

December 31, 1969

PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
(Another in a series)

DEMOCRACY AND ITS CREATIVE MINORITY

by T. B. Maston

Retired Professor of Christian Ethics
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Basic in a democracy, political or religious, is majority rule accompanied with a respect for the rights of the minority. The latter involves the right to attempt through peaceful means to change the viewpoint or opinion of the majority.

There is one minority group that has a rough time in a democracy. It is the creative minority. The preceding correctly implies that all minorities are not creative and also that only a minority of people in a democracy are creative.

The majority of people prefer not to be disturbed. They may be critical of things as they are, but most of them are traditionalists and defenders of the status quo.

The strong desire for stability that seems to be characteristic of a democracy is one reason why the creative minority has a hard time in a democracy. By "creative minority" we are not thinking primarily of an organized group but rather of individuals. Frequently there is a tendency in a democracy to ostracize such individuals.

There also seems to be built into the democratic process a tendency toward the leveling of people. When one rises very far above the ordinary level the tendency is to push him back down. This tendency is particularly strong when he rises above the ordinary level in ideas and ideals, in motives and purposes, in dreams and thought.

The leadership of a democracy and the majority who support that leadership evidently feel threatened by such creative minds and souls, who challenge the old ways and are willing to try the new. Creative individuals are disturbers of the status quo, and from the perspective of the majority, there are few sins that are more serious.

There is a tendency at times in a religious democracy to apply a particular theological label to its creative minority. Because they are open to new insights and new strategies they are frequently considered "liberal." They may, however, be basically conservative in their theology while being liberal in regard to structures and programs.

A creative minority is needed in any democracy. Otherwise the democracy will tend to become static. A static structure will soon lose its relevance in a rapidly changing world. The creative minority may be like a thorn in the flesh at times, but it is needed to suggest new insights and new directions.

This means, among other things, that in church and denomination as well as in political democracy the rights of the minority to be heard should not only be respected and defended, but also welcomed.

There should never be a tendency to label one as "an obstructionist," "a non-conformist," or "a liberal" simply because he suggests a different perspective or procedure.

It is tremendously important, if a democracy is to remain healthy and dynamic, for the right to differ in love to be recognized and respected.

We should be very careful about "reading" or forcing anyone out of the denomination because he disagrees with the majority and/or with the leadership of the denomination. There is a possibility that a minority perspective may represent the wave of the future. A minority may be pointing the way in which God would have us to go.

At the same time, the minority, if it is to be really creative, must respect the majority and seek to work within the existing structures to bring about the desired changes.

(BP)---FEATURES

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W. C. Fields, Director
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December 31, 1969

Ecumenical Ex-Cowboy Rides
Theology Books, Not Bulls

by John Seelig

FORT WORTH (BP)--Rodeo is in the air, here.

Fort Worth is preparing for the 74th annual Southwestern Exposition and Fat Stock Show and Rodeo, the original indoor rodeo.

And when you mention "rodeo," a student at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary here quickens his step, as his heart beats a little faster.

George R. "Rod" Smith III has been interested in rodeo, bull riding, calf roping, clowning, bareback riding, and horses, most of his life. When he was 14 he began participating in rodeos and through the years has entered nearly all events.

For three years he was a professional--a member of the Rodeo Cowboy's Association. He participated in the national finals in Montana in 1959 when he won second place in Louisiana's state high school rodeo competition. He prefers bull riding and rodeo clowning.

Last year, however, he traded bull riding for books on theology. Today he is quite an "ecumenical" ex-cowboy.

A first year divinity student from Kentwood, La., Rod is a member of Ridglea West Baptist Church; has just been called as assistant to the pastor and youth director of St. Paul's Methodist Church, and teaches physical education and coaches basketball at St. Mary's Catholic School. His wife is secretary of Edgecliff Methodist Church,

For four years he was a Louisiana state trooper while studying at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.

He decided to enter the ministry during a city-wide evangelistic crusade in Baton Rouge in the summer of 1966. He said he feels his police work and rodeo activities will help him in the ministry with people, for they have helped him see people as they really are.

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PHOTO mailed to Baptist state paper editors from Southwestern Seminary.



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PROBLEMS OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE
Last (105th) in a series

. . .30. . .

by T. B. Maston
Retired Professor of Christian Ethics
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

The above is a symbol used by editors and printers. It means "that is all" or the end. This is thirty for this series of articles.

A decision was reached several months ago that the series would be concluded when enough articles had been distributed to provide one a week for two years, a total of 104 articles.

An attempt has been made to relate the articles to everyday Christian living. Some have centered on problems in personal Christian living. Others have dealt with church and denominational problems. Still others have considered broader social and moral problems.

Some major problems have not been discussed. This has been due primarily to two factors: (1) insufficient space to discuss them helpfully, (2) lack of background: some problems I have not felt equipped to discuss.

The articles have been brief, 500 to 600 words, primarily for two reasons: (1) that more editors of papers with limited space might be able to use them, (2) that more people would read them. I believe that the first of these proved to be true, and editor friends tell me that the second is definitely correct.

Through the years I have had a desire to do two types of writing: (1) some that would be respected by my colleagues in the field of theological education, (2) some that would reach the masses of Christian people. I am not sure I have been able to do either of these successfully, but these articles have been an expression of the second of these desires of wishes.

The articles have been written primarily for distribution to state denominational papers. We are grateful, however, that some of them have been used by other church related publications and even a few by secular press and radio.

A special word of appreciation is due to the Baptist Press and its director, W. C. Fields, for the distribution of the articles. This distribution has given them a much wider audience than would have been true otherwise.

Gratitude is expressed in a particular way to the editors. My judgment is that editors of our publications do as much as any group to shape the thinking of our people. To all of you editors I want to say thank you for opening the pages of your paper to me.

Thanks to all of you who have responded either favorably or unfavorably by letter or by spoken word to any of the articles in the series. I pray that our heavenly Father will forgive for any error, mistake, or harmful thing that has been said. I trust also that he will erase any false impression that anyone has gotten from anything that has been written.

May he use something that has been said to bless some life and to help all of us to face up to our responsibility to live the kind of life we should for him and for our fellowman.



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December 31, 1969

"Hello World" Rocks
Mission 70 Crowd

by Beth Hayworth
Baptist Press Staff Writer

ATLANTA (BP)--"Hello World," a spectacular Broadway-style musical filled with fun and gaiety, pain, pathos and a ringing call for love and brotherhood, premiered at the Mission 70 Conference here.

At the conclusion, the audience of 4,500 students and youth leaders roared their approval with a standing ovation complete with whistles and "bravos" for the cast, band and directors of the 55-minute stage production.

Commissioned especially for Mission 70, the music drama was directed by Ragan Courtney, a graduate of Louisiana Baptist College, Pineville, La. A member of the "under 30" generation, Courtney is a free-lance writer, actor and director in New York City.

The book and lyrics to "A Musical of the Mind: Hello World" were written by Courtney and Betty 'Jo' Corum of the Woman's Missionary Union, Birmingham, Ala.

Composer Buryl Red, senior music editor for Holt, Rinehart and Winston publishers, wrote the score. Red, music director for the Manhattan Baptist Church in New York City, also conducted the 22-member Baylor Lab Band in the premier performance.

The cast of 36 students, dressed in mod outfits of black and white with touches of red, was from Houston Baptist College. R. Paul Green, chairman of the Fine Arts Department at HBC and professor of choral music, assisted in rehearsing the choir for the production.

"Hello World" was performed on a wide stage set with different sized boxes and hanging screens of squares and rectangles of pastel colors. Rear projection screens were used for kaleidoscopic lighting effects and for quick flashes of photographs.

The musical drama began and ended in gaiety with the cast dispersed in the audience singing and shouting over and over "Say Hello--Hello World." In between, five scenes confronted the viewers with areas of concern in the contemporary world: war, poverty, the youth rebellion, the need for brotherhood and the depersonalization of the technology revolution.

Through choreography, psychedelic lights, projected pictures of events and persons in need, the cast and band created images, sounds and scenes to produce awareness of a world in need: dead and dying bodies in war, a funeral cortege for a soldier, children begging, the hippie culture and middle-class citizens and the robot movements of a computerized society.

Using an eclectic approach to musical styles, the score ran the scale from rock, jazz, blues and swing to country, soul and melodic hymns. Aided by an electronic synthesizer, the band at times blared the mixed sounds of the contemporary music scene and then shifted to provide soft, almost reverent backgrounds for solos and the doxology, sung in unison by the chorus.

The scenes were tied together by the dialogue of a couple of students seated at a breakfast table reading the morning paper. The awareness of a world in need gradually dawned on the couple until one of them admitted that seeing the needs of others made a person responsible for correcting them.

"I must think different thoughts. I must look and listen and do new deeds. I must live as I've never lived before. I must feel and dream and have imagination. I must say love, peace, poverty, sex, race, death, and laughter in the same breath with God and church," he said, partly to himself, and the audience.

The spectacular production, professional in most every detail suffered at a few points. For example, in the confrontation between the hippie subculture and the church-oriented group, the hippie was too easily convinced that he should join the Christian side.

Also, for a group of Southern Baptist students, the confrontation would have appeared more realistic if it had been between an activist group of Christians and a church group that is not aware of vast human needs in these changing times.

Even so, an unmistakable call to action, brotherhood and love was clear. In one scene the chorus began to chant the verse, "A new commandment I give unto you that you love one another." At first it was whispered, then increased in tempo and sound until the word "love" was shouted a dozen or more times.

A hymn of commitment, sung near the end of the show, may become the new theme song for Baptist youth meetings. In tones that were warm and clear the cast sang: "Use me, use me Lord as your eyes to see the need, your hands the poor to feed, your voice, the truth to sing."

When the final "Hello Worlds" were shouted from the cast and the band played the finale, students and leaders were voicing their opinions: "Fantastic," said more than one. "It was beautiful," declared a big football type fellow. "Great!" was uttered again and again.

"This is the kind of thing that is speaking to young people," one veteran student worker declared with enthusiasm.

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PHOTO mailed to Baptist state paper editors from HMB.

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Campus Crusade Holds
Christmas Revolution

12/31/69

DALLAS (BP)--Several Baptist youth are among the 6,000 members of Campus Crusade for Christ who gathered for a "Christmas revolution" in six regional meetings. In addition to the meeting here, which attracted approximately 700, conferences were held in Chicago, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Sun Valley, Idaho and San Bernadino, Calif.

It is impossible to assess the Baptist role in these meetings, since Campus Crusade generally plays down denominational ratios and prides itself on its interdenominational stance.

But in Dallas, at least, two Baptist young men played pivotal roles. Jim Heatherington, a member of Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, was an organizer and supervisor of the week-long event.

Prominent on the agenda was Waylon Ward, West Texas director for Campus Crusade and a member of the First Baptist Church, Lubbock.

Promotional literature for the "revolution" claimed that young men and women were "trained in a mobilization concept to confront other university students of the world with the great news that Jesus Christ really is the right now answer for a right now life."

This mobilization concept included small action groups which fanned out to Dallas shopping centers, parks and transportation terminals to witness.

In a morning devotional service, Ward told the young men and women that "God has a unique plan for each life, and he's not trying to fit you into some kind of mold...He wants to make each one of you into a 'divine original' that can be used to help fulfill his plan for our world."

Ward describes one of the goals of Campus Crusade as "channelling the unique talents and lives of young people into the church and thus helping the church fulfill the great commission."

The Campus Crusade leaders feel that the hippies and other alienated youth have made some valid criticisms of religions, especially concerning hypocrisy, but Ward contends that young people are basically attracted to Christianity.

"It is not Christianity that is turning young people off, it is the caricature of Christianity that repels them," he said.

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