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Third in a Series

COMMON FEATURES OF EXTREMISM'S UGLY FACES

By H. Clayton Waddell
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In describing extremists, most people characterize them with the terms "Far Right" or "Far Left." This calls up the visual image of the far ends of a straight line. Close examination, however, leads to the conclusion that they are more like broken ends of a fractur circle, quite close together.

Although extremists on the left and right may refuse to "claim kin," they are sometimes blood brothers. They are related in some rather obvious ways.

Both extremes distrust the democratic process. Both oversimplify problems, issues and solutions. They each look upon those who disagree with or oppose them as members of a conspiracy. They distrust any instrument of international cooperation. Both left and right consider people to be expendable.

While the Communist Party makes no pretense about the fact that its purpose is to undermine and destroy confidence in the democratic system, the right-wing extremist on the other hand destroy democracy while pretending to defend it.

It would be irresponsible to minimize the magnitude of the danger that world-wide Communism poses for free America. But it is more irresponsible to so distort the image of that danger that the real hazard is clouded over.

Right wing extremists have irresponsibly used the weapons of hate, suspicion, distrust, and fear to turn man against man and destroy the confidence of the American people in their chosen leaders and their institutions. By their tactics of innuendo and guilt by association, they have fragmented communities and done violence to innocent citizens. In the name of Americanism, some right wing extremists, who call themselves patriots, deliberately endeav r to undermine the faith of the American people in the democratic process.

The democratic process lives or dies with rational debate and constructive argument. But extremists do not allow the possibility of debate and diversity which is the life blood of democracy and freedom. Only one side is tolerated. Facts are interpreted and shaped to fit into conclusions already drawn.

Extremists often oversimplify complex problems with a nostolgic tendency to look backward. The extremist longs for the private and familiar experiences of yesterday and the security that once enveloped him. Instead of trying to cope with a world he does not understand, he proposes to abandon it. Oversimplified solutions to vastly complex problems are at best naive, at worst, very dangerous.

The extreme right and left are literally dependent upon each other for survival. Communism and capitalism are both seen by their "enemies" to be conspiracies. Without each other, their cause for being would vanish.

Both extremists of left and right distrust the international instruments which nations are haltingly fashioning to enable themselves to function without destroying each other in nuclear war. Those of the right see international cooperation as a Communist conspiracy; while the Communists see them as instruments of capitalistic imperalism designed to stop the spread of Communism. Instead of arbitration, the extremists put their confidence in force. This is demonstrated by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslavakia, as well as by the clamor from the extreme right for "no appeasement" in Vietnam.

Neither right nor left has any scruples about how they acquire power. Any method that works is condoned. The right is likely to equate power with military victory and they g on the theory that there is no substitute for victory. The left is willing to resort to the most radical methods to subdue restive people when they deem it advisable.

The right and the left both hope to control the future of America and the world, and both are willing to use people as pawns in their struggle for power. They each look upon people as expendable.

Both right and left are self-appointed champions of the cause of freedom, but they fail utterly to acknowledge that freedom and responsibility go together. They do not see the fact that in order for a man to be free, he must participate in the decisions that govern his life. Decisions in extremist groups are made from above, and woe to him who deviates from the established doctrine.

Right and left are strangely alike in many ways, sharing common features of faces that are obviously ugly.

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Editor Questions
Cigarette Advertising

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following editorial, written by Robert J. Hastings, editor of the Illinois Baptist, has been distributed to journalism students at Southern Illinois University as an example of unique writing technique. The editorial is written only with questions. It is entitled: 8½ Years.

Do you want to live longer? Would you intentionally cut 8½ years off your life? Would you purposefully dig your own grave 8½ years prematurely? Would you, with premediation, schedule your own funeral 8½ years sooner than necessary? Are you aware that the average smoker does, indeed, shorten his life expectancy by 8½ years? Do you realize this is 8 Christmases too soon, 8 anniversaries too early, 8 birthdays too quickly? Is an untimely grave worth either fighting or switching for? Is all that "Salem out of the country" bit really worth a one-way ride to the cemetery 8½ years earlier than necessary? Is it truly worth that Tarreyton filter foolishness or that mile for a Camel craziness? Doesn't society owe the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. a real vote of confidence for spending nearly $82 million in 1968 on advertising to hook us on a habit that speeds up our chances for a one-way ride in a hearse?

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October 7, 1969

Baptists, Catholics May Cooperate
In Oklahoma Social Service Agency

OKLAHOMA CITY (BP)--Plans for an inter-denominational social service agency that would provide an option for meeting community needs without involving Baptist, Roman Catholic and other churches in a council of churches have been disclosed here.

Both the Catholic Bishop of Oklahoma City, Victor J. Reed, and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, Herschel H. Hobbs, have been involved in the steering committee which has proposed creation of the new agency.

A kick-off dinner for the new organization, called Agency for Christian Cooperative Ministry, has been slated for Oct. 28 at the First Baptist Church where Hobbs is pastor.

Hobbs said that the new agency would provide a means of cooperative Christian efforts to meet community needs, enabling churches that do not wish to affiliate with a council of churches to be involved in cooperative efforts.

Chairman of the steering committee for the new agency is John Wagner, a layman from St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral here, and the last president of the Oklahoma City Council of Churches, which Wagner said is being phased out of existence.

The city-wide council of churches has been struggling for survival since its executive director resigned some time ago. The organization, however, would not be a continuation of the council or a substitute for it, officials involved said.

Hobbs, in a telephone interview, said that he told the steering committee when it first started thinking about a cooperative ministry agency that the Baptists would never be a part of the council of churches approach.

When asked if any other Baptists were involved in the new agency, Hobbs replied that two other Baptist ministers had attended the steering committee meetings but later dropped out saying they were not sure their churches would cooperate.

He added, however, that some Baptist churches and individuals as well might become involved after the Oct. 28 dinner, which had been planned to try to communicate to laymen and ministers the possibilities and goals of the organization.

Wagner said that the agency might consider such things as ministries to nursing homes, hospitals, jails and counseling groups; involving suburban or upper-middle income church groups with the needs of minority and poverty-stricken areas of the city; providing newcomers with information on churches in the area; creating a Christian psychological counseling center; etc.

Hobbs said that the programs of the agency would be "project oriented" and that churches and individuals could decide if they wanted to be involved in specific projects or not..

"This approach won't compromise our churches," Hobbs said. "None of these projects will involve the matter of doctrinal belief.

"This is not a council of churches," Hobbs continued. "It will make no pronouncements on theological, political or social matters. There would be no hard-set organization. It is to be strictly a clearing house for cooperative ministry.

"It is an open way for Baptists to cooperate where we have a mutual concern about community needs without compromising our beliefs or doctrinal stand," Hobbs said. "I believe we are pioneering, and we might be setting a pattern for others to follow."

"It doesn't mean that Baptists and Catholics will unite," Hobbs added, saying that a headline to that effect in an Oklahoma City newspaper was very misleading.

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Details of the plan will be worked out following the late October meeting at First Baptist Church. Tentatively, Hobbs said the organization hopes to hold periodic forum meetings for church members outlining specific cooperative ministry projects to be coordinated by an executive committee. Each church would decide if it wanted to participate and to what extent.

An executive secretary and office secretary would probably be employed by the executive committee to handle the staff work.

Kenneth Forshee, minister of Highland Hills Christian (Disciples of Christ) Church, who outlined most of the plan for the agency, said the organization would be concerned mainly with three things: (1) the verticle dimension of the Christian faith, (2) Christian social service efforts meeting human needs in Christ's name and (3) Christian participation in social action and the social structure.

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