

February 24, 1969

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

"CHRISTIAN" AS A PREFIX

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The word "Christian" is frequently used as an adjective as well as a noun. An adjective is used "to denote a quality of the thing...or to specify a thing as distinct from something else."

When "Christian" is used as an adjective or a prefix it denotes a quality or it specifies a something distinctive about the noun to which it is attached. We may not be able to define exactly what is meant by the word "Christian," but we know that there is supposed to be a distinctive quality about anything or anyone that is labeled or called "Christian."

For example, a home, a community, a college, or even a church cannot justifiably be called "Christian" unless it maintains a quality that is distinctive.

Likewise an individual who is known as a "Christian" is supposed to live a life that is different from others. If he does not he has no right to claim the name "Christian." He is to live a life with a distinctive tone or quality in every relation he maintains and in every role he plays.

There is no place where it is more important for one to be a real Christian than in the home. We may be a husband or a wife, a parent or a child, but we should never forget that we are Christians and that should make a difference in our relations to one another.

The same is true outside the home. If we are Christians, the word "Christian" is to be a prefix for every relation and role of our lives.

We may be a banker, lawyer, doctor, farmer, teacher, preacher, social worker, or housewife, but if we are Christians the word "Christian" is to affect every relation we maintain. We may be an employer or an employee, but we are a "Christian" employer or employee. We may be a member of a civic group, a Chamber of Commerce, or a labor union, but "Christian" is to precede and define the quality of our relations in the organization or group.

Also as Christians we are citizens of our nation and of the world. But we are Christian citizens and that should make a difference.

We may be a white man or a black man, but if we are Christians that fact should change our outlook concerning our relations with one another. So it is with all cultural and ethnic groups.

It has been suggested that "Christian" attached to any relationship we maintain, any role we play is supposed to denote a distinctive quality. What are the distinctive qualities or marks of a Christian? The question can be answered in a summary way by saying that being a Christian means to be Christlike.

A Christian is a Christ-ian. A sincere Christian knows that he falls far short of being like Christ, but he does recognize that this is the ideal by which he should measure his life.

What kind of a life did Christ live when he walked among men? He went about doing good. He ministered to the needs of people. He comforted the sorrowing. He fed the hungry. He lifted the downtrodden. He had compassion on people. He was a blessing to all whose lives were touched by him.

This needs to be said over and over again: We will live the kind of life he lived only to the degree that we let the resurrected Christ live in us and express himself through us. This is what it really means to live the Christian life.



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Georgia Editor Proposes
Cutting Ties With Mercer

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ATLANTA (BP)--In the wake of a decision by trustees of Mercer University to seek three federal grants despite disapproval by the Georgia Baptist Convention, the editor of the Christian Index here has proposed severing Baptist ties with the school.

"Why not admit what many have been saying for 10 years--that Baptists cannot long continue to operate colleges and universities on our present scale--and deed Mercer University to the trustees, and let it become a private school, free to get money wherever it can," said the editorial.

Editor Jack U. Harwell proposed that the Mercer trustees be self-perpetuating, rather than be elected by the Georgia Baptist Convention under present procedure.

Georgia Baptists could still sponsor and pay for a department of Christianity adjacent to the campus but not directly related to the university, the editor said.

"One thing is sure," Harwell said. "We cannot go on much longer with the tensions now so evident in Georgia Baptist life over our schools and their financing.

"The disputes are tearing at the very fiber of our cooperative life, even in the internal fellowships of many of our churches," the editorial said.

The editor said that while some have called Mercer's action a "declaration of war" and others say it is a "declaration of independence," he personally felt it should be called a "declaration of desperation."

Since 1965, the Georgia Baptist Convention has repeatedly voted against use of federal loans, and last November declared itself against acceptance of any tax funds for Georgia Baptist schools.

Mercer trustee chairman Baldwin Martin of Macon, Ga., expressed disappointment "at the inconsistency of the convention last November when it approved the Georgia Baptist Hospital's getting loans from sources offering 'the lowest available interest'," which might include federal loans.

Editor Harwell called this "a glaring paradox" and said, "It seems we stand for separation of church and state only as it applies to schools," But this wouldn't justify Mercer trustees going against the expressed will of their parent body, the editor added.

"The trustees were acting out of desperation," Harwell observed. "They have been charged by the convention to manage the university and they have not been given the wherewithall to do so; to stay alive, funds have got to come from somewhere."

"Whether the seriousness of Mercer's plight justifies acceptance of direct government grants is another matter altogether," the editor wrote.

He said he personally felt that the principle of religious liberty and tax support of religion is more important than the university's denominational affiliation.

"What happens now in the Mercer-Convention relationship?" the editorial asked. Does the convention punish Mercer as a disobedient child; do we slap the trustees on the wrist by editorials of condemnation; do we acknowledge the power of the trustees to act as they have and thus do nothing; what are the alternatives?"

The editorial rejected as unwise such alternatives as seeking a court injunction to prevent Mercer's acceptance of government grants until the convention can meet; trying to recall all Mercer trustees and electing a new slate; and firing Mercer President Rufus Harris.

He then proposed that the 136-year-old ties between the convention and the Baptist school in Macon be severed. Mercer University is named for Jesse Mercer, who founded both the school in 1833 and gave to Georgia Baptists The Christian Index, which he published for seven years.

"As we seek these solutions, let's for one time forget personalities and deal in principles," the Christian Index editor declared. "Let's stop fussing and start praying. Let's quit being petty and do the big thing. In short, let's be Christian."

The editor asked the Georgia Baptist Convention Executive Committee in its meeting April 1 to recommend courses of action "that will lead us out of our educational dilemma, and into a unity we so desperately need."

"In the meantime," the editorial concluded, "let's all declare a moratorium on invective and accusations and declare a prayer vigil. God has some solutions for us, if we will only seek His wisdom--and follow it when we know it."

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New Orleans Gets \$25,000
Gift For World Evangelism

(2-24-69)

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--A \$25,000 gift to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary here for its World Evangelism Center has been contributed by Mrs. Evelyn Lineberry of Midland, Tex.

The gift will be used for development and research in more successful evangelism methods used around the world, said W. H. (Dub) Jackson, director of the World Evangelism Center and former missionary to Japan.

Another gift of \$7,000 has come through the First Baptist Church of Tulia, Tex., Jackson said. The church, where Frank Pollard is pastor, is one of several American churches invited to assist Japanese Baptists in an evangelistic effort in 1970.

Jackson has just completed a trip to the Orient at the request of Japan Baptist Pastor Shuichi Matsumura, vice president of the Baptist World Alliance, to help plan the evangelistic crusades in connection with the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Tokyo in 1970. Jackson met with Baptist leaders in Hong Kong, Korea, and Japan.

Already ten American churches have agreed to send teams of up to 40 laymen with their pastors to Japan in 1970 to assist Japanese churches in their revivals. Churches of the Louisiana Baptist Convention will be assisting in the Korean crusades, Jackson said.

He added that the World Evangelism Center at New Orleans Seminary has been invited to help plan the crusades in the Orient, and that a complete file on each crusade will be developed to become "a treasure house of the best methods of evangelism."

Mrs. Lineberry, who made the \$25,000 contribution, is a member of the Scarborough family, well known in Texas Baptist circles. She had high praise for the World Evangelism Center in making the gift.

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Wilson Elected Child
Care Leaders' President

(2-24-69)

JEKYLL ISLAND, Ga. (BP)--George R. Wilson, superintendent of the Baptist Children's Home of Arizona in Phoenix, was elected here president of the Child Care Executives of the Southern Baptist Convention;

Child care executives from 19 states and the District of Columbia chose Wilson to succeed James V. Browning of Oklahoma City, and voted to hold their 1970 meeting in Phoenix. The 1971 meeting will be held in Jackson, Miss.

Two major speakers at the meeting, T. M. Johns of Lakeland, Fla., and John Murdock of Greenwood, S. C., reviewed child care of the past and anticipated trends for the future.

They agreed that the non-specialized care related to the "orphanage" concept belongs to the past, and challenged Baptist agencies to be "flexible, experimental and imaginative" in planning new multiple-services' programs.

Hosts for the three-day meeting at the Georgia resort area were Georgia Baptist Childrens' Homes General Manager John C. Warr of Atlanta and his staff.

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