

PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
(Forty-third in a series)

Theological Conservatism and Social Liberalism

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I do not like to use theological labels, such as "conservative" and "liberal," but sometimes it seems necessary to do so.

It is generally understood that Southern Baptists are theologically conservative. Some outside of our ranks, who do not understand us, call us "fundamentalists." The latter may be appropriate for some Southern Baptists, but not for the vast majority.

There may also be a few theological liberals among Southern Baptists, but if so, they are very few. Naturally, Southern Baptists represent different degrees of conservatism, but most of us are middle-of-the-road conservatives.

The majority of Southern Baptists are not only conservative theologically, but also economically, politically, and socially. We are, in the main, traditionalists or defenders of the status-quo.

This general conservatism stems, to a large degree, from the culture in which most of us live. In other words, we have been culturally conditioned.

We need to awaken, however, to the fact that the region where most of us live is rapidly changing from a rurally oriented culture to an industrialized, urbanized area. We also need to recognize that we are no longer exclusively "Southern." Some of the areas where we are growing most rapidly are outside the states of the Deep South. It is time for us to join the nation and the world.

Let us hope that we will retain our basically conservative theological position. This will provide a solid foundation on which we can build and advance in the days ahead. Let us trust, however, that we will couple with our theological conservatism a social liberalism, which is necessary if we are to speak effectively to the world in which we live.

These are revolutionary days in our nation and in our world. The masses of the world, including American Negroes, are on the march. They are remaking the face of the earth. It is possible that God is on the march with these restless masses. At least, we can be sure that He is creatively active in our day as He has been in the past.

How tragic if most Southern Baptists defend the status-quo which represents an old way of life that is definitely on the way out. It will be doubly tragic if many of our leaders and pastors try to continue to live in the nineteenth century. Let all of us, Southern Baptists and our leaders, move into the twentieth century in our moral and social perspective.

There are few things that would do more to revitalize Southern Baptist life than a meaningful, dynamic union of a basically conservative theology and a progressive or liberal spirit regarding the application of Christian truth to our pressing social, economic, and political problems.

And let us never forget that one can be and many are socially liberal and yet conservative theologically. Unfortunately, some Southern Baptists tend to label a man a "liberal" if they disagree with his position regarding the application of the gospel to some particular economic, political, or social issue. Really, some will label him a "liberal" if he has any position on some of those issues.



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FBI Reports 3.8 Million
Crimes in U. S. A. in 1967

WASHINGTON (BP)--There were 3,802,300 crimes committed in the nation in 1967, an increase of 16.5 per cent over 1966, according to J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in the "Uniform Crime Reports-1967," just released to the public.

Los Angeles--Long Beach, Calif., had the highest crime rate in the nation last year, the FBI chief's report indicated. This area chalked up 4,117.4 crimes per 100,000 population.

The top ten cities with the highest crime rate are: (1) Los Angeles--Long Beach, Calif.; (2) New York City; (3) Oakland, Calif.; (4) Miami, Fla.; (5) Baltimore, Md.; (6) Detroit, Mich.; (7) Phoenix, Ariz.; (8) Augusta, Ga.; (9) New Orleans, La.; and (10) Fresno, Calif.

Contrary to popular opinion, the nation's capital city does not lead in crime. There are 16 other major cities in the U. S. A. with crime rates higher than Washington, D. C.

The 193-page report is the nation's only nation-wide view of crime statistics, Hoover said. It contains information provided by local law enforcement agencies. It lists only those crimes known to the police.

The FBI head pointed out that there is no way to determine the total number of crimes which are committed. Many crimes are committed which are not reported to official sources, he said.

The crimes included in the FBI report are murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny of \$50 and over and auto theft. These, the report said, "represent the most common local crime problem."

Crime is not merely a police or government problem, Hoover said. It is a social problem with responsibility reaching out to the entire community, he said.

"Most murders are committed by relatives of the victim or persons acquainted with the victim," the report found. "It follows, therefore, based on these facts, that criminal homicide is, to a major extent, a social problem beyond police prevention," it continued.

Likewise, "most aggravated assaults occur within the family unit or among neighbors or acquaintances."

Careers in crime or repeat arrests have been under special study by the FBI since 1963. "Of all offenders (17,876) released to the streets in 1963, 60 per cent were re-arrested on a new charge within the four-year period," the report said.

The study also found that "the longer a releasee refrains from criminal involvement the greater his chances are for successful rehabilitation."

"The first two years appear to be critical and the figures suggest a greater degree of supervision is necessary during this period of time," according to the report.

The large numbers of repeat offenses place "an ever increasing burden on law enforcement and raise serious questions with respect to the effectiveness of rehabilitation," Hoover said.

According to the time clock on crime in 1967, seven serious crimes were committed each minute.

Specifically, there was one murder every 43 minutes, one forcible rape every 19 minutes, one aggravated assault every two minutes, one robbery every two and a half minutes, one burglary every 20 seconds, one larceny (\$50 and over) every 30 seconds and one auto theft every 48 seconds.

Stewardship Commission
Okays Fund Raising Program

NASHVILLE (BP)--The Stewardship Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention approved here a new program of work designed to assist churches and institutions with fund raising efforts on a request basis, and elected a new director of Cooperative Program promotion.

Named to head the commission's work in Cooperative Program promotion was James V. Lackey, the commission's director of church and institutional fund raising for the past year and commission staff member for six years. A native of Oklahoma, Lackey succeeds W. E. Grindstaff who resigned recently.

During the past year, Lackey has been developing the program of endowment and capital giving services which the commission voted to approve in its August meeting.

Basically, the program will assist Baptist churches and institutions in raising cash, pledges, and deferred giving for debt retirement, refurbishing present facilities, building new facilities, acquiring equipment and property, or (for institutions) annual giving, capital giving, and deferred giving programs.

The Stewardship Commission's services will be offered on a cost-recovery basis to the Baptist churches or institutions which request their assistance with the approval of Baptist stewardship leadership on the state-wide level.

Merril D. Moore, executive director of the SBC Stewardship Commission, pointed out that the new fund-raising services could not be fully offered to Southern Baptist churches and institutions until after the Stewardship Commission employs staff members to direct the services within the next six to nine months.

The commission approved the plan which calls for employment of a director of endowment and capital giving services. Eventually, as the program begins to pay its own way, as many as three associate directors of the endowment and capital giving service will be added, with consultants "as needed" employed to do the field work.

In outlining the plan to the commission, Lackey explained that the consultants will be professionals in the field of fund raising and development, and will spend a specific amount of time in relation to the fund-drive goal amount, directing the fund raising efforts on the field.

The church or institution would pay for the service a cost-recovery basis determined by the adopted goal and the number of days required to "service" the goal.

The program will incorporate three areas of work into one office, --church building, fund raising, institutional development, and estate planning and deferred giving assistance.

The Stewardship Commission has in the past employed both a director of church and institutional fund raising, and a director of endowment and capital giving promotion; but under the new organization structure, these two positions would be combined into one office with a full staff working under the director of endowment and capital giving service.

Although the action by the commission in August is the first approval of an over-all plan for assisting Baptist churches and institutions in fund raising efforts, the Southern Baptist Convention in 1965 approved a program statement for the commission authorizing development of assistance to churches in the area of building fund raising.

Lackey, who for five years was director of stewardship development for the commission, was elected to direct the program of church and institutional fund raising last year. In a report to the commission, Lackey said that he had worked with about 15 churches in drives that raised an average of \$178,000 per church.

"Southern Baptists have failed to take advantage of enlisting funds from people who would not give to any other cause except a building program," Lackey told the commission. "Some people will give money to a building program that would not give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, to the Cooperative Program, or to the regular church budget," he said.

Lackey said that the new program would be designed to help both churches and Baptist institutions to enlist such funds through a professionally-directed program.

Moore, in outlining the historical aspects that led to creation of the new program, said that many churches and institutions face a financial crisis because of over-extending building program obligations, and the new program was designed to help counter this problem.

Mail Response To "JOT"
Prompts Volunteer Help

FORT WORTH (BP)--Response to the Southern Baptist television cartoon series "JOT" has been so heavy that crews of volunteers from several Southern Baptist churches in the Fort Worth--Dallas area have been enlisted to help handle the mail.

During the month of July, the Southern Baptist Radio and Television Commission which produces "JOT" received 22,000 letters. On a single day in August, more than 3,200 letters arrived here. The average is well over 1,000 letters per day.

In an effort to reply to the huge mail response, groups of volunteers from 15 churches in the Fort Worth-Dallas area, especially women from the Women's Missionary Union organizations of the churches, have responded with needed help.

Radio-Television Commission officials say that the mail response to "JOT" is even increasing with nation-wide publicity. Newsweek magazine, for example, carried an article in August describing "JOT" as "the first genuinely entertaining--and effective--use of television for preaching morality to pre-teen children."

"JOT" is a color cartoon series featuring an animated "dot" who bounces cheerfully across the television screen and confronts moral problems similar to those of the boys and girls who watch the program.

At the conclusion of each program, "JOT" offers each viewer a "surprise" if they will write to "JOT" in Fort Worth.

Since the series was released last January over nine stations, filling requests for the "surprise" has presented problems for the short-staffed commission. Since then, the number of stations showing "JOT" has been increased to 40, and the mail volume has increased tremendously.

Lacking both the staff and funds to cope with such a response, the commission considered discontinuing the surprise. Writer-producer Ruth Byers, however, designed a surprise packet, which includes a Bible verse game as a means of following up the spiritual messages in the cartoons. This was regarded as too important a part of the "JOT" ministry to be sacrificed.

Crews of 10 to 25 women from WMU organizations and other groups in 15 area churches have been helping mail the "JOT" surprises. The groups assemble and address more than 1,000 surprises during their once-a-week work sessions.

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Illinois Man Named
To Sunday School Post

8/28/68

NASHVILLE (BP)--Ernest R. Adams, formerly Sunday School secretary of the Illinois Baptist State Association, Carbondale, has been named supervisor of the general administration section, Sunday School department for the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board here.

Adams will be responsible for the supervision of editors and consultants who work with general administration materials of the department, said A. V. Washburn, head of the department.

A native of Centralia, Ill., Adams is a graduate of Oklahoma Baptist University, Shawnee, and holds a master of religious education degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth.

Prior to becoming Sunday School secretary for Illinois Baptists, Adams was associate state Sunday School secretary, Arkansas Baptist State Convention, Little Rock, and adult consultant at the board.

Adams is married to the former Betty Jean Dunbar, also a native of Centralia. They have five children--Nancy (20), Cheryl (19), Alan (16), Philip (14) and Kenneth (2).

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