

December 17, 1968

PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE  
(Fifty-seventh in a series)

THE MILITARY CHAPLAINCY

By T. B. Maston

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Among the most rewarding and enriching recent personal experiences have been four weeks in seminars with Protestant Navy chaplains. These and other contacts with the chaplains have deepened my respect and appreciation for them and for their ministry in the military.

I have a growing conviction that more of our most capable and best trained young ministers should prayerfully consider entering the Air Force, Army, or Navy chaplaincy for a few years or as a career. And it should be stressed that the military chaplaincy needs the best. It is no place for the maladjusted, for misfits, or for men who cannot make good in the civilian ministry.

There are several reasons why young ministers should give consideration to some phase of the military chaplaincy. They would have in the chaplaincy unusual evangelistic opportunities and missionary outreach. They would discover the latter not only within the military community but also in the broader civilian community where they might serve in the States or overseas.

In addition, certain personal benefits would accrue to the young minister who served as chaplain. For many of them it would be a broadening experience. They would work with chaplains representing many different denominations and widely divergent theological perspective. They would discover that most of these men, with whom they may sharply disagree, are just as devoted as they are to the work of the Lord and to the welfare of the men they serve.

The chaplain would discover that the same thing is true of most of his fellow chaplains who have habits which he might thoroughly disapprove. He would find that he could work with and respect these men without compromising his own personal position. Really he will win the respect of other chaplains not by compromising but by consistently maintaining his own ideals and convictions. He must do so, however, without a Pharisaical attitude of self-righteous superiority.

If a young minister decides to stay in the chaplaincy only for a few years, it will make some valuable contributions to his civilian ministry. While in the service he will have an opportunity to participate in special retreats, seminars, and possibly even in graduate theological training and/or specialized courses, particularly in the field of counseling. This advanced training along with his personal experiences in the military will enrich his background for a more effective ministry.

Furthermore, some experience in the military will strengthen the minister's rapport with many of the men in his congregation. Many of them have been or will be in some branch of military service. Also, he will be able to counsel more helpfully with young men in his church fellowship who are entering the military.

Most chaplains will agree that the minister entering the chaplaincy, particularly as a career, should have a deep sense of divine purpose or call. This call should be comparable to the call to foreign mission service. Just as is true of the missionary's wife so the chaplain's wife should have a similar sense of divine leading into the chaplaincy.

It takes a special kind of woman to be a chaplain's wife. She must be able to adjust to rather frequent changes of location. She must be emotionally and spiritually mature enough to meet possible emergencies. Wives of chaplains, particularly of the Navy, will frequently and for a considerable period of time carry the full responsibility of the father as well as the mother. She also faces the adjustments that come when the husband and father returns.

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

## WHO IS THE GOOD CHRISTIAN?

By T. B. Maston

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It is unfortunate that we feel that it is necessary to insert "good" or "real" as a prefix to Christian. It should be sufficient for one simply to be known as a Christian, but it is not. There are entirely too many "Christians" who are merely nominal Christians.

Many answers are given to the question, "Who is the good Christian?" The following are the major ones.

Some suggest that the good Christian is one who does not smoke, drink, dance, etc. This is the negative test of the Christian life. This emphasis is particularly prevalent among sectarian groups such as the Pentecostals and among those with a considerable sectarian tinge such as Baptists.

Others would say that the good Christian is one who is faithful to the formal requirements of his faith. He attends the services of his church regularly, he supports its program with at least a tithe of his income.

Still others contend that the supreme test of whether or not one is a real or good Christian is his activity in the work of the church. The good Christian is one who teaches a Sunday school class, works with a youth program, or ministers in and through a mission.

A few people judge the Christian more by his active participation in the life of the community. He may or may not be active in the work of his church, but if he provides leadership for worthy causes in his community he is considered a good Christian.

All of the preceding may and should characterize to varying degrees the good Christian. However, no one of them is the supreme test of a good Christian. For example, one may not \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_, yet he may not be a good Christian. He may be faithful to the formal requirements of his faith, may be active in the work of God and in the life of the community, and yet not be a good Christian. Really, some people may make one of these "tests" a substitute for real Christian living.

For one to comprehend what it means to be a real Christian he needs to understand the nature of the initial Christian experience. When we became children of God we were brought into a vital lifechanging union with the resurrected Christ. We were made "new creatures" in Christ Jesus.

To be a real Christian means to let that which was a potentiality in the initial experience become a living, dynamic reality in our lives. Another way of expressing the same concept is to say that the real Christian is one who lets the resurrected Christ live in him and express himself through him. In other words, we are real Christians to the degree that we are Christlike.

The preceding means that the supreme test of the Christian life is positive rather than negative; vital rather than formal. Basically the Christian life is a relationship, a relationship so deep and meaningful that all of one's life is influenced by it.

The good Christian will not do certain things, he will be faithful to the formalities of his faith and will be active in the work of his church and in wholesome and helpful programs in his community. The motivation for all these expressions of the Christian life, however, will be one's love for and gratitude to God for the blessings that have come through his salvation Christ.

The whole matter can be summarized by simply saying that the Christian life flows from within outward. Its source is one's vital relationship to the living Christ.

December 17, 1968

WMU Board Approves New  
Names, Program for 1970

NASHVILLE (BP)--New Organization names, new periodicals, and new programs were approved by the Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) Executive Board meeting here following sessions of the Southern Baptist Planning and Promotion Conference.

The action gives new names for the current WMU age divisions of Woman's Missionary Societies, the Young Women's Auxiliary, Girls' Auxiliary, and Sunbeam Bands.

The new names beginning in October, 1970, will be:

- Baptist Women (adult division, ages 18 and up.)
- Baptist Young Women (ages 18-29 in the adult division)
- Acteens (youth division, ages 12-17)
- Girls in Action (children's division, ages 6-11)
- Missions Friends (preschool division, birth through age five).

The name changes resulted from a WMU decision to cooperate with the all-program grouping-grading plan suggested for use in churches beginning in October, 1970.

The four basic age divisions suggested in the plan differ from the four current WMU age-level organizations which grew into existence at different times in the 80-year history of WMU. Promotion of the new names will be launched at the WMU annual meeting June 9-10 in New Orleans.

"We feel that brand-new names will reflect the new age groupings and fresh spirit of Woman's Missionary Union in the 70's," said Mrs. R. L. Mathis, promotion division director for WMU.

"An advisory committee of the Executive Board and the staff of WMU, studied possible designations for the new age divisions for nearly a year. It was not easy to give up names that have served us well for many years, but we feel that the new names will eliminate some communications problems that have plagued us in the past," she said.

"For example, Woman's Missionary Society (the adult organization) has always been confused with Woman's Missionary Union (the over-all organization). The name Baptist Women eliminates that confusion. It also fits favorably with the name of the adult division in Brotherhood--Baptist Men," said Mrs. Mathis.

She pointed out features of other names. "Acteens has a ring that will appeal to today's young people. The name suggests the action-oriented approach of the organization," Mrs. Mathis said.

"The name Girls in Action retains the popular GA initials of Girls' Auxiliary but brings in a word that more clearly reflects the purpose of the organization," Mrs. Mathis said.

Mrs. Mathis explained that the Executive Board had wanted to change the name of Sunbeam Band for several years, feeling that the name had lost significance. The board held its action until the grouping-grading plan was approved. "The name Missions Friends reveals both the purpose of the program for preschoolers as well as the immediate concerns of young children," she said.

The board also voted new periodicals to support the 70's organization plan of WMU. Instead of four magazines currently published, there will be seven.

A general magazine for WMU officers will be called Dimension. The reading magazine for Baptist Women will be Royal Service, retaining the name of the adult magazine currently mailed to 450,000 subscribers.

Contempo is the name of a new magazine for Baptist Young Women.

The children's division will have both a leader and a member periodical. Leaders will subscribe to Aware, while girls will subscribe to Discovery.

The preschool division periodical, aimed only at leaders, will be called Start.

The grouping-grading plan also required changes in program design, according to Mrs. Mathis. The Executive Board approved the WMU Program Base for the 1970's--a complete statement of the plan of organization, study, and action for all ages.

"Because we began a new organization plan last October we did not need to make drastic changes in our program design for the 70's," Mrs. Mathis said. "We reshaped only those points influenced by the grouping-grading plan, and smoothed out rough places which experience has revealed in the plan for WMU '68."

New features in the 1970's include a restatement of WMU tasks; addition of a missions support chairman for Baptist Women; and special approaches for young women in the adult division.

The board also approved individual achievement plans for Acteens and Girls in Action. The plans replace Forward Steps, which were a feature of Girls' Auxiliary. The Acteen individual achievement plan will be called Studiact, and the GA plan will be called Missions Adventures.

In other business, the board approved by-laws for presentation at the annual meeting. Plans for transfer of missions education of six-, seven-, and eight-year-old boys to Brotherhood were introduced at a joint WMU-Brotherhood meeting. The transfer is another change brought on by the grouping-grading plan.

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Interest on Church Debts Is  
Double Cooperative Program

(12-17-68)

NASHVILLE (BP)--The interest on debts of Southern Baptist churches climbed to \$49.8 million in 1967, almost twice the amount given the same year to the Cooperative Program for Southern Baptist Convention causes, Porter Routh, executive secretary of the SBC executive committee, revealed.

Routh, who alluded to the rising interest cost briefly at the Southern Baptist Planning and Promotion Conference here, said the total debt for all Southern Baptist churches was nearly \$830½ million.

Almost half of the churches--16,981 out of 34,147--reported debt. In terms of amount, Texas churches owed the most, \$140,566,401, while the District of Columbia had the largest percentage of churches in debt at 91.8 per cent.

During the same year the 34,147 churches reported total gifts of almost \$712 million, of which almost \$72 million went to the Cooperative Program. State Baptist conventions sent slightly more than \$25 million to Southern Baptist Convention causes.

The report showed that slightly more than 3½ cents of every dollar given in churches reached the Cooperative Program for Southern Baptist Convention causes.

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Baptist Leader Refutes  
Comments on Marijuana

(12-17-68)

DALLAS (BP)--A Texas Baptist leader refuted recent statements by Huston Smith, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology professor, that marijuana is less dangerous than alcohol.

James M. Dunn, secretary of the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, said here that Smith's statements during a lecture at Chowan College, a Baptist school in Murfreesboro, N.C., did not hold up in the light of research conducted by the Christian Life Commission.

Dunn cited recent discoveries of medical science, and studies such as those at Northwestern University and University of Southern California, which indicate "growing evidence of its (marijuana's) potential danger for 'bad trips', genetic change, and brain damage similar to those produced by LSD."

"It is irresponsible statements by prominent figures such as Dr. Smith that make it easier for youngsters to rationalize use of marijuana, LSD, and other drugs, and hence often suffer the tragic consequences.

Dunn also reacted to statements by Smith that psychedelic drugs such as LSD can give a uniquely religious experience and help users gain a deeper perception of truth.

"I don't know what Dr. Smith's definition of 'religion' is," commented Dunn, "but his statement reveals a total misunderstanding of the Christian faith. Authentic Christianity has always been grounded in reality, rather than esoteric escapism."

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