

April 29, 1968

PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE<sup>332</sup>  
(Twenty-sixth in a series)

RIOTS AND RIGHTS

By T. B. Maston

Retired Professor of Christian Ethics  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

420

American cities in recent years have been torn by riots. Many white Americans, including some Christians, are tending to deny the rights of our Negro citizens because of their disapproval of the riots. The riots properly can and should be condemned, but we should not close our eyes to the conditions that tend to spawn the riots. Neither should we let our condemnation of the riots cause us to lose our interest in and concern for the constitutional rights of all citizens, regardless of race or class.

We should also remember that the riots represent only a minority of our colored citizens. Most Negro leaders are strongly opposed to the riots. As American citizens, many of them are just as interested as their white friends in maintaining respect for constituted authorities. They recognize that a breakdown of respect for law and order in a democracy can rather easily, and it seems inevitably, lead to anarchy. They also understand that anarchy is fallow ground for the rise of a dictatorship. Under the latter, the rights of all are limited or suppressed.

Riots tend to jeopardize the rights of Negroes in another way. The riots of recent years have tended to drive Negro and white people further apart. It has been increasingly difficult to maintain lines of communication. Some Negro as well as white leaders think there is a possibility of our nation moving in the direction of two societies, one black and the other white, with each society separate but equal.

If such a separation occurs, it will be a type of apartheid. It will be a far cry from what Negro and white leaders have contemplated for our nation. They have been advocating a thorough going integration of the Negro into the mainstream of American life. They have wanted the American dream or creed applied consistently and equally to men of all races and cultures. This would mean first-class citizenship for all. The riots threaten this goal. The whole civil rights movement is threatened.

Regardless of our theological persuasion or our social perspective, we should be concerned about the racial situation in our urban centers. We should seek to become acquainted with the grievances of our Negro people, many of whom live in the crowded ghettos in the deteriorating centers of our cities.

Many individual Christians should get involved in doing something about those conditions. The same should be true of many of our churches. This may require a changed perspective concerning the work and ministry of the church. It may require a degree of cooperation that few churches have known with other Baptist churches, with churches of other denominations, and with community agencies.

Let us repeat: We as Christians should be careful that we do not lose sight of the basic rights of Negroes because we condemn the riots. Let us keep the riots and the rights separated.

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My personal opinion is that the vast majority of Christians should be politically independent. In this way, they can let the man running for office or the issues rather than the party label determine how they vote.

Also, by being an independent, they can best make their influence felt in the political world. Independent voters determine the outcome of most elections. Because independent voters are so determinative in elections, they are the main hope for a clean-up when the party in power gets corrupt.

Another reason for being an independent in politics is that there is not much to choose between the parties. Both major parties have conservative and liberal wings. The only difference is a difference in degree. Both parties, in a sense and to a degree, are split personalities. Even party platforms are strikingly similar on many issues. There would be a sounder basis for faithful adherence to one party if there could be a political re-alignment with a clear-cut distinction between a conservative and a liberal party.

An additional reason for my political independence is a personal aversion for most labels, particularly theological and political ones. This aversion is especially strong for a self-imposed label. When a person voluntarily accepts a label he tends to limit himself in his search for truth. The only restraint that a child of God should want should be the restraint of truth itself.

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# BAPTIST PRESS

News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

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Keith Named Texas  
Baptist PR Director

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DALLAS (BP)--Billy Keith, former director of Baptist radio and television work in northern Japan, has been named director of public relations for the Baptist General Convention of Texas, effective June 1.

Keith, a Southern Baptist missionary to Japan since 1961, succeeds R. T. McCartney who resigned Jan. 1 to become general manager of Arthur Davenport Associates in Oklahoma, City.

The new Texas Baptist public relations director is a native of Oklahoma, where he was pastor of First Baptist Church, Canadian, Okla., before appointment by the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board as a missionary to Japan in 1961.

Keith, 34, is a graduate of Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill., and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, where he served for several years as news director. He was also news director at the seminary last year while on furlough from the mission field.

During his service in Japan, Keith was news director for the Japan Baptist New Life Movement, a nation-wide evangelistic effort co-sponsored by Texas Baptists in 1961, pastor of a Japanese church, plus directing radio and television work in Sapporo, Japan, on the northern island of Hokkaido. He also was editor for a period of the Japan Baptist News.

Keith received the unanimous approval of a special committee authorized by the convention's Executive Board in March to find a successor to McCartney, who had served as director of the department since 1961. His selection was announced here by T. A. Patterson executive secretary of the Texas convention.

"Keith comes to us with rich experience in a number of fields of service," said Patterson, "having been a missionary, a pastor, an editor, news director and public relations associate with Southwestern Seminary.

"He understands Texas Baptists, understands the importance of the communications media and ways and means of utilizing these media to the fullest extent," said Patterson.

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Ministers Wives To  
Take Look At Selves

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The 12:30 Wednesday luncheon will be held at the Sheraton-Lincoln Hotel just a few blocks from the Sam Houston Memorial Coliseum where the convention will hold its sessions.

The program will feature a panel discussion entitled, "Let's Look at Ourselves." Panelists will be Mrs. Lamar Jackson of Birmingham, Ala.; Mrs. Andrew Hall of Fayetteville, Ark.; Mrs. Charles Jolly of Pittsburg, Pa.; and Mrs. Charles Walker of Jasper, Ga. Each is the wife of a Baptist minister.

Two brief addresses will follow the panel: Mrs. Ollie J. (Loulie Latimer) Owens, of Columbia, S. C., on the subject, "Let's Laugh at Ourselves," and by Mrs. Carl Bates of Charlotte, N. C., on "Let's Like Ourselves."

Tickets for the luncheon will be on sale in the lobby of the convention hall beginning Monday, June 3, at a cost of \$3.75, said Mrs. Herbert Howard of Dallas, president of the organization.

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Union President Inaugurated  
In Salute To Higher Education

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JACKSON, Tenn. (BP)--During a day-long "Salute to Higher Education" here when Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey spoke, Union University inaugurated Robert E. Craig as the Baptist school's 17th president.

Inaugural speaker was John J. Hurt, editor of the Baptist Standard, weekly publication of Texas Baptists, who spoke of the value of communication in today's society and in education.

Lack of communication, he said, is responsible for many of life's problems. "In this 20th century we are butchering ourselves upon a cross of misunderstanding when technology has provided the ultimate in communication facilities."

Hurt said that the simplist of all communication is dialogue, where two or more sit and exchange their thinking.

He called for more dialogue between college administrators and students, saying the day is gone when presidential edicts can be accepted without argument. "Far better than compulsory agreement is dialogue which explores the facts leading to conclusions with opportunity to express contrary views," Hurt said.

Craig, formally installed as president of the Baptist school here, came to Union from the presidency of Southwest Baptist College in Bolivar, Mo. Previously he was dean at California Baptist College, Riverside, Calif., and chairman of the teacher education division at the University of Corpus Christi in southern Texas.

The inaugural services were held at the First Baptist Church of Jackson. Earlier during the day, Vice President Humphrey spoke at a "Salute to Higher Education" program at the new Jackson coliseum. The presidents of four colleges in Jackson were honored during the day's activities.

Colleges in Jackson participating in the program were Union University, Jackson State County Junior College where F. E. Wright, former Union president, is now president; Lambuth College, and Lane College.

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Houston Baptist College  
Study Set On Integration

337

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4/29/68

HOUSTON (BP)--A professor at Houston Baptist College, Jerry Robinson, has been awarded a \$176,898 grant for a three-year study on the mental conflicts public school teachers experience in adjusting to teaching in integrated classrooms.

The study is being financed by the National Institute of Mental Health, U. S. D partment of Health, Education and Welfare.

Robinson is a former assistant pastor of the First Baptist Church in Brookhaven, Miss., and assistant professor in sociology at the Baptist school here.

The study will be carried out with the cooperation of the Houston Independent School District, and will evaluate the effectiveness of special training programs conducted last summer at Texas Southern University, the University of Houston and the University of St. Thomas, which were designed to reduce the mental conflicts of teachers adjusting to integration.

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