



September 5, 1968

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

Abortion: Termination of Pregnancy

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There are important moral and ethical issues involved in the contemporary effort to modify existing abortion laws. Christians should be alert to these issues and should seek to think through them to a defensible Christian position.

At the present time most states permit "induced termination of pregnancy" only when the life of the mother is endangered. Four states and the District of Columbia permit abortion to protect the "health and safety" of the mother. Three states prohibit "unlawful abortion" with no further clarification. Four states (California, Colorado, Maryland, and North Carolina) have modified and liberalized their laws regarding abortion.

During the past year the legislatures of more than one-half of the states considered the revision of their abortion laws. In some cases revisions have been recommended but so far have not been adopted by the legislatures. Many state legislatures will face the question in the months immediately ahead.

The abortion laws in some states should be revised. With proper safeguards, abortion might wisely be permitted in the case of incest or rape. It is possible that the interpretation of the "health of the mother" should be broadened to include mental as well as physical health. The remainder of this article, however, will be limited to a consideration of the suggestion that abortion be permitted when "there is documented evidence that the infant may be born with incapacitating physical deformity or mental deficiency."

The preceding is included in a statement on abortion approved by the American Medical Association. The same idea is included in a law proposed by the American Law Institute. I have great respect for doctors and lawyers, but I would like to ask the nature of the "documented evidence." Also, how much of a chance is there for an error in judgment? Notice that the statement says, "may be born" rather than "will be born". One group of doctors have said that only rarely can medical science predict with certainty that a child will be defective.

Furthermore, what is to be the definition of "incapacitating"? What type of physical deformity and what degree of mental deficiency would incapacitate the child?

Many parents of the handicapped can join me in testifying that the "incapacitated" son or daughter has brought many rich blessings to their lives. Pearl Buck, in a recent statement, suggests that a retarded child or handicapped person brings his or her own "gift of life, even to the life of normal human beings."

How would the approval of the aborting of infants with "incapacitating physical deformity or mental deficiency" affect our society? One of the brightest spots in our culture is what is done for the physically handicapped and mentally retarded children among us.

There is an additional question that constantly bothers me: If we justify the abortion of the potentially handicapped child, would not the next logical step be the justification of the termination of life for the incurably ill and for the old and "useless"? If life can be artificially terminated at one end, can it not just as logically be terminated at the other end?



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Communication, Not Poor Giving  
Blamed For Project 500 Problem

ATLANTA (BP)--The disappointing financial development for Project 500 does not represent poor giving as much as lack of communication, a mission executive said here.

"It is not that the rate of giving has decreased, but that the rate of increase has not been as much as was hoped for," said Loyd Corder, director of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's program of establishing new churches.

Earlier, the Home Mission Board announced that only about one-third of the expected \$3.4 million can be counted on with certainty for Project 500, the denomination's special two-year church extension effort.

"If our people had understood the project, I feel they would have given commensurate with what we are trying to do," Corder said.

"But this takes a period of education. Project 500 is more elaborate than anything we have attempted before," he explained.

Meanwhile, missions leaders are taxing their ingenuity to continue important work in many Project 500 locations. As of the end of July, work was underway in 124 of the 500 predetermined locations, half of the effort manned by laymen.

Strategy is what makes Project 500 different from normal church extension efforts, Corder observed. Project 500 is a special "over and above" effort to pinpoint particularly strategic locations for new churches and then start churches or church-type missions in those areas within two years (1968-1969).

As an "over and above" project, Corder said, money for Project 500 was to come from an extra effort in the Annie Armstrong Home Missions Offering and non-budgeted overage in regular Cooperative Program receipts.

The funds, as Home Mission Board Executive Secretary, Arthur Rutledge said, simply have not developed.

For example, one of the most critical items in initiating the new work--the church pastoral aid that permits trained, qualified personnel to go to a yet undeveloped field--depended heavily on Annie Armstrong Offering receipts.

The 1968 offering of \$5½ million was pushed higher than the average increase and the last \$1 million in receipts was to go to Project 500 church pastoral aid. In other words, however much over \$4½ million is received is to go to Project 500.

Projections now indicate that, even though the Annie Armstrong Offering receipts will reflect a fair increase over 1967, only about \$200,000 will be available to Project 500.

In similar regard, the 1969 offering goal of \$6½ million provides that the last \$1½ million go to Project 500. Mission officials are taking no chances of overextending themselves, however; they are acting now on the basis that they will receive only \$500,000 and hoping for more.

In 1968, the hoped for \$400,000 from Cooperative Program receipts turned out to be \$100,000. In 1969 there will be no money from Cooperative Program receipts earmarked for Project 500, with the exception of that for church site loan funds, Corder said.

Missionaries in pioneer areas, where Baptist work is new and relatively small, are continuing to start home fellowships in Project 500 locations, assuring the start of some form of ministry and preparing the groundwork for the day that resources are available.

"Probably 65 or 70 of our men--either pastors or missionaries--have related already to Project 500 locations by starting home fellowships," said Jack Redford, associate in the Home Mission Board's pioneer missions department.

"Regardless of finances, this project has made us reflect on the value of strategic points, instead of just starting churches for the sake of starting churches."

Redford said one mission pastor, Ralph Whicher, had been processed and approved by the Home Mission Board for appointment to Oakdale, Conn., and was to receive church pastoral aid to supplement his salary until the tiny mission congregation could support him.

When the cutback in such support became evident, Whicher chose to go anyway and is supporting himself by working in a sheet metal plant.

Several other Project 500 congregations in what the Home Mission Board called rural-urban areas (rural areas and towns under 50,000) are being led by military personnel and other laymen.

Corder said Project 500 locations will continue to get priority, even though many new efforts will get only limited assistance and many others will have to be delayed.

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Ohio Baptists Launch  
400th Church Via VBS

9/5/68

NASHVILLE (BP)--A Vacation Bible School held in an inner city, integrated neighborhood resulted in the 400th Southern Baptist church to be constituted in the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio.

The Western Avenue Baptist Church of Toledo was constituted as Ohio's 400th church, following the familiar pioneer mission pattern, from Vacation Bible School to revival to constituted Baptist church.

The organization, however, was unique in that the sponsoring church, the First Baptist Church of Fairborn, Ohio, was 150 miles away.

The Fairborn church also had sponsored Favorite Hill Baptist Church, Piqua, Ohio, the 300th church to be constituted by Ohio Southern Baptists.

Western Avenue Baptist Church traces her beginning to a Vacation Bible School conducted in the Western Avenue area of Toledo, where 60 boys and girls attended in mid-July, 1966.

The sponsoring church gave \$22,000 for church property, as well as \$250 per month to the Toledo mission. The pastor's salary was supplemented by the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board.

Of the 124 charter members of Western Avenue Baptist Church, 91 were new converts.

In four years Ohio Southern Baptists expect to constitute their 500th church thus marking another milestone in the growth of Southern Baptist work in the Great Lakes area, an Ohio Baptist state leader said.

Ohio expects within the next two years to give a sufficient number of churches to West Virginia and to Pennsylvania to help those two states form two new state conventions.

Porter Routh, executive secretary of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, gave the charge to the new church. Arthur Rutledge, executive secretary of the SBC Home Mission Board, delivered the constituting sermon.

Floyd A. Collins is pastor of the Western Avenue Baptist Church.

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Total Missions Gifts Reach  
\$37 Million In August, 1968

9/5/68

NASHVILLE (BP)--Southern Baptists had given \$37.8 million to world-wide missions efforts during the first eight months of the year, a monthly financial statement released by the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee here disclosed.

The \$37.8 million total includes \$17½ million given to support all SBC programs of work through the Cooperative Program unified budget plan, plus \$20.3 million in designated gifts to specific SBC missions causes.

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Total missions contributions for the first eight months of 1968 increased nearly \$2.3 million over missions gifts for the same period of 1967, the report indicated.

The increase is reflected by a \$1.4 million jump (7.39 per cent) in designated gifts, and an increase of \$891,916 (5.36 per cent) in gifts through the Cooperative Program.

Contributions through the Cooperative Program for the month of August totalled \$2.2 million. Cooperative Program gifts have exceeded the \$2 million mark each month of 1968, which SBC Executive Committee Financial Planning Secretary John H. Williams called an encouraging trend.

Most of the \$37.8 million has gone to support the work of the SBC Foreign Mission Board, which has received \$24 million thus far in 1968. The SBC Home Mission Board has received \$8.4 million.

The total missions gifts reported by the SBC Executive Committee reflect only contributions to support nation- and world-wide missions efforts of the convention, and do not include amounts supporting local and state missions efforts.

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