



News Service of the Southern Baptist Convention

---FEATURES
produced by Baptist Press

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Nashville, Tennessee 37219
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August 21, 1969

PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
(another in a series)

OBSESSION WITH SEX

by T. B. Maston

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A professor of sociology, Pitirim Sorokin, has said that our society is so preoccupied with sex that it oozes from all the pores of American life. A highly respected professor of New Testament, Otto Piper of Princeton, has suggested that there is a general obsession with sex and that people consider sex the surest, shortest, and cheapest way to happiness. He has also said that in the area of sex there is complete chaos and confusion.

All of the major news media are filled with sex and the appeal to sex. It is discussed or portrayed with a frankness or a crudeness, depending on one's perspective, that was unheard of a few years ago. This is the result, to some degree, of the permissive morality of the contemporary period.

C. S. Lewis some years ago said that many people claim that sex has become a mess because it had been hushed up. He suggested that in the past twenty years it had been "chatted about all day long" and yet sex was still a mess.

Talking about it or "ventilating" it alone will not straighten out the mess. What the ventilation will do depends on who does the ventilating, how it is done, and the motive for doing it.

Wisely or unwisely, there is a great deal of freedom in the contemporary period to discuss sex and also to experiment with it. There is some question whether or not this freedom has actually led to more sex relations before and outside of marriage.

It may be, in spite of contemporary obsession with sex, that there is little if any increase in the percentage of men and women who are involved in premarital sex relations or extramarital relations. On the surface there may seem to be more involvements simply because such things are discussed more openly than formerly.

Regardless of the preceding the American public in general is obsessed with sex. This obsession affects adults as well as teen-agers.

Reverting to Piper's statement, let us ask the question: "Is sex the surest, shortest, and cheapest way to happiness?" Really, does one find happiness by seeking it directly, or does it come as a by-product? Furthermore, does one find genuine happiness through sex experience with anyone other than husband or wife?

Still another question: "Is the greater freedom that is available in the area of sex real freedom?" May one even become enslaved by the lack of restraint?

One more question that needs to be asked and answered is: "When we are beset by sex on every side, does our Christian faith have a significant word to speak to us?" It is my conviction that it does have.

Our Christian faith is concerned with the totality of life and hence with sex. It could not be otherwise if the God we worship is the sovereign God of the universe. He cannot be sovereign unless he is sovereign in and over all areas of life. We can be assured that he is concerned about every aspect of our lives including the sexual.

This means, among other things, that we should seek to know his will in this vital area of our lives. It also means that our churches should seek to give helpful guidance in the area of sex to parents and to their children.

Arkansas Board Adopts
Record 1970 Budget

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (BP)--The Executive Board of the Arkansas Baptist State Convention in a meeting here approved a record budget for 1970, elected five new employes and created a new position. It also resolved a long-standing question about convention plans for camps and assemblies.

A budget of \$2,737,229 was approved for 1970. This is an increase of \$70,022 dollars over the current budget and a record for the convention. The amount budgeted for the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention was \$906,642 compared to \$883,897 in 1969.

J. Everett Sneed was elected director of special ministries in the missions department and Clarence Shell as state rural evangelist in the evangelism department. Both positions are new. Sneed has been associational missionary for the Independence Baptist Association, with offices in Batesville. Shell has been pastor of Barney Baptist Church, Hot Springs.

Jesse D. (Jack) Cowling, education director of Central Baptist Church, Magnolia, was named Baptist Student Union Director at Southern State College, Magnolia. Charles Purtle of Prescott was elected traveling Baptist Student Union Director for four area colleges.

Mrs. Betty Rowe Kennedy, Arkadelphia, was elected managing editor of the Arkansas Baptist Youth Magazine. Mrs. Kennedy, a journalism major graduate of Ouachita University, succeeds Franklin I. Presson, who resigned to become dean of students at Louisiana College.

The Board also voted to create a new position of chaplain at Cummings Prison Farm and decided to continue ownership and operation of Shiloam Springs Baptist Assembly and Arkansas Baptist Camp at Paron. Improvements were voted for both locations.

Charles H. Ashcraft, former executive secretary of the Utah-Idaho Southern Baptist Convention, attended the Board meeting for the first time as the new executive secretary of the Arkansas Baptist Convention.