



April 30, 1968

328  
PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE  
(Twenty-eighth in a series)

SINS IN THE SANCTUARY

By T. B. Maston

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Retired Professor of Christian Ethics  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

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Our church buildings have been dedicated to God and to his worship. How thoroughly are they being used to fulfill his purposes? The sanctuary stands in the community as a symbol of God's presence among the people. Do the people recognize it as such a symbol? Whether or not they do will be determined largely by the prevalence or absence of certain sins in the sanctuary.

One sin that has to be guarded against is a worldly pride in the building itself. Certainly a church should provide a worthy house for the Lord, but it has to watch or an unworthy pride will creep in.

This pride frequently expresses itself in a boastful parade of the cost of the building. There may also be pride in some of the luxuries that add nothing to the efficiency of the building.

Pride in the building may repel the very people the church needs most to reach. It is even possible that some members of the church will prefer for certain types of people not to be reached by the church.

The latter may be an expression of self-satisfaction and self-centeredness. If this spirit becomes general in the church group, the church will tend to remain a relatively closely knit, more or less exclusive fellowship. Those who are welcomed into the fellowship will be the ones who can smoothly adjust to the group.

Closely akin to, if not identical with, the preceding sins in the sanctuary is the spirit of self-righteousness. This was the only sin specifically condemned by Jesus. It was the sin of the Pharisees, the most "religious" people of that day.

Too many who attend regularly the services in our sanctuaries secretly if not openly pray the prayer of the Pharisee, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are" (Luke 18:11). He went on to inform the Lord what a good man he was. We need to have, even in the sanctuary, the spirit of the publican: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

One of the besetting sins of those of us who regularly attend the services of our churches is a failure to recognize our sinfulness. Too many of us in the sanctuary do not recognize that "all we like sheep have gone astray" (Isa. 53:6), that all of us "have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23).

Also, entirely too many of us go from the sanctuary unchanged. This is a sin. We supposedly came to worship God. We can be sure that if we are not changed when we leave his house, we have not worshipped him.

If we, through genuine worship, have had a vision of the God revealed in the Scriptures then we will go out of the sanctuary to attempt to make that vision a reality in the world. If we do not go into the world, it is a sin. If we go with any purpose other than to serve, it is also a sin.

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Furthermore, there are some wonderful men and women in our midst. Many of the latter, however, are in places of executive leadership. Certainly, we should be grateful to the Lord for the top level elder statesmen that we have among us.

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April 30, 1968

News Analysis

Shocking Hunger Conditions <sup>340</sup>  
 Reported Throughout America

1,110

By Beth Hayworth

WASHINGTON (BP)--In the midst of the national debate on the meaning of the Poor People's Campaign to dramatize the plight of the poor in the land, a report on Hunger in the Nation has been released here that illustrates the problem.

Of the 29.9 million persons classified by the government as "impoverished," at least 10 million have such insufficient diets that many are slowly starving to death, according to the report.

Facts to back up this claim are in a 100-page document released by the Citizens Board of Inquiry into Hunger and Malnutrition in the United States, a privately-financed citizens group.

"Hunger, USA" tells the story of babies who weigh less at one year than they did at birth, of children who go to school too hungry to learn and of old folks who are so poor that they subsist on a liquid diet.

The private board of inquiry was set up last summer by the Citizens' Crusade Against Poverty at the suggestion of its chairman, Walter P. Reuther, head of the United Auto Workers.

The co-chairmen of the panel were Benjamin E. Mays, president emeritus of Morehouse College in Atlanta and Leslie W. Dunbar, executive director of the Field Foundation.

The panel was appointed and research begun after a Senate subcommittee heard testimony about widespread hunger and malnutrition in Mississippi.

Funds for the study came from private foundations and church groups. Two denominations supporting the research were the Domestic and Foreign Missions Society of the Protestant-Episcopal Church in the U. S. A., and the Board of Missions of the United Presbyterian Church, U. S. A.

In releasing its report, the 25-member board of prominent Americans said that chronic hunger is not confined to Mississippi alone. Victims of hunger can be found all over the nation, but particularly in the South and Southwest, it said.

Conditions are so bad in 256 counties in 24 states that a national emergency should be declared in order to give immediate aid, the board declared.

Leading the list of states with "hunger counties," is Georgia with 47. Mississippi is second with 37.

Others in the top 12 are: Texas, 30; North Carolina, 27; Alabama, 17; South Carolina, 16; Virginia, 14; Kentucky and Tennessee, 11 each; Louisiana, 9; Florida, 8; and South Dakota, 7.

A county was classified as a "hunger area" if it had three out of four factors at an established "critical" level: 40 per cent of the families below the poverty line; mortality rate of 15 per 1,000 among infants from one month to two years; 25 per cent of poor participating in federal food distribution programs and receiving welfare assistance.

Although the board said the critical level for each factor was set "conservatively" to insure that they were addressing themselves to extreme conditions, in most cases the critical level was twice that of the national average.

The citizens group said that most of the desolate poor are Indians, Negroes, Appalachian whites and Spanish-speaking residents of the Southwest. Migrant farm families and Indians on some reservations were described as having the worst of all health conditions.

"If you will go look, you will find America a shocking place," the board of inquiry said after its nine months search for the facts of hunger.

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'We find ourselves somewhat startled by our own findings, for we too had been lulled into the comforting belief that at least the extremes of privation had been eliminated in the process of becoming the world's wealthiest nation," they said.

The panel summed up its findings thusly:

\* Hunger and malnutrition exist in this country, affecting millions of our fellow Americans and increasing in severity and extent from year to year.

\* Hunger and malnutrition take their toll in the form of infant deaths, organic brain damage, retarded growth and learning rates, increased vulnerability to disease, withdrawal, apathy, alienation, frustration and violence.

\* Federal programs designed to help the poor eat better are "terribly insufficient." Of the nearly 30 million poor, only 5.4 million, or 18 per cent, benefit from the surplus commodities and the food stamps programs. The majority of those participating are not the poorest of the poor, the panel said.

\* Of the six million school children of poor families, only two million received free lunches in the nation's school lunch program.

\* Participation in government food programs has dropped 1.4 million in the last six years while malnutrition among the poor has risen sharply.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture, which administers the government's food programs, came in for severe criticism for failing to provide better diets for the poor. The private panel charged that the failure of federal efforts to feed the poor "cannot be divorced from our nation's agricultural policy, the congressional committees that dictate that policy and the Department of Agriculture that implements it."

They accused the Agriculture Department of placing the interests of agricultural producers first, the needs of the poor and hungry second.

In its recommendations, the board urged that the government's food programs be taken from the Agriculture Department and given to the Office of Economic Opportunity or the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

Secretary of Agriculture Orville L. Freeman responded to the accusations by saying he "welcomed" the citizens group to what "has often been a lonely battle to eradicate hunger." He added that support for his department's efforts in these programs has been "in short supply" in recent years.

Freeman said the elimination of hunger is a complex problem and is compounded by a lack of jobs, education and discrimination. He added that in about 330 low-income counties, local governments have refused the aid of the Agriculture Department's food programs.

The report also indicts private service groups as well as government agencies for the "shocking" absence of statistics on the extent of hunger in the United States. They said their own estimate of 10 million suffering from hunger and malnutrition was conservative and the actual figure might be closer to 13 million.

After last summer's hearings on hunger in Mississippi, Congress authorized early in December a study to determine the extent of malnutrition in this country. That study, due June 5, 1968, has never gotten off the ground, and Congress has not yet appropriated funds for the investigation.

At the heart of the board's long-range recommendations is a free food stamp program. Eligible recipients would file simplified federal income tax returns and receive vouchers entitling them to the food stamps.

In concluding its report, the board urged private organizations concerned with human welfare to address themselves to the "most elemental of all of humanity's problems" and to find within its purposes and resources its own distinctive contribution to the problem of hunger in America.

A commitment equal to that of the industrial expansion following World War II and the present efforts to explore space should be the model, it said. "With a realistic and sincere sense of resolve, we must say that all our children shall eat well," the citizens challenged.



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