pronged campaign of shame has failed is because it leaves out so much of this cultural web. In the middle are all those who profit from the sale of tobacco, from churches and their consecrated and disciplined members, to governments and their noble and necessary projects for the public good.

A second reason the campaign of shame has failed is that it features the pure, the righteous, the morally indignant pointing fingers at the unclean, the sinner, the moral reprobate. Little in our experience, and nothing in our spirit, leads us to believe such tactics will succeed in effecting the conversion for which we pray.

Remember the old song, "not the preacher, not the deacon, but it's me O Lord, standing in the need of prayer"?

Conversion begins in the soul of the addict, at the point of desperation, when all else fails. Isn't this the miracle method of that great book of the century, *Alcoholics Anonymous*? Isn't this number one on that twelve step path to recovery, and wholeness, and salvation? "My name is Joe and I am an alcoholic."

The institutions, corporations, and organizations of our good land need a new confession: "My name is First Baptist church, and I am addicted to tobacco. My name is Kroger, and I am addicted to tobacco. My name is Memorial County hospital, and I am addicted to tobacco. My name is the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and I am addicted to tobacco."

It is not a strategy of shame, but of rejecting the centuries of denial, of refusing to blame others for our own responsibility, of refusing to name as scapegoats those who are most vulnerable, most visible, or most able to cough up big money. We are all in this together, and until we sing some version of that old spiritual, there will be no answer to our prayers for a drug free society.

One Hell of a Prayer

All the talk about prayer, high school football, and the Supreme Court reminds me of my own episode with such things thirty-two years ago. The year was 1968 and I was an 18 year-old senior at Hazelwood High School in suburban St. Louis. It was, they told us, the largest high school in the state.

Because it was known about school that I aspired to the ministry, somebody asked me to deliver the benediction at our high school graduation. I was honored and told my friends.

One such friend was Steve Sherman, a drummer in the band, which is how I knew him. He asked me, "Are you going to pray 'in Jesus name'?" Being Jewish, he was interested in such things. Naturally, I said, "Yes." At that time in my life I did not know there was any other way to pray. He told his mother who, in turn, spoke to a teacher, also of the Jewish faith, who talked to somebody, who, of course, complained to the principal. He discussed the matter with the superintendent of schools. At least, that is the way I think it all happened.

I do not remember being aware of any "controversy" until I was summoned to the office of the principal, a Mr. Fuqua. He was not a stranger to me, but reporting to such an office always provokes anxiety. As it turned out, it was a very low-key affair. He explained the situation, a delicate one, he said. Some had requested that I prepare a manuscript of the prayer and present it to the principal for approval.

However, as providence would have it, Mr. Fuqua was a Baptist layman, and, would you believe it, so was the superintendent, an unexpected situation in such a place. "Dwight," he said to me, "I know we Baptists are not accustomed to writing prayers, so I am telling you this situation, and asking you to be sensitive to everybody. I know you will do the right thing."

There was never any doubt in my mind what "the right thing" was; 18 year-old preacher boys have a firm grip on what is right and what is wrong. I had never written a prayer, and, as far as I knew, had never heard a written prayer. Extemporaneous prayer is the pattern in the free church tra-

dition, and so is praying in the name of Jesus.

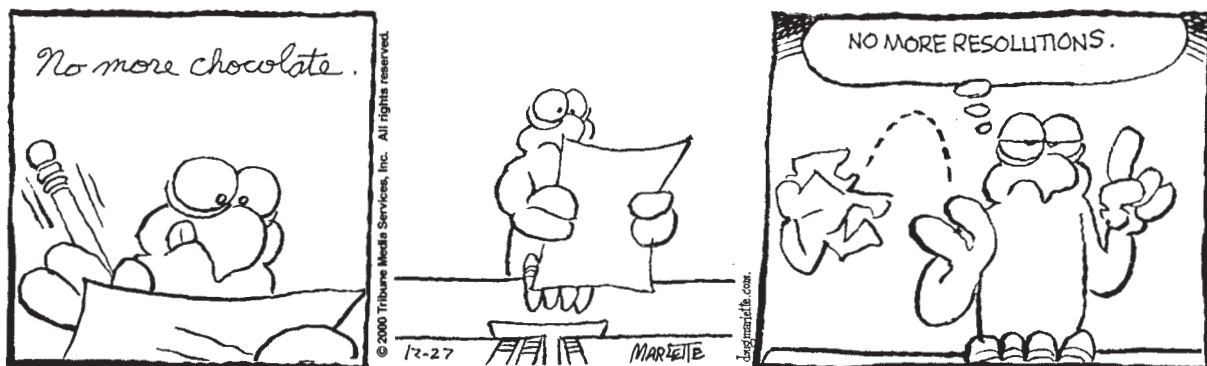
Since then, I have learned the value of written prayers. I have composed many for my own use. I have been blessed by reading, hearing, and praying those prepared by others. Much about this has been good for my Baptist-shaped soul.

But as for praying 'in Jesus' name'? I have *not* come to think it better to give up the specific for the general. There is pressure these days toward generic praying, using general terms and broad petitions, without anything said that ties it to a particular tradition. It is supposed to help all listeners feel included.

But I wonder. I still prefer the specific to the general. When in public, I say, pass the prayer around. Let the Baptist pray his way, and the Catholic hers; allow Jews to offer Jewish prayers and encourage Muslims to recite Islamic prayers. Give me a Jewish prayer any day rather than something generic. I learn from the Catholic and the Muslim as they lead in prayer. But if everyone goes for the lowest common denominator, so that all prayers sound alike, what difference does it make who prays, and to whom, and for what?

So it was that day when we gathered in Keil Auditorium, the large civic arena at the center of the city. There must have been five thousand people present. I do not remember a thing about the event; not where I sat, or who spoke, or where we went to celebrate after the ceremony. Only this: as we turned in our caps and gowns, one fellow graduate, an athlete who might have passed as the anti-type of this thin, bespectacled preacher boy, gave me a big slap on the back and said, "Thanks, Moody; that was one hell of a prayer!"

Never again has one of my prayers, written or otherwise, provoked such a memorable response! ■



Two Essays:

By Ralph Lynn, Professor of History Retired, Baylor University

The Untraveled World

[This article first appeared in *Brook Lane Health Services Bulletin, Hagerstown, MD*]

Why is it that history is replete with accounts of people killing each other in disputes over theological matters, which we believe but about which we can know nothing, while we have no record of similar conflict over the tangible, readily observable matters associated with science?

Perhaps the nearest approach to an answer is that we desperately crave the security of certainty in our lives that are so full of impenetrable mystery.

In earlier times, religion had no rivals. Modern science is no rival, either, because scientists are seekers, never finders, of the comforting ultimate truth we cover.

Perhaps, then, we seek and find our desired certainty by committing ourselves unreservedly to some gospel that can be neither proved nor disproved. But this sort of certainty seems often to be troubled by doubts. Yet, despite our doubts—or perhaps to conquer them—each group tends to defend its gospel vigorously against all opposition.

What to do?

Perhaps we should begin by coming to terms with what seems to me to be the fact that, whether or not we are aware of it, we finite human beings are all agnostics. We are agnostics because the finite can know nothing of the Infinite. Happily, however, we can be believing agnostics.

Probably it is only after entering into immortality that we can actually know about spiritual matters. A sacred book can offer little assurance since it must be interpreted—but equally learned and equally devout scholars arrive at significantly different interpretations. Even the profoundly ignorant who

insist that “it is all clear in black and white” are interpreting it.

Perhaps the way out is for Christians to approach the Bible with the humility which characterizes the approach of scientists to their “book”—which, of course, is our earth and the vast cosmos of which our planet is but a miniscule part.

Scientists are aware that they can learn only by asking humbly how Nature works. They are aware that their most cherished axioms are vulnerable and must be discarded with new discoveries. They must, in a word, be prepared to make changes in orthodoxy.

Should Christians be less humble in our search for the Infinite?

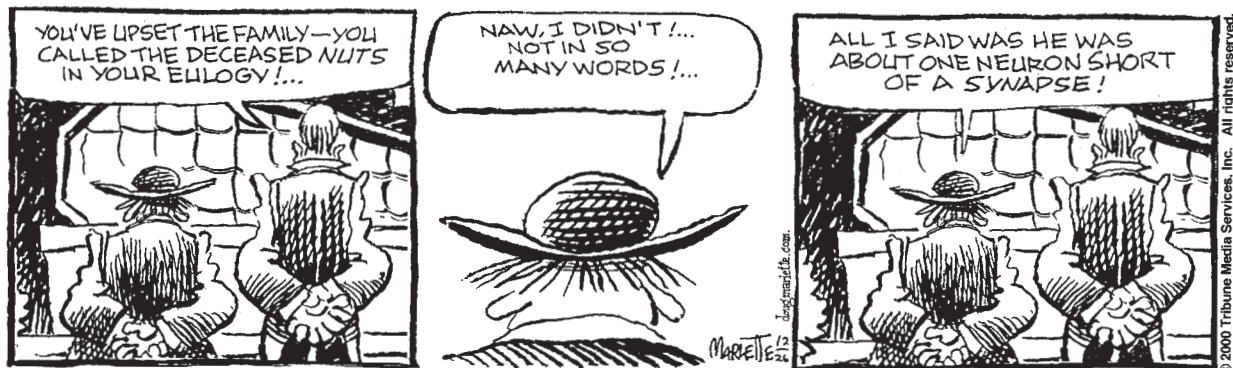
For all of us, religious or not, to quote Tennyson, “All experience is an arch where through gleams that untraveled world whose margin fades forever and forever when we move.”

Perhaps we should remember and applaud that 19th century Scottish expositor of the Bible, Alexander MacLaren, who—apparently in a moment of both despair and confidence—exclaimed, “There is more light to break from the Old Book yet.”

Rogue Ideologues Advocating Enmity

[This article first appeared in the *Waco Tribune-Herald, September 27, 2000*]

Ours is a complicated world. Responsibility for this column must be divided between the editor, my wife and the late Alfred North Whitehead—a world-famous philosopher who left England for the United



States where he taught for many years at Harvard.

The editor? He prints the “Thought for Today.” My wife? She knows I do not read this item so she reads it to me. And, of course, Whitehead wrote it: “Ideas won’t keep; something must be done with them.”

I can do nothing with the following pair of related ideas except to get them in print and invite readers to think about them.

First, on the anti-liberal beneficiaries of liberalism.

Millions of basically sensible people, who live from month to month on incomes inadequate to support their admirable life-types, have been bamboozled by wealthy politicians (Ronald Reagan) and religious demagogues (Cal Thomas) into thinking that our government is our chief problem (if not our outright enemy) and that they are wise to blame anything they do not like on liberals.

In my less civilized moments, I find myself wishing that these unhappy people could be deprived of Social Security, Medicare, guaranteed bank accounts and CDs, and the entire “safety net” which even the dinosaurs of both parties reluctantly support as the price of getting the votes of all these innocent anti-liberal beneficiaries of liberalism.

Even in my least civilized moments, I would want this deprivation to last just long enough to include one or more of the tragedies these liberal programs insure the anti-liberals against.

Second, on the National Rifle Association.

It seems to be composed of decent people, robed in righteousness and patriotism, who yet appeal continuously to our primitive instincts by arousing fears of our fellows and of our government.

Even more illogically, these nice people engage in subversive mock heroics by pretending that the ridiculously extensive small arms programs they foster (instead of civilized hunting and target guns) could be effective in a civil war (to protect our “rights”!) against our government which controls a military-industrial complex and ground, air and naval forces that are the envy of every nation on earth.

Charlton Heston, the aging poster boy of their mock heroics, has had better opportunities than the rank and file of the NRA people. Heston should be ashamed of himself.

I wish I had some effective remedy for the problems these people present. As a professional student of history and religion, I always think of education and religion as remedies for human problems.

But these people can read and write and they are characteristically religious—they attend church more or less regularly and they take chicken soup to sick neighbors.

Perhaps what is missing is the habit of serious study, analytical examination of their world, and analytical self-criticism.

But this is only a way of describing most of us who have just enough education and religion to serve as guarantees that we will never develop a serious case of either. ■

Divided By Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America

Michael O. Emerson and Christian Smith,
Oxford University Press, 2000.

*Book Review by Darold H. Morgan,
President Emeritus of the Annuity Board of the SBC*

In this book we have two university professors of Sociology resurrecting with force and logic, substantiated by a wealth of research, the very old and very much alive problem of racism in America as it pertains to evangelical Christians. The volume is especially timely for this large group of believers who think that the race problem is no longer a front-burner issue. It applies directly to white evangelicals who believe in the individualist tradition that has convinced many that choices rightly made have all but solved this particular problem. The authors do not challenge the sincerity of the evangelical’s racial concepts, but their abundant research produces a conclusion that this group may actually be preserving a sad status quo in America’s racial problems by their “head-in-the-sand” bias.

American evangelicals constitute a mixed bag of theological groupings. Included are the fundamentalists, some Pentecostals, samples from mainline denominations, and that rather nebulous group which crosses denominational lines and enjoys the title of “evangelicals.” A common thread is apparent in a variety of commitments to biblical inerrancy. By no means is there a specific denominational identity in this study.

There are several strengths in the book. One is the genuinely helpful historical review of racism in the United States from the colonial period, particularly through the aftermath of the Civil War. This section of the book is genuinely helpful in determining why racism is such a deeply rooted problem in the land. Another strength is found in the extensive research the authors have done through thousands of phone conversations and hundreds of personal interviews. This has resulted in a series of graphs that confirm their findings. One must not underestimate the extensive bibliography that will certainly be of benefit to the serious student who wishes to go further in this study.

A major weakness in the book comes from a lack of conclusions as to how to move American evangelicals to cope positively with the problem. Perhaps their intent is to convince this influential American crowd as to the range and depth of the problem itself. That substantive progress has been made in

America in the White/Black racial dilemma (and this is the primary focus of the book) is obvious. But there is so much more to be done. Evangelical inconsistencies remain a major factor in this searing critique.

The research the authors have done point succinctly to the white evangelicals who genuinely want this problem solved but do not want to pay the price necessary to bring progress to the table. They fail to recognize the depth of the problem.

The authors firmly conclude that evangelicals could make a significant difference in America's racial dilemma (which, of course, extend far beyond the white/black arena). They are also convinced that progress in federal and state legislation to some degree has been a solution. Nevertheless, American evangelicals must face the complexities of racism for "a racialized society is a society wherein race matters profoundly . . . it is a society that allocates differential economic, political, social, and even psychological rewards to groups along racial lines that are socially constructed" (p. 7).

Many white evangelicals simply are unwilling to explore thoroughly these issues because of inherent individualism, believing that blacks could solve their problems if they really wanted to. Hence, the peculiar conclusion evangelicals face is a reluctant pessimism about the entire issue—this group will not face up to reality.

Throughout the book there are some very interesting and appropriate references to the nineteenth-century observations of Alexis de Toqueville and the twentieth century's classic study of race relations in America by Gunnar Myrdal. These European observers are strangely up-to-date in their widely publicized views, especially as it applies to contemporary evangelicals and their concepts of race in America. Both of these astute writers give balance and perspective to the charges that the evangelical movement not only minimizes the racial problem, but also blames the blacks for contributing to the problem by their unwillingness to forget the past.

Perhaps the strongest lesson stemming from these pages is in the challenge that there is much work to be done "to reach the destination of equality, interdependence, and mutual understanding." The authors compliment the evangelicals for their sincere desire to address racial issues; but the compliment is corrupted by the fact that most evangelicals (according to their research) are unwilling to make the sacrifices necessary to bring substantive progress. "Good intention fails to recognize the institutionalization of racialization in . . . the system" (p. 10).

The book is a sharp wakeup call for all sincere Christians who currently are not aware of the seriousness and complexity of America's racial problems. It is not pleasant reading, but it is necessary reading for concerned followers of Christ, especially conservative, Bible-believing Christians who have unique barriers to overcome. ■

Core Values of a Christian Family

By Paul Basden

Pastor of Brookwood Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama

A high IQ is not needed to realize that families are the source of our greatest joys and our greatest sorrows. From the same people come the most satisfying and maddening experiences. Comedian Dennis Miller reminds us that it is our families who often stick with us through thick and thin. In *Ranting Again*, he writes: "Your family cuts you the most slack and gives you the most chances. When the quiz-show host says, 'Name something you find in a refrigerator,' and you say, 'A dictionary,' and the rest of America is screaming, 'You moron!' at their TV sets, who's clapping and saying, 'Good answer! Good answer!' Your family, that's who." The old saying is true: "There's nothing like a good family when you're really up a tree."

Yet families can also drive us crazy. Perhaps you've heard the true story of the woman who was speaking with her college-aged nephew one evening. "During a phone conversation, my nephew mentioned that he was taking a psychology course at Butler University in Indianapolis. 'Oh great,' I said. 'Now you'll be analyzing everyone in the family.' 'No, no,' he replied. 'I don't take abnormal psychology until next quarter.'"

Maybe Robert Frost was closest to the truth when he wrote, "Home is the place where, When you have to go there, They have to take you in." Clearly we have a love-hate relationship with our family. Most of us would prefer that it be a little more love-love. Is such a thing possible? Can our families be more like God intended them to be?

Two years ago a church member gave me former Georgia Governor Zell Miller's book entitled *Corps Values*. I read it with interest and profit. Miller maintains that the Marine Corps instills a handful of crucial values in its recruits, values such as neatness, punctuality, persistence, respect, courage and loyalty. Believing that American society is cracking and crumbling at its very foundations, and convinced that the United States would be a better place if everyone adopted the twelve Marine Corps ideals, he proposes them as the core values for our country.

That got me thinking: many Christian families are not only noticing that our national society is in this sad shape; they are noticing that their very own families are beginning to crack and crumble as well. We are facing difficult challenges that are adding heavy stresses to today's families. Are there core values that we as Christians can adopt for our families?

The answer is a resounding *yes!* Christian families are not clueless about God's will for domestic life. God has shown us his intentions for the home. He has revealed in Holy Scripture several core values, which can guide us as we seek to build godly families. The sixth chapter of Deuteronomy points to three of those

values. The first three verses set the stage.

These are the commands, decrees, and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, promised you. (Deut 6:1-3)

For forty years the people of Israel had been lost in the desert, wandering aimlessly due to disobedience to God. They were finally on the east banks of the River Jordan, waiting to enter the Promised Land and to settle it. But there was a problem: Canaan was a pagan, corrupt land, and the beliefs and practices of the Canaanites were far from what God had in mind for the Israelites. So Moses re-told the Israelites what God expected of them and what he expected them to teach their children. He was preparing these families to live in a pagan, godless culture, one that was not going to be family-friendly. If we are going to survive and thrive in our own Canaan, we need some guidance. Three core values can strengthen our families. The first core value is this:

Choose the Right Priority

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deut 6:4-9)

The *shema* (vs. 4) is arguably the most important passage in the Old Testament to both ancient and modern Jews. It served to remind the children of Israel that in the midst of a polytheistic culture, they were to proclaim the one true God. We Christians also believe in only one God, although we believe that this God exists as a tri-unity: Father, Son, and Spirit. We join all monotheistic religions in proclaiming an unambiguous message: there is only one God, not many.

What follows is a real surprise: the primary way we relate to this one true God is *love*—not fear or obedience, although both of these words are used earlier in the chapter. Certainly fearing God and obeying God are important ways of relating to God, but they are not the primary way. Jesus agreed when he identified the Great Commandment (Mt 22:37) with vs. 5: wholehearted, single-minded love for God. Both Old and New Testament name love as the ultimate way of knowing God.

In a sense, loving God is hard to explain. God is always unseen, usually unheard. How do creatures love their Creator? One way is simply to tell him that we love him, which is what praise and adoration seek to do. I am a little embarrassed to con-

feess this, but I will anyway: for the first thirty-five years of my life, I seldom told God I loved him. It sounded too affected, too artificial, too cheap. I somehow missed the words of the psalmist: “I love you, O Lord, my strength.” (Ps. 18:1) But as the years have passed, God has granted me the freedom to say, “I love you, Lord!” For me, it has been an important first step in learning to love the Lord more fully. This has changed the way I worship and the way I pray.

Another way to love God is to depend on him for our needs, which is the heart of prayer. We parents would be irritated at our children if they came into the house late one afternoon and tearfully exclaimed, “I know tonight is the night when you aren’t going to give me any more supper. I want to trust you as my parent, but I just can’t. This is the night I will starve to death.” We would be offended; our righteous indignation would be justified. It is a slap in the face for children not to trust parents who are trustworthy. In the same way, we show our love to God when we trust him to care for us today as he always has done in the past. Just as we insult him when we act as if he were not trustworthy.

We also show our love to God when we apologize for our sins and disobedience; this sums up the meaning of confession. God does not want us to live under the burden of guilt. But he does want us to name our sins in his presence so we can find pardon. Just as one of the sweetest sounds in any home is the voice of one member apologizing to another, so one of God’s favorite sounds is the confession of one of his children. It is a sign of love.

Thanking God is yet another way to express our love to him. It is the essence of gratitude. We can all appreciate the prayer of the old deacon who said, “I’m living in the red, Lord.”

And caring for others always tells God that we love him. Jesus takes it personally how we treat the lost and broken in the world. He said: “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” (Mt. 25:40)

Parents, your first responsibility is to love God as passionately as you can. Make this Priority One. “Walk the walk” for yourself.

Your second responsibility is to guide your children to do the same – “talk the talk” at home. Children *need* spiritual direction; it is not inborn. And you can no longer count on the outside support that you may have received as a child.

- Schools no longer help as much as they once did. My two daughters cannot imagine that, when I was in fourth grade in Richmond, Virginia, my teacher read a passage from the Bible and then led us in the Lord’s Prayer every morning.

- Government has relinquished its earlier stance of granting favored status to religion and churches. Those days are long gone.

- The mass media has virtually abdicated its role as friend of the Judeo-Christian ethic. Few television shows today espouse the same social values that weekly staples like “Leave It To Beaver” or “Andy Griffith” or “Father Knows Best” used to do. The morality tales embedded in today’s prime time TV shows, such as “NYPD Blue,” are quite different.

While churches help a lot (It really does take a church to raise a child!), it is we parents who have the ultimate, primary responsibility for training our kids to love the Lord. We must *live* it and *teach* it. We must “walk the walk and talk the talk.” We must both “show and tell.” We cannot choose one or the other.

Not only do children *need* spiritual direction, they also *want* spiritual direction. They know it's a mad, mad, mad, mad world out there, and they want help finding their way. So if kids *need* it and they *want* it, then we must take the responsibility to *talk* to them about it. We can no longer say, "I'll just live a good Christian life and take my children to church." That no longer suffices, if it ever did. We must tell our children about God, over and over again. Repetition is still the best teacher. Parents, let me ask you: how prominent is God in your home conversations? I am not referring to pious preaching, but to honest sharing. You value what you talk about. A Christian family knows that God is the right priority.

The second core value is:

Choose The Right Attitude

When the Lord your God brings you into the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you – a land with large, flourishing cities you did not build, houses filled with all kinds of good things you did not provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves you did not plant – then when you eat and are satisfied, be careful that you do not forget the Lord, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. (Deut. 6:10-12)

The children of Israel were about to face a severe challenge upon entering Canaan, even harder than forty years in the desert. The challenge? Prosperity. They were going to inherit a land full of gifts waiting for them: cities already built, houses ready to be occupied, wells already dug, vineyards and olive groves planted and growing. These were gifts that would make the Israelites suddenly prosperous. No longer would they be a wandering tribe of poor Bedouin nomads. And God knew the pitfalls of prosperity for Israelite families.

If prosperity posed a danger to families back then, then prosperity is still dangerous for Christian families today. Since 1986, I have lived and served in two affluent communities. Each one is fast-paced, money-hungry, consumer-driven, and materialistic. What I have seen and what our family has battled testifies to the truth that a surplus of things threatens the integrity of Christian families. From personal experience, I have found that prosperity breeds certain diabolical traits, such as:

- *Pride* – When I prosper, I begin to believe that "I am captain of my destiny, master of my fate. I deserve what I have. And I deserve even more!" It becomes terribly easy for prosperous families to forget that God put us where we are, and that gifts from heaven best explain our success. We have forgotten what the Apostle Paul wrote: "What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?" (1 Cor. 4:7).

- *Trust in Riches* – Prosperity leads many of us to conclude falsely "money can solve all my problems." We forget that God owns it all and that we are merely stewards and managers of what he has entrusted to us.

- *Addiction to Amusement* – In our culture, both the "haves" and the "have nots" find themselves addicted to amusement. Those who work hard and make huge salaries provide their fam-

ilies with plenty of opportunity to fill free time with recreation and entertainment. Ironically, those who are unemployed or underemployed are no different. They often waste the little money they have on amusement also. With so much free time devoted to "fun," it's little wonder why our prayer lives seem so shallow and vapid.

- *Day-Timer Christianity* – Prosperous people lead busy lives. We say, "I am a busy person. I have lots of obligations and duties in my life. Church is just one of them. I'll get there when it's convenient. I'll be involved if I have the time." And we have forgotten that Christianity is more than showing up at church occasionally. It is a life-changing encounter with God, or it is nothing.

Prosperity stands as a constant threat to Christian families. Winston Churchill nailed it when he said, "We are stripped bare by the curse of plenty."

How do we approach prosperity? If we really believe that "the love of money is the root of all sorts of evil" (1 Tim. 6:10), then we must be proactive in our response to things. Let me suggest two ways to handle prosperity. First, *thanksgiving* must dominate our hearts. I don't mean the kind of patronizing attitude that Jesus condemned in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, where the proud Pharisee prayed, "God, I thank you that I am not like other men" (Lk. 18:11). I mean a quiet, humble gratitude for what God has entrusted to you. Parents, are you teaching your children to be thankful for what they have? If not, we will learn firsthand the bitter lesson Shakespeare wrote about: "How sharper than a serpent's tooth is a thankless child."

Second, we need to exercise *caution*, remembering that Moses told the Israelites to "be careful" (vs. 12). Parents, do you tell your children how dangerous riches are? Do you let them know that the dollar mark can become a poison warning? Do you warn them that "things" can keep them away from Jesus and the Kingdom of God? If your kids looked at your lifestyle, would they see someone who has a healthy fear of money?

If you consider yours a Christian family, what is your attitude toward prosperity? Arne Garborg summarizes it well: "It is said that for money you can have everything, but you cannot. You can buy food, but not appetite; medicine but not health; knowledge but not wisdom; glitter, but not beauty; fun but not joy; acquaintance, but not friends; servants, but not faithfulness; leisure but not peace; sex but not love. You can have the husk of everything for money, but not the kernel." To be a truly Christian family, you must develop the right attitude toward prosperity: humble thanksgiving and healthy caution.

Finally, the third core value is:

Choose the Right Message

In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded you?" tell him: "We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Before our eyes the Lord sent miraculous signs and wonders – great and terrible – upon Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land that he promised on oath to our forefathers.

The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. And if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.” (Deut. 6:20-25)

Parents, if we have right priority (“One God, one love”), and if we have the right attitude (toward prosperity), then something wonderful will happen. Our children will ask about what we are doing and why we are doing it! They will ask:

- “Why do we have to go to church every Sunday? Lee’s family gets to play every Sunday!”
- “Why do we give money at church? Jennifer gets to keep all of her allowance.”
- “Why do we pray before meals? Sarah’s family never does that when I spend the night with her.”
- “Why do we read and believe the Bible? Almost none of my friends has a Bible on their kitchen table or by their bed.”
- “Why do we go to a soup kitchen or a homeless shelter on a holiday? All of my friends go out to eat.”

At this point there are lots of answers you can give. You could say:

- “We have to because God told us to.”
- “We ought to so that God will like us.”
- “We need to so that people will think we are good Christians.”

But that is not how God told the Israelite parents to answer their children. He told them to tell the story of grace and salvation. Listen again to the divine instructions: “In the future, when your son asks you, ‘What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded you?’ tell him: ‘We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. Before our eyes the Lord sent miraculous signs and wonders.’” Today we would say, “For it is by grace you have been saved” (Eph. 2:8). Today we would sing, “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.”

That is the right message for your children: *Grace, not law! Grace, not fear! Grace, not duty! Grace, not performance!* Parents, answer your children’s questions with the story of grace, the story of Jesus, the story of God’s love, and the story of your gratitude to the Lord. A Christian family knows the right message.

How then do we learn to live by these core values? Christian families do not happen accidentally. They do not appear by osmosis. It takes work...courage...prayer...obedience...and above all, it takes love.

Peggy Noonan, speechwriter for Ronald Reagan during his presidency, learned this lesson in an interesting way:

Such joy. It was spring of 1985, and President Reagan had just given Mother Teresa the Presidential Medal of Freedom in a Rose Garden ceremony. As she left, she walked down the corridor between the Oval Office and the West Wing drive, and there she was, turning my way. What a sight; a saint in a sari coming down the White House hall. As she came nearer, I could not help it. I bowed. “Mother,” I said, “I just want to touch your hand.” She looked up at me

– it may have been one of God’s subtle jokes that his exalted child spent her life looking up to everyone else – and said only two words. Later I would realize that they were the message of her mission. “Luff Gott.” Love God. She pressed into my hand a poem she had written, as she glided away in a swoosh of habit.

Love God indeed! When it comes to family living, we too easily look for a complex solution. But the answer is far more simple: love God. If your children are driving you crazy, love God. If your teenagers are rebelling, love God. If you have newborn children or grandchildren and anxiously wonder what kind of world they are going to inherit, love God. As you learn to practice these core Christian values in your Canaan, remember God’s ultimate call on your life: love God! ■

Ten Good Things

(continued from page 31)

with God and his righteous rule can relax in calm assurance. Some propitious developments came together last year to blanket me with a sort of cosmic calm bringing reassurance that God’s people are everlastingly covered with God’s gracious hand. This is insurance guaranteed not to lapse.

9. PROVIDENCE AND A MEASURE OF REST. Providence can be a kind of synonym for Deity; and it can also be a noun that speaks of care, foresight, and advance planning. It has seemed to me that the past year has brought abundant evidence of God’s providence, care when it is needed most. Things have been clearly seen as having worked together for some good to those who love the Lord and are called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28). When the profundity of this truth is embraced, there comes deep rest, deliverance from weariness, despair, commotion, annoyance, confusion, and agitation. Such tranquility has often been the wonderful gift of God throughout the past year, a foretaste of the blessing of rest in eternity which God is preparing from those who love him.

10. GRACE AND A MEASURE OF BLESSING were bestowed beyond what might have been asked or thought. What more could be said? Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Now, lest I leave you with the impression that I am hopelessly Pollyannaish, I offer a caveat. Yes, I know about sin, evil, failure, pain, suffering, injustice, and death. Yes, I am aware of a personal diminution of strength, some fading of vision (the medical texts call it by the decidedly inelegant name of senile macular degeneration), a gradual shutting down of the functions of my auditory nerves, and the steady demise of millions of brain cells. Yes, like T. S. Eliot’s J. Alfred Prufrock who saw the moment of his greatness flicker, who saw the Eternal Footman hold his coat and snicker so that, he says, “in short, I was afraid,” so I lived last year with a rather vivid awareness of the frailty of my humanity. And that awareness, if anything, is increasing as this new year begins to unfold. And yet . . .

Yet. Yet these ten good things remembered are not figments of the imagination. They are real. And so “if there be any virtue and if there be any praise...think on these things.” (Phil. 4:8). ■

Baptists and Religious Liberty

By George W. Truett

Editor's Note: On May 16, 1920, George W. Truett, then pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, delivered this historic address to ten to fifteen thousand people from the east steps of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C. Eight decades later, Baptists need to reclaim this distinctive of religious liberty and its corollary, separation of church and state. Though excerpts of this address are often quoted, seldom has the sermon in its entirety appeared in print. Our thanks to Melissa Rogers of the Baptist Joint Committee for retrieving the sermon from the archives of the SBC Historical Commission.

Southern Baptists count it a high privilege to hold their Annual Convention this year in the National Capitol, and they count it one of life's highest privileges to be the citizens of our one great, united country.

Grand in her rivers and her rills,
Grand in her woods and templed hills;
Grand in the wealth that glory yields,
Illustrious dead, historic fields;
Grand in her past, her present grand,
In sunlight skies, in fruitful land;
Grand in her strength on land and sea,
Grand in religious liberty."

It behooves us often to look backward as well as forward. We should be stronger and braver if we thought oftener of the epic days and deeds of our beloved and immortal dead. The occasional backward look would give us poise and patience and courage and fearlessness and faith. The ancient Hebrew teachers and leaders had a genius for looking backward to the days and deeds of their mighty dead. They never wearied of chanting the praises of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, of Moses and Joshua and Samuel; and thus did they bring to bear upon the living the inspiring memories of the noble actors and deeds of bygone days. Often such a cry as this rang in their ears; "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you: for I called him alone, and blessed him, and increased him."

The Doctrine of Religious Liberty

We shall do well, both as citizens and as Christians, if we will hark back to the chief actors and lessons in the early and epoch-making struggles of this great Western democracy, for the full establishment of civil and religious liberty—back to the days of Washington and Jefferson and Madison, and back to the days of our Baptist fathers, who have paid such a great price, through the long generations, that liberty, both religious and civil, might have free course and be glorified everywhere.

Years ago, at a notable dinner in London, that world-famed statesman, John Bright, asked an American statesman, himself a Baptist, the noble Dr. J. L. M. Curry, "What distinct contribution has your America made to the science of government?" To that question Dr. Curry replied: "The doctrine of religious lib-

erty." After a moment's reflection, Mr. Bright made the worthy reply: "It was a tremendous contribution."

Supreme Contribution of New World

Indeed, the supreme contribution of the new world to the old is the contribution of religious liberty. This is the chiefest contribution that America has thus far made to civilization. And historic justice compels me to say that it was pre-eminent-ly a Baptist contribution. The impartial historian, whether in the past, present or future, will ever agree with our American historian, Mr. Bancroft, when he says: "Freedom of conscience, unlimited freedom of mind, was from the first the trophy of the Baptists." And such historians will concur with the noble John Locke who said: "The Baptists were the first propounders of absolute liberty, just and true liberty, equal and impartial liberty." Ringing testimonies like these might be multiplied indefinitely.

Not Toleration, But Right

Baptists have one consistent record concerning liberty throughout all their long and eventful history. They have never been a party to oppression of conscience. They have forever been the unwavering champions of liberty, both religious and civil. Their contention now is, and has been, and, please God, must ever be, that it is the natural and fundamental and indefeasible right of every human being to worship God or not, according to the dictates of his conscience, and, as long as he does not infringe upon the rights of others, he is to be held accountable alone to God for all religious beliefs and practices. Our contention is not for mere toleration, but for absolute liberty. There is a wide difference between toleration and liberty. Toleration implies that somebody falsely claims the right to tolerate. Toleration is a concession, while liberty is a right. Toleration is a matter of expediency, while liberty is a matter of principle. Toleration is a gift from man, while liberty is a gift from God. It is the consistent and insistent contention of our Baptist people, always and everywhere, that religion must be forever voluntary and uncoerced, and that it is not the prerogative of any power, whether civil or ecclesiastical, to compel men to conform to any religious creed or form of worship, or to pay taxes for the support of a religious organization to which they do not belong and in whose creed they do not believe. God

wants free worshipers and no other kind.

A Fundamental Principle

What is the explanation of this consistent and notably praiseworthy record of our plain Baptist people in the realm of religious liberty? The answer is at hand. It is not because Baptists are inherently better than their neighbors—we would make no such arrogant claim. Happy are our Baptist people to live side by side with their neighbors of other Christian communions, and to have glorious Christian fellowship with such neighbors, and to honor such servants of God for their inspiring lives and their noble deeds. From our deepest hearts we pray: “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” The spiritual union of all true believers in Christ is now and ever will be a blessed reality, and such union is deeper and higher and more enduring than any and all forms and rituals and organizations. Whoever believes in Christ as his personal Saviour is our brother in the common salvation, whether he be a member of one communion or of another, or of no communion at all.

How is it, then, that Baptists, more than any other people in the world, have forever been the protagonists of religious liberty, and its compatriot, civil liberty? They did not stumble upon this principle. Their uniform, unyielding and sacrificial advocacy of such principle was not and is not an accident. It is, in a word, because of our essential and fundamental principles. Ideas rule the world. A denomination is moulded by its ruling principles, just as a nation is thus moulded and just as an individual life is thus moulded. Our fundamental essential principles have made our Baptist people, of all ages and countries, to be the unyielding protagonists of religious liberty, not only for themselves, but for everybody else as well.

The Fundamental Baptist Principles

Such fact at once provokes the inquiry: What are these fundamental Baptist principles which compel Baptists in Europe, in America, in some far-off sea girt island, to be forever contending for unrestricted religious liberty? First of all, and explaining all the rest, is the doctrine of the absolute Lordship of Jesus Christ. That doctrine is for Baptists the dominant fact in all their Christian experience, the nerve center of all their Christian life, the bedrock of all their church policy, the sheet anchor of all their hopes, the climax and crown of all their rejoicings. They say with Paul: “For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.”

The Absolute Lordship of Christ

From that germinal conception of the absolute Lordship of Christ, all our Baptist principles emerge. Just as yonder oak came from the acorn, so our many-branched Baptist life came from the cardinal principle of the absolute Lordship of Christ. The Christianity of our Baptist people, from Alpha to Omega, lives and moves and has its whole being in the realm of the doctrine of the Lordship of Christ. “One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.” Christ is the one head of the

church. All authority has been committed unto him, in heaven and on earth, and he must be given the absolute pre-eminence in all things. One clear note is ever to be sounded concerning him, even this, “Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.”

The Bible Our Rule of Faith and Practice

How shall we find out Christ's will for us? He has revealed it in his Holy Word. The Bible, and the Bible alone, is the rule of faith and practice for Baptists. To them the one standard by which all creeds and conduct and character must be tried is the Word of God. They ask only one question concerning all religious faith and practice, and that question is, “What saith the Word of God?” Not traditions, nor customs, nor councils, nor confessions, nor ecclesiastical formularies, however venerable and pretentious, guide Baptists, but simply and solely the will of Christ as they find it revealed in the New Testament. The immortal B. H. Carroll has thus stated it for us: “The New Testament is the law of Christianity. All the New Testament is the law of Christianity. The New Testament is all the law of Christianity. The New Testament always will be all the law of Christianity.”

Baptists hold that this law of Christianity, the Word of God, is the unchangeable and only law of Christ's reign, and that whatever is not found in the law cannot be bound on the consciences of men, and that this law is a sacred deposit, an inviolable trust, which Christ's friends are commissioned to guard and perpetuate wherever it may lead and whatever may be the cost of such trusteeship.

Exact Opposite of Catholicism

The Baptist message and the Roman Catholic message are the very antipodes of each other. The Roman Catholic message is sacerdotal, sacramentarian, and ecclesiastical. In its scheme of salvation it magnifies the church, the priest, and the sacraments. The Baptist message is non-sacerdotal, non-sacramentarian, and non-ecclesiastical. Its teaching is that the one High Priest for sinful humanity has entered into the holy place for all, that the veil is forever rent in twain, that the mercy seat is uncovered and opened to all, and that the humblest soul in all the world, if only he be penitent, may enter with all boldness and cast himself upon God. The Catholic doctrine of baptismal regeneration and transubstantiation is to the Baptist mind fundamentally subversive of the spiritual realities of the gospel of Christ. Likewise, the Catholic conception of the church, thrusting all its complex and cumbrous machinery between the soul and God, prescribing beliefs, claiming to exercise the power of the keys, and to control the channels of grace—all such lording it over the consciences of men is to the Baptist mind a ghastly tyranny in the realm of the soul and tends to frustrate the grace of God, to destroy freedom of conscience, and to hinder terrible the coming of Kingdom of God.

Papal Infallibility or the New Testament

That was a memorable hour in the Vatican Council, in 1870, when the dogma of papal infallibility was passed by a majority vote. It is not to be wondered at that the excitement

was intense during the discussion of such dogma, and especially when the final vote was announced. You recall that in the midst of all the tenseness and tumult of that excited assemblage, Cardinal Manning stood on an elevated platform, and in the midst of that assemblage and holding in his hand the paper just passed, declaring for the infallibility of the Pope, he said: "Let all the world go to bits and we will reconstruct it on this paper." A Baptist smiles at such an announcement as that, but not in derision and scorn. Although the Baptist is the very antithesis of his Catholic neighbor in religious conceptions and contentions, yet the Baptist will whole-heartedly contend that his Catholic neighbor shall have his candles and incense and sanctus bell and rosary, and whatever else he wishes in the expression of this worship. A Baptist would rise at midnight to plead for absolute religious liberty for his Catholic neighbor, and for his Jewish neighbor, and for everybody else. But what is the answer of a Baptist to the contention made by the Catholic for papal infallibility? Holding aloft a little book, the name of which is the New Testament, and without any hesitation or doubt, the Baptist shouts his battle cry: "Let all the world go to bits and we will reconstruct it on the New Testament."

Direct Individual Approach to God

When we turn to this New Testament, which is Christ's guidebook and law for his people, we find that supreme emphasis is everywhere put upon the individual. The individual is segregated from family, from church, from state, and from society, from dearest earthly friends or institution, and brought into direct, personal dealings with God. Every one must give account of himself to God. There can be no sponsors or deputies or proxies in such vital matter. Each one must repent for himself, and believe for himself, and be baptized for himself, and answer to God for himself, both in time and in eternity. The clarion cry of John the Baptist is to the individual, "Think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. And now also the ax is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire." One man can no more repent and believe and obey Christ for another than he can take the other's place at God's judgment bar. Neither persons nor institutions, however dear and powerful, may dare to come between the individual soul and God. "There is . . . one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Let the state and the church, let the institution, however dear, and the person, however near, stand aside, and let the individual soul make its own direct and immediate response to God. One is our pontiff, and his name is Jesus. The undelegated sovereignty of Christ makes it forever impossible for his saving grace to be manipulated by any system of human mediation whatsoever.

The right to private judgment is the crown jewel of humanity, and for any person or institution to dare to come between the soul and God is a blasphemous impertinence and a defamation of the crown rights of the Son of God.

Out of these two fundamental principles, the supreme authority of the Scriptures and the right of private judgment,

have come all the historic protests in Europe and England and America against unscriptural creeds, polity and rites, and against the unwarranted and impertinent assumption of religious authority over men's consciences, whether by church or by state. Baptists regard as an enormity any attempt to force the conscience, or to constrain men, by outward penalties, to this or that form of religious belief. Persecution may make men hypocrites, but it will not make them Christians.

Infant Baptism Unthinkable

It follows, inevitably, that Baptists are unalterably opposed to every form of sponsorial religion. If I have fellow Christians in this presence today who are the protagonists of infant baptism, they will allow me to say frankly, and certainly I would say it in the most fraternal, Christian spirit, that to Baptists infant baptism is unthinkable from every viewpoint. First of all, Baptists do not find the slightest sanction for infant baptism in the Word of God. That fact, to Baptists, makes infant baptism a most serious question for the consideration of the whole Christian world. Nor is that all. As Baptists see it, infant baptism tends to ritualize Christianity and reduce it to lifeless forms. It tends also and inevitably, as Baptists see it, to secularizing of the church and to the blurring and blotting out of the line of demarcation between the church and the unsaved world.

And since I have thus spoken with unreserved frankness, my honored Pedobaptist friends in the audience will allow me to say that Baptists solemnly believe that infant baptism, with its implications, has flooded the world, and floods it now, with untold evils.

They believe also that it perverts the scriptural symbolism of baptism; that it attempts the impossible tasks of performing an act of religious obedience by proxy, and that since it forestalls the individual initiative of the child, it carries within it the germ of persecution, and lays the predicate for the union of church and state, and that it is a Romish tradition and a corner-stone for the whole system of popery throughout the world.

I will speak yet another frank word for my beloved Baptist people, to our cherished fellow Christians who are not Baptists, and that word is that our Baptist people believe that if all the Protestant denominations would once for all put away infant baptism, and come to the full acceptance and faithful practice of New Testament baptism, that the unity of all the non-Catholic Christians in the world would be consummated, and that there would not be left one Roman Catholic church on the face of the earth at the expiration of the comparatively short period of another century.

Surely, in the face of these frank statements, our non-Baptist neighbors may apprehend something of the difficulties compelling Baptists when they are asked to enter into official alliances with those who hold such fundamentally different views from those just indicated. We call God to witness that our Baptist people have an unutterable longing for Christian union, and believe Christian union will come, but we are compelled to insist that if this union is to be real and effective, it must be based upon a better understanding of the Word of God and a more complete loyalty to the will of Christ as revealed in His Word.

The Ordinances Are Symbols

Again, to Baptists, the New Testament teaches that salvation through Christ must precede membership in his church, and must precede the observance of the two ordinances in his church, namely, baptism and the Lord's Supper. These ordinances are for the saved and only for the saved. These two ordinances are not sacramental, but symbolic. They are teaching ordinances, portraying in symbol truths of immeasurable and everlasting moment to humanity. To trifle with these symbols, to pervert their forms and at the same time to pervert the truths they are designed to symbolize, is indeed a most serious matter. Without ceasing and without wavering, Baptists are, in conscience, compelled to contend that these two teaching ordinances shall be maintained in the churches just as they were placed there in the wisdom and authority of Christ. To change these two meaningful symbols is to change their scriptural intent and content, and thus pervert them, and we solemnly believe to be the carriers of the most deadly heresies. By our loyalty to Christ, which we hold to be the supreme test of our friendship for him, we must unyieldingly contend for these two ordinances as they were originally given to Christ's churches.

The Church A Pure Democracy

To Baptists, the New Testament also clearly teaches that Christ's church is not only a spiritual body but it is also a pure democracy, all its members being equal, a local congregation, and cannot subject itself to any outside control. Such terms, therefore, as "The American Church," or "The bishop of this city or state," sound strangely incongruous to Baptist ears. In the very nature of the case, also, there must be no union between church and state, because their nature and functions are utterly different. Jesus stated the principle in the two sayings, "My kingdom is not of this world," and "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Never, anywhere, in any clime, has a true Baptist been willing, for one minute, for the union of church and state, never for a moment.

Every state church on the earth is a spiritual tyranny. And just as long as there is left upon this earth any state church, in any land, the task of Baptists will that long remain unfinished. Their cry has been and is and must ever be this:

"Let Caesar's dues be paid
To Caesar and his throne;
But consciences and souls were made
To be the Lord's alone."

A Free Church In A Free State

That utterance of Jesus, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's," is one of the most revolutionary and history-making utterances that ever fell from those lips divine. That utterance, once for all, marked the divorcement of church and state. It marked a new era for the creeds and deeds of men. It was the sunrise gun of a new day, the echoes of which are to go on and on and on until in every land, whether great or small,

the doctrine shall have absolute supremacy everywhere of a free church in a free state.

In behalf of our Baptist people I am compelled to say that forgetfulness of the principles that I have just enumerated, in our judgment, explains many of the religious ills that now afflict the world. All went well with the early churches in their earlier days. They were incomparably triumphant days for the Christian faith. Those early disciples of Jesus, without prestige and worldly power, yet aflame with the love of God and the passion of Christ, went out and shook the pagan Roman Empire from center to circumference, even in one brief generation. Christ's religion needs no prop of any kind from any worldly source, and to the degree that it is thus supported is a millstone hung about its neck.

An Incomparable Apostasy

Presently there came an incomparable apostasy in the realm of religion, which shrouded the world in spiritual night through long hundreds of years. Constantine, the Emperor, saw something in the religion of Christ's people which awakened his interest, and now we see him uniting religion to the state and marching up on the marble steps of the Emperor's palace, with the church robed in purple. Thus and there was begun the most baneful misalliance that ever fettered and cursed a suffering world. For long centuries, even from Constantine to Pope Gregory VII, the conflict between church and state waxed stronger and stronger, and the encroachments and usurpations became more deadly and devastating. When Christianity first found its way into the city of the Caesars it lived at first in cellars and alleys, but when Constantine crowned the union of church and state, the church was stamped with the impress of the Roman idea and fanned with the spirit of the Caesars. Soon we see a Pope emerging, who himself became a Caesar, and soon a group of councilors may be seen gathered around this Pope, and the supreme power of the church is assumed by the Pope and his councilors.

The long blighting record of the medieval ages is simply the working out of that idea. The Pope ere long assumed to be the monarch of the world, making the astounding claim that all kings and potentates were subject unto him. By and by when Pope Gregory VII appears, better known as Hildebrand, his assumptions are still more astounding. In him the spirit of the Roman church became incarnate and triumphant. He lorded it over parliaments and council chambers, having statesmen to do his bidding, and creating and deposing kings at his will. For example, when the Emperor Henry offended Hildebrand, the latter pronounced against Henry a sentence not only of excommunication but of deposition as Emperor, releasing all Christians from allegiance to him. He made the Emperor do penance by standing in the snow with his bare feet at Canossa, and he wrote his famous letter to William the Conqueror to the effect that the state was subordinate to the church, that the power of the state as compared to the church was as the moon compared to the sun.

This explains the famous saying of Bismarck when Chancellor of Germany, to the German Parliament: "We will

never go to Canossa again.” Whoever favors the authority of the church over the state favors the way to Canossa.

When, in the fullness of time, Columbus discovered America, the Pope calmly announced that he would divide the New World into two parts, giving one part to the King of Spain and the other to the King of Portugal. And not only did this great consolidated ecclesiasticism assume to lord it over men’s earthly treasures, but they lorded it over men’s minds, prescribing what men should think and read and write. Nor did such assumption stop with the things of this world, but it laid its hand on the next world, and claimed to have in its possession the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of purgatory so that it could shut men out of heaven or lift them out of purgatory, thus surpassing in the sweep of its power and in the pride of its autocracy the boldest and most presumptuous ruler that ever sat on a civil throne.

Absolutism Vs. Individualism

The student of history cannot fail to observe that through the long years two ideas have been in endless antagonism—the idea of absolutism and the idea of individualism, the idea of autocracy and the idea of democracy. The idea of autocracy is that supreme power is vested in the few, who, in turn, delegate this power to the many. That was the dominant idea of the Roman Empire, and upon that idea the Caesars built their throne. That idea has found world-wide impression in the realms both civil and ecclesiastical. Often have the two ideas, absolutism versus individualism, autocracy versus democracy, met in battle. Autocracy dared, in the morning of the twentieth century, to crawl out of its ugly lair and proposed to substitute the law of the jungles for the law of human brotherhood. For all time to come the hearts of men will stand aghast upon every thought of this incomparable death drama, and at the same time they will renew the vow that the few shall not presumptuously tyrannize over the many; that the law of human brotherhood and not the law of the jungle shall be given supremacy in all human affairs. And until the principle of democracy, rather than the principle of autocracy, shall be regnant in the realm of religious, our mission shall be commanding and unending.

The Reformation Incomplete

The coming of the sixteenth century was the dawning of a new hope for the world. With that century came the Protestant Reformation. Yonder goes Luther with his theses, which he nails over the old church door in Wittenberg, and the echoes of the mighty deed shake the Papacy, shake Europe, shake the whole world. Luther was joined by Melancthon and Calvin and Zwingli and other mighty leaders. Just at this point emerges one of the most outstanding anomalies of all history. Although Luther and his compeers protested vigorously against the errors of Rome, yet when these mighty men came out of Rome—and mighty men they were—they brought with them some of the grievous errors of Rome. The Protestant Reformation of the Sixteenth century was sadly incomplete—it Luther and his compeers grandly sounded out was a case of arrested development. Although the battle cry of justification

by faith alone, yet they retained the doctrine of infant baptism and a state church. They shrank from the logical conclusions of their own theses.

In Zurich there stands a statue in honor of Zwingli, in which he is represented with a Bible in one hand and sword in the other. That statue was the symbol of the union between church and state. The same statue might have been reared to Luther and his fellow reformers. Luther and Melancthon fastened a state church upon Germany, and Zwingli fastened it upon Switzerland. Knox and his associates fastened it upon Scotland. Henry VIII bound it upon England, where it remains even till this very hour.

These mighty reformers turned out to be persecutors like the Papacy before them. Luther unloosed the dogs of persecution against the struggling and faithful Anabaptists. Calvin burned Servetus, and to such awful deed Melancthon gave him approval. Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes, shut the doors of all the Protestant churches, and outlawed the Huguenots. Germany put to death that mighty Baptist leader, Balthaser Hubmaier, while Holland killed her noblest statesman, John of Barneveldt, and condemned to life imprisonment her ablest historian. Hugo Grotius, for conscience’ sake. In England, John Bunyan was kept in jail for twelve long, weary years because of his religion, and when we cross the mighty ocean separating the Old World and the New, we find the early pages of American history crimsoned with the stories of religious persecutions. The early colonies of America were the forum of the working out of the most epochal battles that earth ever knew for the triumph of religious and civil liberty.

America and Religious and Civil Liberty

Just a brief glance at the struggle in those early colonies must now suffice us. Yonder in Massachusetts, Henry Dunster, the first president of Harvard, was removed from the presidency because he objected to infant baptism. Roger Williams was banished, John Clarke was put in prison, and they publicly whipped Obadiah Holmes on Boston Common. In Connecticut the lands of our Baptist fathers were confiscated and their goods sold to build a meeting house and support a preacher of another denomination. In old Virginia, “mother of states and statesmen,” the battle for religious and civil liberty was waged all over her nobly historic territory, and the final triumph recorded there was such as to write imperishable glory upon the name of Virginia until the last syllable of recorded time. Fines and imprisonments and persecutions were everywhere in evidence in Virginia for conscience’ sake. If you would see a record incomparably interesting, go read the early statutes in Virginia concerning the Established Church and religion, and trace the epic story of the history-making struggles of that early day. If the historic records are to be accredited, those clergymen from the Established Church in Virginia made terrible inroads in collecting fines in Baptist tobacco in that early day. It is quite evident, however, that they did not get all the tobacco.

On and on was the struggle waged by our Baptist fathers for religious liberty in Virginia, in the Carolinas, in Georgia, in Rhode Island and Massachusetts and Connecticut, and else-

where, with one unyielding contention for unrestricted religious liberty for all men, and with never one wavering note. They dared to be odd, to stand alone, to refuse to conform, though it cost them suffering and even life itself. They dared to defy traditions and customs, and deliberately chose the day of non-conformity, even though in many a case it meant a cross. They pleaded and suffered, they offered their protests and remonstrances and memorials, and, thank God, mighty statesmen were won to their contention, Washington and Jefferson and Madison and Patrick Henry, and many others, until at last it was written into our country's Constitution that church and state must in this land be forever separate and free, that neither must ever trespass upon the distinctive functions of the other. It was pre-eminently a Baptist achievement.

A Lonely Struggle

Glad are our Baptist people to pay their grateful tribute to their fellow Christians of other religious communions for all their sympathy and help in this sublime achievement. Candor compels me to repeat that much of the sympathy of other religious leaders in that early struggle was on the side of legalized ecclesiastical privilege. Much of the time were Baptists pitifully lonely in their age-long struggle. We would now and always make our most grateful acknowledgment to any and all who came to the side of our Baptist fathers, whether early or late, in this destiny-determining struggle. But I take it that every informed man on the subject, whatever his religious faith, will be willing to pay tribute to our Baptist people as being the chief instrumentality in God's hands in winning the battle in America for religious liberty. Do you recall Tennyson's little poem, in which sets out the history of the seed of freedom? Catch its philosophy:

“Once in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed,
Up there came a flower.
The people said, a weed.
To and fro they went,
Through my garden bower,
And muttering discontent,
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall,
I wore a crown of light,
But thieves from o'er the wall,
Stole the seed by night.

Sowed it far and wide.
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried,
'Splendid is the flower.'

Read my little fable:
He who runs may read,
Most can grow the flowers now.
For all have got the seed.”

Very well, we are very happy for all our fellow religionists of every denomination and creed to have this splendid flower of religious liberty, but you will allow us to remind you that you got the seed in our Baptist garden. We are very happy for you to have it; now let us all make the best of it and the most of it.

The Present Call

And now, my fellow Christians, and fellow citizens, what is the present call to us in connection with the priceless principle of religious liberty? That principle, with all the history and heritage accompanying it, imposes upon us obligations to the last degree meaningful and responsible. Let us today and forever be highly resolved that the principle of religious liberty shall, please God, be preserved inviolate through all our days and the days of those who come after us. Liberty has both its perils and its obligations. We are to see to it that our attitude toward liberty, both religious and civil, both as Christians and as citizens, is an attitude consistent and constructive and worthy. We are to “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.” We are members of the two realms, the civil and the religious, and are faithfully to render unto each all that each should receive at our hands; we are to be alertly watchful day and night, that liberty, both religious and civil, shall be nowhere prostituted and mistreated. Every perversion and misuse of liberty tends by that much to jeopardize both church and state.

There comes now the clarion call to us to be the right kind of citizens. Happily, the record of our Baptist people toward civil government has been a record of unfading honor. Their love and loyalty to country have not been put to shame in any land. In the long list of published Tories in connection with the Revolutionary War there was not one Baptist name.

Liberty Not Abused

It behooves us now and ever to see to it that liberty is not abused. Well may we listen to the call of Paul, that mightiest Christian of the long centuries, as he says: “Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not your liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.” This ringing declaration should be heard and heeded by every class and condition of people throughout all our wide stretching nation.

It is the word to be heeded by religious teachers, and by editors, and by legislators, and by everybody else. Nowhere is liberty to be used “for an occasion to the flesh.” We will take free speech and a free press, with all their excrescences and perils, because of the high meaning of freedom, but we are to set ourselves with all diligence not to use these great privileges in the shaming of liberty. A free press—how often does it pervert its high privilege! Again and again, it may be seen dragging itself through all the sewers of the social order, bringing to light the moral cancers and leprosy of our poor world and glaringly exhibiting them to the gaze even of responsive youth and childhood. The editor's task, whether in the realm of church or state, is an immeasurably responsible one. These editors, side by side with the moral and religious teachers of the country, are so to magnify the ballot box, a free press, free schools, the courts, the

majesty of law and reverence for all properly accredited authority that our civilization may not be built on the shifting sands, but on the secure and enduring foundations of righteousness.

Let us remember that lawlessness, wherever found and whatever its form, is as “the pestilence that walketh in darkness” and “the destruction that wasteth at noonday.” Let us remember that he who is willing for law to be violated is an offender against the majesty of law as really as he who actually violates law. The spirit of law is the spirit of civilization. Liberty without law is anarchy. Liberty against law is rebellion. Liberty limited by law is the formula of civilization.

Humane And Righteous Laws

Challenging to the highest degree is the call that comes to legislators. They are to see to it continually, in all their legislative efforts, that their supreme concern is for the highest welfare of the people. Laws humane and righteous are to be fashioned and then to be faithfully regarded. Men are playing with fire if they lightly fashion their country’s laws and then trifle in their obedience to such laws. Indeed, all citizens, the humblest and the most prominent alike, are called to give their best thought to the maintenance of righteousness everywhere. Much truth is there in the widely quoted saying: “Our country is afflicted with the bad citizenship of good men.” The saying points its own clear lesson. “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice, but when the wicked bear rule, the people mourn.” The people, all the people, are inexorably responsible for the laws, the ideals, and the spirit that are necessary for the making of a great and enduring civilization. Every man of us is to remember that it is righteousness that exalteth a nation, and that it is sin that reproaches and destroys a nation.

God does not raise up a nation to go strutting selfishly, forgetful of the high interests of humanity. National selfishness leads to destruction as truly as does individual selfishness. Nations can no more live to themselves than can individuals. Humanity is bound up together in the big bundle of life. The world is now one big neighborhood. There are no longer any hermit nations. National isolation is no longer possible in the earth. The markets of the world instantly register every commercial change. An earthquake in Asia is at once registered in Washington City. The people on one side of the world may not dare to be indifferent to the people on the other side. Every man of us is called to be a world citizen, and to think and act in world terms. The nation that insists upon asking that old murderous question of Cain, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” the question of the profiteer and the question of the slacker, is a nation marked for decay and doom and death. The parable of the Good Samaritan is Heaven’s law for nations as well as for individuals. Some things are worth dying for, and if they are worth dying for they are worth living for. The poet was right when he sang:

“Though love repine and reason chafe,
There comes a voice without reply,
‘Tis man’s perdition to be safe,
When for the truth he ought to die.”

Things Worth Dying For

When this nation went into the World War a little while ago, after her long and patient and fruitless effort to find another way of conserving righteousness, the note was sounded in every nook and corner of our country that some things in this world are worth dying for, and if they are worth dying for they are worth living for. What are some of the things worth dying for? The sanctity of womanhood is worth dying for. The safety of childhood is worth dying for; and when Germany put to death that first helpless Belgian child, she was marked for defeat and doom. The integrity of one’s country is worth dying for. And, please God, the freedom and honor of the United States of America are worth dying for. If the great things of life are worth dying for, they are surely worth living for. Our great country may not dare to isolate herself from all the rest of the world, and selfishly say: “We propose to live and to die to ourselves, leaving all the other nations with their weaknesses and burdens and sufferings to go their ways without our help.” This nation cannot pursue any such policy and expect the favor of God. Myriads of voices, both from the living and the dead, summon us to a higher and better way. Happy am I to believe that God has his prophets not only in the pupils of the churches but also in the schoolrooms, in the editor’s chair, in the halls of legislation, in the marts of commerce, in the realms of literature. Tennyson was a prophet when, in “Locksley Hall,” he sang:

“For I dipt into the future, far as human eye
could see,
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder
That would be;
Saw the heavens fill with commerce, argosies of
Magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with
Costly bales;
Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there
Rain’d a ghastly dew
From the nations’ airy navies grappling
in the central blue;
Far along the world-wide whisper of the south-wind
rushing warm,
With the standards of the people plunging thro’
the thunderstorm.
Till the war drum throb’d no longer, and the
battle flags were furled
In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world.”

A League of Nations

Tennyson believed in a league of nations, and well might he so believe, because God is on his righteous throne, and inflexible are his purposes touching righteousness and peace for a weary, sinning, suffering, dying world. Standing here today on the steps of our nation’s Capitol, hard by the chamber of the Senate of the United States, I dare to say as a citizen and as a Christian teacher, that the moral forces of the United States of America, without regard to political parties, will never rest until there is a worthy League of Nations. I dare to express also the unhesitating belief that the unquestioned majorities of both great politi-

cal parties in this country regard the delay in the working out of a League of Nations as a national and worldwide tragedy.

The moral and religious forces of this country could not be supine and inactive as long as the saloon, the chief rendezvous of small politicians, that chronic criminal and standing anachronism of our modern civilization, was legally sponsored by the state. I can certify all the politicians of all the political parties that the legalized saloon has gone from America life, and gone to stay. Likewise, I can certify the men of all political parties, without any reference to partisan politics, that the same moral and religious forces of this country, because of inexorable moral issues involved, cannot be silent and will not be silent until there is put forth a League of Nations that will strive with all its might to put an end to the diabolism and measureless horrors of war. I thank God that the stricken man yonder in the White House has pleaded long and is pleading yet that our nation will take her full part with the others for the bringing in of that blessed day when wars shall cease to the ends of the earth.

The recent World War calls to us with a voice surpassingly appealing and responsible. Surely Alfred Noyes voices the true desire for us:

“Make firm, O God, the peace our dead have won
For folly shakes the tinsel on its head,
And Points us back to darkness and to hell,
Cackling, ‘Beware of visions,’ while our dead
Still cry, ‘It was for visions that we fell.’
They never knew the secret game of power,
All that this earth can give they thrust aside,
They crowded all their youth unto an hour,
And for fleeting dream of right, they died.
Oh, if we fail them in that awful trust,
How should we bear those voices from the dust?”

The Right Kind Of Christians
This noble doctrine and heritage of religious liberty calls to us imperiously to be the right kind of Christians. Let us never forget that a democracy, whether civil or religious, has not only its perils, but has also its unescapable obligations. A democracy calls for intelligence. The sure foundations of states must be laid, not in ignorance, but in knowledge. It is of the last importance that those who rule shall be properly trained. In a democracy, a government of the people, for the people, and by the people, the people are the rulers, and the people, all the people, are to be informed and trained.

My fellow Christians, we must hark back to our Christian schools, and see to it that these schools are put on worthy and enduring foundations. A democracy needs more than intelligence, it needs Christ. He is the light of the world, nor is there any other sufficient light for the world. He is the solution of the world's complex questions, the one adequate Helper for its dire needs, the one only sufficient Saviour for our sinning race. Our schools are afresh to take note of this supreme fact, and they are to be fundamentally and aggressively Christian. Wrong education brought on the recent World War. Such education will always lead to disaster.

Pungent were the recent words of Mr. Lloyd George: “The most formidable foe that we had to fight in Germany was not the arsenals of Krupp, but the schools of Germany.” The educational center of the world will no longer be in the Old World, but because of the great war, such center will henceforth be in this New World of America. We must build here institutions of learning that will be shot through and through with the principles and motives of Christ, the one Master over all mankind.

The Christian School
The time has come when, as never before, our beloved denomination should worthily go out to its world task as a teaching denomination. That means that there should be a crusade throughout all our borders for the vitalizing and strengthening of our Christian schools. The only complete education, in the nature of the case, is Christian education, because man is a tripartite being. By the very genius of our government, education by the state cannot be complete. Wisdom has fled from us if we fail to magnify, and magnify now, our Christian schools. These schools go to the foundation of all the life of the people. They are indispensable to the highest efficiency of the churches. Their inspirational influences are of untold value to the schools conducted by the state, to which schools also we must ever give our best support. It matters very much, do you not agree, who shall be the leaders, and what the standards in the affairs of civil government and in the realm of business life? One recalls the pithy saying of Napoleon to Marshal Ney: “An army of deer led by a lion is better than an army of lions led by a deer.” Our Christian schools are to train not only our religious leaders but hosts of our leaders in the civil and business realm as well.

The one transcending inspiring influence in civilization is the Christian religion. By all means, let the teachers and trustees and student bodies of all our Christian schools remember this supremely important fact, that civilization without Christianity is doomed. Let there be no pagan ideals in our Christian schools, and no hesitation or apology for the insistence that the one hope for the individual, the one hope for society, for civilization, is in the Christian religion. If ever the drum beat of duty sounded clearly, it is calling to us now to strengthen and magnify our Christian schools.

The Task of Evangelism
Preceding and accompanying the task of building our Christian schools, we must keep faithfully and practically in mind our primary task of evangelism, the work of winning souls from sin unto salvation, from Satan unto God. This work takes precedence of all other work in the Christian program. Salvation for sinners is through Jesus Christ alone, nor is there any other name or way under heaven whereby they may be saved. Our churches, our schools, our religious papers, our hospitals, every organization agency of the churches should be kept aflame with the passion of New Testament evangelism. Our cities and towns and villages and country places are to echo continually with the sermons and songs of the gospel evangel. The people, high and low, rich and poor, the foreigners, all the people are to be faithfully told of Jesus and his great salvation, and entreated to come

unto him to be saved by him and to become his fellow workers. The only sufficient solvent for all the questions in America—individual, social, economic, industrial, financial, political, educational, moral and religious—is to be found in the Saviourhood and Lordship of Jesus Christ.

“Give is a watchword for the hour,
A thrilling word, a word of power;
A battle cry, a flaming breath,
That calls to conquest or to death;
A word to rouse the church from rest,
To heed its Master’s high behest
The call is given Ye hosts arise;
Our watchword is Evangelize!”

W World Program

Are thus caring for the homeland, we are at the same time to see to it that our program is co-extensive with Christ’s program for the whole world. The whole world is our field, nor may we, with impunity, dare to be indifferent to any section, however remote, not a whit less than that, and with our plans sweeping the whole earth, we are to go forth with believing faith and obedient service, to seek to bring all humanity, both near and far, to the faith and service of him who came to be the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

His commission covers the whole world and reaches to every human being. Souls in China, and India, and Japan, and Europe, and Africa, and the islands of the sea, are as precious to him as souls in the United States. By the love we bear our Saviour, by the love we bear our fellows, by the greatness and preciousness of the trust committed to us, we are bound to take all the world upon our hearts and to consecrate our utmost strength to bring all humanity under the sway of Christ’s redeeming love. Let us go to such task, saying with the immortal Wesley. “The world is my parish,” and with him may we also be able to say, “And best of all, God is with us.”

G A Glorious Day

lorious it is, my fellow Christians, to be living in such a day as this, if only we shall live as we ought to live. Irresistible is the conviction that the immediate future is packed with amazing possibilities. We can understand the cry of Rupert Brooke as he sailed from Gallipoli, “Now God be thanked who hath matched us with this hour!” The day of the reign of the common people is everywhere coming like the rising tides of the ocean. The people are everywhere breaking with feudalism. Autocracy is passing, whether it be civil or ecclesiastical. Democracy is the goal toward which all feet are traveling, whether in state or in church.

The demands upon us now are enough to make an archangel tremble. Themistocles had a way of saying that he could not sleep at night for thinking of Marathon. What was Marathon compared to a day like this? John C. Calhoun, long years ago, stood there and said to his fellow workers in the National Congress: “I beg you lift up your eyes to the level of the conditions that now confront the American republic.”

Great as was that day spoken of by Mr. Calhoun, it was as a tiny babe beside a giant compared to the day that now confronts you and me. Will we be alert to see our day and be faithful enough to measure up to its high demands?

The Price To Be Paid

Are we willing to pay the price that must be paid to secure for humanity the blessings it needs to have? We say that we have seen God in the face of Jesus Christ, that we have been born again, that we are the true friends of Christ, and would make proof of our friendship for him by doing his will. Well, then, what manner of people ought we to be in all holy living and godliness? Surely we should be a holy people, remembering the apostolic characterization, “Ye are a chosen generation; a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that we should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God.”

Let us look again to the strange passion and power of the early Christians. They paid the price for spiritual power. Mark well this record: “And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.” O my fellow Christians, if we are to be in the true succession of the mighty days and deeds of the early Christian era, or of those mighty days and deeds of our Baptist fathers in later days, then selfish ease must be utterly renounced for Christ and his cause and our every gift and grace and power utterly dominated by the dynamic of his Cross. Standing here today in the shadow of our country’s Capitol, compassed about as we are with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us today renew our pledge to God, and to one another, that we will give our best to church and to state, to God and to humanity, by his grace and power, until we fall on the last sleep.

If in such spirit we will give ourselves to all the duties that await us, then we may go our ways, singing more vehemently than our fathers sang them, those lines of Whittier:

“Our fathers to their graves have gone,
Their strife is passed, their triumphs won;
But greater tasks await the race
Which comes to take their honored place,
A moral warfare with the crime
And folly of an evil time.
So let it be, in God’s own sight.
We gird us for the coming fight;
And strong in Him whose cause is ours,
In conflict with unholy powers,
We grasp the weapons He has given,
The light and truth and love of Heaven.” ■

“Whatsoever things are lovely . . . think on these things” Philippians 4:8

Ten Good Things

By Foy Valentine, Founding Editor

For many years the editors of USA Today asked me to write a column for their first issue of the New Year. Their assigned topic was “Ten Good Things that Happened” during the past year. It was a pleasant exercise. Without meaning to appropriate the idea for this present occasion, I sat down recently and reviewed the year 2000 to see what might pop into my head. Sure enough Ten Good Things came to mind.

Would you be willing for me to share them with you?

1. LIFE AND A MEASURE OF HEALTH were extended to me. The ongoing gift of life itself could never be basely taken for granted. On the contrary, life last year seemed to me to be more and more the special gift of God; and I have savored it day-by-day, week-by-week, and month-by-month. Moreover, God forbid that I should consider the measure of health which I have experienced as anything but undeserved, unearned, and unmerited icing for the cake of life. In the year 2000, God did this again for me and for most of those I truly love. I am much obliged.

2. FAMILY AND A MEASURE OF JOY were embraced. The richest blessings of life were encompassed in this circle of family. Godly parents, a wonderful wife of 53 years, three splendid daughters, fine sons-in-law, five marvelous grandchildren, brothers who are both kin and kindred spirits, and a cloud of cousins near and far, close and distant, have affirmed us, propped us up in our leaning places, and furnished us a context for joyous and abundant living. Things could not even begun to be as good without them.

3. FRIENDSHIPS AND A MEASURE OF ENRICHMENT were experienced. Let me illustrate with how we have capsuled in a two-day get-together on Valentine’s Day an institutionalized Friendship Festival. Friends from near and far come flying in, driving in, shuffling in, and hobbling in. Some spend the night with us, staying up late and talking non-stop. Some get up early. Some sleep late. All eat a right smart. We have a big Luncheon Blowout at Neiman Marcus’ Iris Room where they clear off a wide space for us and try to stay out of our way. We share news, tell yearns, make jokes, and do what we can to keep one another appropriately humble. Nobody has an agenda. We are totally and happily relaxed. As one of them e-mailed back the next day after returning to his home, “It just doesn’t get any better than that.” So. It really doesn’t.

4. PEACE AND A MEASURE OF JUSTICE were proffered and, in various ways, accepted. There is a biblical figure of speech which speaks of righteousness and peace kissing each other (Ps. 85:10). When righteousness, or justice, come out on top of all our strivings, peace prevails. This is not just an absence of hostility but a *shalom* of heavenly proportions, a peace that has surmounted injustice, soared above strife, and broken down middle

walls of partition. Some great points of light during the past year have been the incredible work of many who have done the things that make for peace. We gratefully salute them.

5. DELIVERANCE AND MEASURE OF CLOSURE for some of the loads I had shouldered were tendered and thankfully received. A Director, Dr. Robert Kruschwitz, was enlisted and installed for the Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University, the consummation of a decade of prayers, hopes, and dreams. An Editor, Dr. Joe Trull, took the torch for publishing *Christian Ethics Today* and with the enlistment of a new Board of Directors has successfully completed the sixth year of this journal’s publication. My own sense of deliverance from these duties has been capped with a deeply satisfying sense of closure regarding my own part in these enterprises. They are in good hands, and I wholeheartedly bless them.

6. WORK AND A MEASURE OF FULFILLMENT continued. I never doubted that they would. Fate handed me a lemon in the form of the Great Depression when I was six years old. That long night began in 1929. Hard Times. But my family, with the help of God, made what little lemonade we could of it. I went to work. And I have been working ever since. Like Virgil’s Aeneas who kept bending his personal will to that of his divine mandate to found and build the city of Rome, I have not been disobedient to my own heavenly vision. I have stayed hitched, continuing to heed what I have perceived to be the high calling of God in Christ Jesus to help “changed people change the world.” God has set before me a bountiful table of marvelous fulfillment. There are signs, moreover, that he may not be plumb finished.

7. ORDERING AND A MEASURE OF ALIGNMENT began to fall into place during the year 2000 in ways that made life better and more satisfying. Too much work can be as hurtful as too little work. For most of my life, for whatever neuroses may have been goading me, I’ve worked too hard, burned the candle at both ends too foolishly, and undertook too much. Now at long last I am beginning to find breathing room, gradually getting my house in order, and slowly catching up on lots of things too long pushed aside. There is an insightful and moving old pioneer gospel song that speaks of the world’s turning and turning till it turns around right. Right on. It’s a good feeling to see things turning around right, to be getting some of my ducks in a row.

8. CALM AND MEASURE OF ASSURANCE. When the Bible says that the stars in their courses fought against Sisera, the Canaanite enemy of the people of God, it is a way of saying that this is a moral universe. Ultimately all those who array themselves against the redemptive and just purposes of the Lord God are destined for defeat. Conversely, those who identify themselves

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CHRISTIAN ETHICS TODAY

A Journal of Christian Ethics

“We need now to recover the prophethood of all believers, matching our zeal for the priesthood of all believers with a passion for the prophethood of all believers.”

—Foy Valentine, Founding Editor

PURPOSES

- Strengthen and support the cause of Christian ethics.
- Champion moral values without which civilization itself could not survive.
- Interpret and apply Christian experience, biblical truth, theological insights, historical perspectives, and current research to contemporary moral issues.
- Maintain an independent prophetic voice for truth and righteousness.
- Address the ethical dimension of public policy issues.
- Utilize the contributions of responsible stewards who designate resources to further the cause of Christian ethics.

Christian Ethics Today was born in the mind and heart of Foy Valentine, as an integral part of his dream for a Center for Christian Ethics. In his words, the purpose of the Journal was “to inform, inspire, and unify a lively company of individuals and organizations interested in working for personal morality and public righteousness.”

During its first five years, the Journal established a life of its own, addressing a variety of subjects relating to Christian social concerns. Creating a rare combination of substantive material, provocative commentary, titillating dialogue, whimsical stories, and reprints of classical expositions, the Journal developed a large and growing list of readers. When the Center was transferred to Baylor University in June 2000, with the calling of a permanent Director, the disbanding Board voted to continue the publication of *Christian Ethics Today*, appointing a new editor and a new Board.

The Journal will continue to be published six times per year. The purpose envisioned by the founding editor remains: To “clarify, communicate, cultivate, and champion those basic ethical values without which neither the churches or civilization itself could survive: wisdom, courage, temperance, justice, righteousness, peace, faith, hope, love, and freedom.”

From the beginning *Christian Ethics Today* has been sent without charge to anyone requesting it, six times per year, “as money and energy permit.” A new editor brings added energy to the mission. But more than ever before, your financial support is “greatly needed, urgently solicited, and genuinely appreciated.” The Christian Ethics Today Foundation is a non-profit organization and has applied for a 501 (c) (3) from the Internal Revenue Service.

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