

March 28, 1969

PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE  
(Another in a series)

PREMARITAL PREGNANCY

By T. B. Maston

Retired Professor of Christian Ethics  
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

When an unmarried young woman becomes pregnant, several major decisions must be made. Those closely associated with persons involved in premarital pregnancy sometimes can help with guidance from a Christian perspective.

Assuming that the young woman has had relations with only one boy or young man, one of the most immediate problems that they face is whether or not to marry. Also, should they make this decision by themselves or should they consult with their parents, their pastor, or some other counsellor? Ordinarily they should share fully with the parents. Frequently counselling with others will be helpful. It may prevent some tragic mistakes.

Parents and other counsellors should seek to lead the couple to weigh fully the choices they have. Decisions, however, should ultimately be made by the couple. It will be a big mistake for parents to force them to marry. There should not be a marriage just "to give a baby a name." Such marriages seldom succeed.

Parents and the young people themselves should know that there are several things that should determine whether or not it will be wise for them to marry. A major factor is how much of a chance there is that their marriage will be a sound one. Is there genuine love and respect for one another? Is there concern for and devotion to the well-being of one another?

There are other questions that may wisely be asked by parents, by pastors, and by the young people themselves. What is the attitude of the young man and the young woman toward the pregnancy? Does each reveal a willingness to accept his or her part of the responsibility? Or, is there a tendency to blame the other? Is there present on the part of both a real sense of repentance and at the same time a spirit of forgiveness?

The supremely important question to be asked by all who are involved, directly or indirectly, in a premarital pregnancy is: "What will be best for the child?" He or she has more at stake than anyone else in the decisions that are made.

The pastor will frequently have an opportunity to speak a word for the child. This opportunity may come when the parents consult with him or when the young woman or the couple come to him. If he is asked to perform the marriage ceremony, that will give him another chance to speak for the child. For the sake of the latter as well as for the sake of the young people involved he may decide to decline to perform the marriage ceremony. I personally believe that he will be justified in performing the ceremony for such a couple only if after one or more conferences with them he is persuaded that they have a reasonably good chance of founding a home on a solid basis and of providing a wholesome environment for the child.

If the couple decides not to marry, the pastor will frequently have an opportunity to counsel with all concerned about homes for unwed mothers. He may also be asked about the wisest procedures concerning the child. Should the latter be retained by the mother, adopted by a member of the family or by someone unknown to them? Primary consideration should be given to what is best for the child. In the majority of cases it will be best from the child's perspective for him to be adopted by someone unknown to the family.



**BAPTIST PRESS**  
News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219  
Telephone (615) 244-2855  
W. C. Fields, Director  
Jim Newton, Assistant Director

**REGIONAL OFFICES**

ATLANTA Walker L. Knight, Editor, 1350 Spring Street, N.W., Atlanta, Georgia 30309, Telephone (404) 873-4041  
DALLAS Billy Keith, Editor, 103 Baptist Building, Dallas, Texas 75201, Telephone (214) RI 1-1996  
WASHINGTON W. Barry Garrett, Editor, 200 Maryland Ave., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002, Telephone (202) 544-4226

**BUREAU**

BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL BOARD Lynn M. Davis, Jr., Chief, 127 Ninth Ave., N., Nashville, Tenn. 37203,  
Telephone (615) 254-1631

March 28, 1969

Dallas Zoning Proposal  
Prompts Church Reaction

DALLAS (BP)--Two Baptist leaders here, the superintendent of missions of the Dallas Baptist Association and the associate pastor of the First Baptist Church, have expressed opposition to the proposed formation of an "institutional designation" for zoning of Dallas schools and churches.

The Dallas City Planning Commission has instructed acting city planning director James Schroeder to prepare recommendations for a restrictive ordinance setting up this designation.

Under the present ordinance, a church or school may locate in any area, operate unrestricted week-day ministries, and, for churches built prior to 1965, there are no parking space requirements.

Ralph Bacon of Dallas Baptist Association, has gone on record asking the city to move slowly in this regard. "My word of caution is based on my visits to other large cities where church zoning ordinances are in effect. They greatly discourage the establishment of new congregations."

The Baptist superintendent of missions suggested that any policies resulting from the study be worked out in cooperation with church leaders.

"These (restrictions) usually are begun in very mild form, but later restrictions are added which encumber various denominational bodies in establishing new churches and hamper older churches in their expansion program," Bacon said.

Mel Carter, associate pastor of the 15,000 member First Baptist Church, called the proposed ordinance "a restriction of religious freedom."

First Baptist operates four missions in Dallas residential areas and Carter fears for their future growth if the recommendations are too strict. Pastor of the church is SBC president W. A. Criswell.

The associate pastor of St. Luke's Presbyterian Church, Charles Hunter concurred with Carter, terming the commission's action "a real bad deal." Hunter, who is also a sociology professor at Bishop College, warned that the ordinance could result "in the disappearance of neighborhood churches and would possibly interfere with a church's mission."

The Executive Director of the Greater Dallas Council of Churches applauded the commission's move, however. Louis Saunders claimed that "zoning is long overdue in this town and it should apply to everybody."

Saunders also said that "it's conceivable to me that there are particular spots where there shouldn't be churches or schools. Personally, I don't interpret it as a deliberate effort to keep us from having churches anywhere they're needed... There would be fewer churches, but they would be larger, and therefore stronger."

Planning director Schroeder said that the ordinance "is not a foregone conclusion. We're just looking into it."

He said that the study was inspired by local complaints.

"A lot of churches get involved with day nurseries and other sidelines in areas where the zoning does not permit similar activities by private residents. We have also had quite a few complaints about parking near churches."

The parking complaints generally involved blocked driveways, alleys and narrow residential streets adjacent to churches, he added.

Schroeder said that he was looking for "a direct response" from the local citizenry. "We are seeking solutions to problems to assist churches, not to hurt them."

The planning official added that most churches have made proper arrangements for parking space through their own initiative, but that a need now exists for an ordinance to spell out to churches what constitutes "adequate parking space" and also formal definitions, written into the ordinance, for various week-day ministries.

Free Shuttle Bus Slated  
From SBC To Seminary

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--A free shuttle bus will run from the Rivergate Convention Center where the Southern Baptist Convention meets June 10-13, to the campus of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary during the week of the convention.

The bus will run each hour throughout the convention week, enabling those who attend the convention to visit the seminary campus while in New Orleans.

The seminary will hold open house on Thursday afternoon from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., during a period of time when no convention sessions will be held.

Open house at the seminary is scheduled immediately following the annual alumni luncheon for seminary graduates and alumni. The luncheon will be held at the Jung Hotel in downtown New Orleans at noon Thursday.

Immediately following the luncheon, a fleet of busses will be waiting to take the group to the seminary campus for the special open house.

A visitor's reception center on the seminary campus will provide information and guides for tours of the campus throughout the week.

The seminary's cafeteria will also be open for those who are visiting the campus at meal time. All dormitory rooms and apartments during the week will be used by Southern Baptist missionaries, and will not be available for other guests, seminary officials said.

-30-

Nursery Facilities Set  
For SBC In New Orleans

(3-28-69)

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--A child care center will be set up at the First Baptist Church nursery here to care for pre-school children of out-of-town visitors attending the Southern Baptist Convention here, June 9-13.

The convention's nursery committee in charge of making the arrangements has established several policies regarding the child care center at the convention.

The policies state that only pre-school children of out-of-town guests can use the facilities.

Charges of \$1.50 per child, regardless of the number of children in a family, will be made for the service.

The nursery will be open 45-minutes prior to each convention session and 45 minutes following each session, Monday through Friday, June 9-13.

First Baptist Church is located at 4301 St. Charles Ave., in New Orleans, about 40 blocks from The Rivergate Convention Center where sessions of the Southern Baptist Convention are to be held.

Convention officials said there is good street car service from the church direct to the Rivergate, and adequate parking facilities at the church for those who want to part at the church and ride the street car to the convention meeting site.

-30-



**BAPTIST PRESS**

460 James Robertson Parkway  
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

DAVIS C. WOOLLEY HO  
HISTORICAL COMMISSION  
127 NINTH AVE, N.  
NASHVILLE, TENN. 37203