

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS**  
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## P R E F A C E

Serving the General Conference as the “Committee on Resolutions” has been a challenging task. Within this document will be found the proposed resolutions and the supporting papers. Our Committee attempted to address selected contemporary issues facing the church. We perceived these concerns from three perspectives. Looking within personhood questions regarding Loneliness, Sexual Morality and Ministry to Single Adults received priority. Looking at modern society stimulated the statements on Abortion, Child Abuse and The Church and Family. Lastly, the larger world and its political climate suggested the positions on Human Rights, Apartheid and Militarism. Our basic goal has been to face these modern “Goliaths” with courage and “in the name of the Lord of hosts.”

We express our gratitude to the General Conference for this opportunity to raise these concerns and a special appreciation to all those who took pen in hand to write them out for us all.

The Committee on Resolutions,

Edward L. Rosenberry, Chairman  
Fred Fisher  
Lloyd W. Harlan  
Howard L. Ruley  
Carole Whetsel

## **ABORTION**

Whereas God alone is the author and giver of life, and all human beings are created in His image (Genesis 1:26);

Whereas human life is of God given worth independent of the stage of development;

Whereas God's word specifically affirms the inestimable value of human life before birth (Psalms 139:13-16, Jeremiah 1:4,5, Matthew 1:20);

### **WE CONCLUDE**

that there is no such thing as a human life that is not worthy to be lived, for all human life originates with the divine Creator. From the Christian perspective to terminate human life, including unborn life, is a breach of the sixth commandment in the Decalogue. We as the church choose to affirm the right to life of each and every human being from conception to the time of natural death.

### **THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, the Churches of God, General Conference, deplore and oppose the concept, the practice, and legalization of abortion. Let it be anathema!

### **FURTHERMORE,**

We propose that our churches take an active role in halting the blight of abortion in our society

By responsibly interpreting and teaching God's word on this issue. Christians need to help others in and outside the church to understand the value placed on human life by God.

By offering the grace of God, the love of Christ, and the counsel of the Holy Spirit to all whose lives are affected by an abortion.

By assisting parents in finding a worthy home for an unwanted child and offering to all pregnant women considering abortion the alternatives of life. The church must address the problem of unwanted pregnancy, or it is being negligent.

## **SEXUAL IMMORALITY**

Whereas God created human sexuality (Genesis 1:27), and instituted marriage (Genesis 2:18, 24-25), for the mutual good of man and woman (I Corinthians 7:3-5);

Whereas God forbids sexual intercourse outside of marriage, whether premarital or extramarital (Proverbs 6:27-29, I Corinthians 6:13-18, Ephesians 5:3);

Whereas God's word condemns all immoral distortions of human sexuality, including male and female homosexuality (Leviticus 20:13, Romans 1:24-27), bestiality (Leviticus 20:15, 16), etc.;

### **WE CONCLUDE**

that God's intent in creating human sexuality is that when male and female are joined together, they are one flesh (See I Corinthians 6:15-18). Hence, outside monogamous heterosexual marriage there can be no biblically moral expression of human sexuality. This is to say that all other so-called "alternate lifestyles" and/or sexual expressions are immoral sin and in need of the grace, mercy, and forgiveness of God.

### **THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, the Churches of God, General Conference, affirm the biblical model for human sexuality, the lifelong heterosexual union of one man and one woman.

### **FURTHERMORE,**

We propose that our churches counter the concepts and practice of sexual immorality prevalent in our society

By teaching forthrightly and efficiently the biblical view of human sexuality. The church must not allow secular institutions, nor humanistic culture to offer its depraved philosophy without challenge.

By offering the hope of cleansing and reconciliation with God for all those trapped in sexually immoral relationships. The role of the church must not be to cast the stone at the individual, but to help them find redemption and new life in Jesus.

By developing and supporting ministries which reinforce family life and biblical morality, and face the reality of sexual promiscuity in our society with love not condemnation.

## **CHILD ABUSE**

Whereas God created mankind in his own image (Genesis 1:26) giving all humanity worth and dignity;

Whereas Jesus instructed His followers that they needed childlike receptiveness and trust to enter the kingdom of heaven, and that it would be better to be drowned in the sea than to offend “one of these little ones which believe in me.” (Matthew 18:1-14);

Whereas Jesus himself was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, and did not bypass childhood, but rather “Increased in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man.” (Luke 2:52);

### **WE CONCLUDE**

that to abuse a child verbally, physically, sexually, or in any manner destroys the child’s self worth and dignity, and offends the Master who claimed all children as His own. In addition, to neglect a child physically, emotionally, etc., is child abuse by omission.

### **THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, the Churches of God, General Conference oppose any and all forms of child abuse.

### **FURTHERMORE,**

We propose that our churches go on the initiative to prevent and stop child abuse

By alerting our people to the signs of child abuse and encouraging them to intervene. Child abuse must be reported. Not reporting it is child abuse!

By stopping the tragedy of abused children. The church must learn the causes and treatments of child abuse. We must help abused victims and families with time, resources and understanding. We must support legal and social efforts to combat child abuse.

By assisting parents in the care and nurture of their children. This can be accomplished in the local church through an emphasis on family life, parenting, marriage enrichment, etc. Local conferences and/or the General Conference need specific programs to counter child abuse with positive teaching on Christian family life.

## **LONELINESS**

Whereas the New Testament presents the Apostolic Church as a partnership of believers united in the person of Jesus Christ where fellowship was quick and intimate (I John 1:3), where the needs of people (physical, spiritual, communal, etc.) were met (Acts 2:42-47), where community prospered and loneliness was met with caring (I John 21);

Whereas loneliness oppresses many persons in contemporary society: latch key children left to fend for themselves by negligent adults, teenagers suffering from poor self-esteem and difficult family or school situations, single adults feeling alone because they have no one, adults despairing because of job or marital problems, older folks lacking meaning and purpose;

Whereas loneliness fosters low self worth, negating the abundant life promised by Jesus (John 10:10), and lures people into drugs, alcohol, immorality, ... or even suicide to escape the seeming pointlessness of life;

### **WE CONCLUDE**

that the church must address this crying need of loneliness; for, it is a sickness within the Christian community and a plague upon society. Our churches are filled with people who wear their “churchy” masks. They look so contented and at peace, but would never reveal how they really feel inside. Conversations remain surface pleasantries, rather than deep sharing of problems and feelings. If there were ever a body of people who should be able to deal with life’s burdens, it would be the church (Galations 6:1-10)! Our relationship with Jesus is what enables us to overcome the loneliness that can so easily engulf us. Christ alone can build self-esteem, but He often chooses to work through the church.

### **THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, the Churches of God, General Conference, pattern ourselves upon the Apostolic example where the Christ-like life is emulated, and the fellowship of believers reaches out to meet the needs of all its people, especially its lonely people.

### **FURTHERMORE,**

We propose that we combat loneliness in our churches

By establishing prayer chains and care cells in and among our churches to alleviate the burden of loneliness, and to create koinonia.

By nurturing an attitude of caring within and between our churches. We need to learn how to care for our brothers and sisters in Christ, and how best to reach out to their needs. An elective in the Celebration Series can be developed to meet this need.

## **HUMAN RIGHTS**

Whereas God created each person in His image and likeness (Genesis 1:26), and cares for all people, meeting the basic needs of both the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45), and acts on behalf of the poor and weak who are overcome by the strong (Ezekiel 34:17-24, Luke 1:46-55), and in Christ breaks down every barrier that would separate and divide persons (Galatians 3:28);

Whereas God provides peace and wholeness through His law and sent His son as a witness of life as it is intended to be lived, who recognized the human rights of those whom society discarded;

Whereas Christ rendered all authority on earth to His church to minister and teach in His name (Matthew 28:18-20);

### **WE CONCLUDE**

that the church, being sensitive to all persons' relationship to God and to one another's needs, must provide for those whose basic needs are not met and must speak on behalf of the poor, the downtrodden, and outcast. The church needs to be careful that it does not take its definition of human rights from the world, lest it have no transcendent center. The concept of individual human rights has its roots in Scripture, most appropriately, in the word shalom. Shalom is usually translated "peace," and comes from a root word meaning "to be healthy, complete, whole, balanced." It describes a life in which one's every need is met, in which a person experiences security, safety and fullness of life, in which one practices justice and is the recipient of justice. Shalom describes life as God intends it to be lived (Judges 19:20, I Chronicles 4:40, Isaiah 59:8, Zechariah 8:13, Malachi 2:6). In the Judeo-Christian perspective all persons are entitled to shalom -- and the human rights that make for shalom.

### **THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, the Churches of God, General Conference, pray for and practice shalom, that those whose lives our people touch may be drawn into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ in order that they may care for one another in genuine brotherly love.

### **FURTHERMORE,**

We propose that our churches stand forward in the cause of human rights. . . .

By being the salt of the earth and the light of the world, infecting the political process in our communities, and where possible, in the nation and world, to change those systems which may create violations of human rights so that all persons may experience justice before God.

## **MILITARISM**

Whereas the Old Testament prophets warned Israel that national security did not rest in kingship (I Samuel 8: 10-17), nor in the force of arms (Judges 7), but in the righteousness of the nation (Proverbs 14:34, Jeremiah 11) and the defenses of the Lord God (II Kings 7);

Whereas Jesus commanded His disciples, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Matthew 26:52), and to Pilate the Master stated, “My kingdom is not of this world: if it were my servants would fight ...” (John 19:36);

Whereas the Churches of God throughout its history speaks forcefully against war/military solutions as an acceptable way to solve national problems, whether between nations or within a nation (General Conference Journal 1933, p. 174);

### **WE CONCLUDE**

that the rising tide of militarism runs contrary to the apostolic witness of the Holy Scriptures. Christianity is founded on the principle of love, not so militarism. It exalts military virtue and ideals, and manifests itself in a policy of aggressive military preparedness. Our present situation is unique in history. Never has there been a time when so many have depended so much upon the force and power of arms and armament. The use of force of arms has become the prevailing option in settling disputes. In no way can such thinking be reconciled with the teachings of Jesus. Our Lord is called the Prince of Peace, and we His followers are to be peacemakers.

### **THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, the Churches of God, General Conference, pledge ourselves to work diligently for peace and justice.

### **FURTHERMORE,**

We propose that we work for peace

By placing our first allegiance in the King of Kings and His rule, disavowing the militarism of national sovereignty.

By praying for all men, especially for national rulers and all in authority (I Timothy 2:1-3). We suggest the church designate a day of prayer and fasting for world peace concerns.

By influencing the political process where and whenever possible in the cause of peace consistent with the teachings of Scripture.

## **APARTHEID**

Whereas God created all mankind in His express image (Genesis 1:26) making all persons of equal and inestimable worth, and in Christ Jesus there can be no basis for discrimination whether by race, economic class, sex, or whatever (Galatians 3:28);

Whereas the Churches of God, General Conference in 1845 found black servitude to be “a flagrant violation of the natural, unalienable and most precious rights of man, and utterly inconsistent with the spirit, laws and profession of the Christian religion;”

Whereas the tragedy in South Africa is rooted in the policy of apartheid and the systematic violation of human rights and justice by the ruling minority;

### **WE CONCLUDE**

that the system of apartheid, as it exists in South Africa, is a flagrant violation of the rights of man as stated by our forebearers of faith in 1845, and is inconsistent with teachings and exercise of the Christian faith.

### **THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT WE, the Churches of God, General Conference, oppose this system of apartheid, and pray for its abolition.

### **FURTHERMORE,**

We propose that our body cleanse itself of this abomination....

By divesting itself of all economic interests (stocks, bonds, securities, etc.) invested in South Africa, or in companies with business investment in South Africa, or in companies that continue to do business in and/or with South Africa whose programs and policies are not directed against apartheid.

By providing a list of companies and investments to be boycotted.

By requesting that all churches, church institutions and/or agencies divest themselves of any and all such holdings by December 31, 1987.

## ON ABORTION

by Pastor Paul E. Anderson

Psalm 139:13, 16 (NIV), “. . . you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. . . your eyes saw my unformed body. . .”

Jeremiah 1:5 (NIV), “Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. . .”

Luke 1:41 (NIV), “When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb. . .”

These Scriptures have been brought to the forefront of the Christian Church since the United States Supreme Court’s *Roe vs. Wade* decision, January 22, 1973. This ruling made it legal for a woman to terminate her pregnancy any time during the first trimester of that pregnancy. According to William Welch, the Supreme Court’s legal decision says:

- 1) The woman’s right to terminate pregnancy comes from the 14th Amendment (the Civil Rights Amendment).
- 2) The fetus does not have the right because it is not a person.
- 3) The woman’s right to life prevails over the fetus.
- 4) The state has the authority to protect both the woman’s life and the life of the fetus.
- 5) The woman’s right to privacy takes precedence over the state in the first trimester.
- 6) The right of the state grows as the pregnancy progresses.
- 7) The state’s authority takes precedence over the woman’s right in the last trimester.<sup>1</sup>

The Reverend Canon John W. Howe reported in *Charisma* magazine in October, 1984, that there are currently 4,000 abortions daily in the United States. Only 3% of those deal with incest, rape, and known deformities. The atomic bombing of Hiroshima killed 75,000. We are aborting that many babies every 18 days.<sup>2</sup> This fact demands the attention of the church. The church must be prepared to address this question: “Who has priority, the fetus or the mother?”

Robert and Mary Joyce, authors of *Let Us Be Born*, said “The abortion issue reaches into the depths of a society’s moral foundations.”<sup>3</sup> They continue, “Human life is a continuing series of births. The fetus becomes an infant; the infant becomes a toddler and pre-schooler; the pre-schooler is born from his home into the wider community of the classroom.”<sup>4</sup> The courts have ruled that life begins at birth. The church responds that life begins at conception!

Under our present legal system, a pregnant woman has three choices. 1) She can give birth to the baby and raise it; 2) she can give birth to the baby and put it up for adoption; or, 3) she can have an abortion. Although these three options are legal, they are not all moral.

Daniel Callahan offers four alternatives for examination.

- 1) Make legal abortion unavailable in all circumstances.
- 2) Make moderate laws which specify a wide range of acceptable and formal procedures to follow for an abortion.
- 3) Pass highly permissive laws, leaving it totally in the hands of the woman.
- 4) Remove the issue from the law books, and leave it in the hands of the medical profession.<sup>5</sup>

Although it is impossible to legislate morality, the church has a responsibility to interpret God's Word. Life is precious to God. The life of the unborn child needs to be respected. The mother's life must also be protected. There are times when the life of a mother is threatened by the birth of a child. In these instances, the church needs to be prepared to offer the grace of God, the love of Christ, and the counsel of the Holy Spirit.

The church has the responsibility to teach its members that life begins at conception. The church must also emphasize the tragic consequences of a society that neglects to respect the miracle of life. Thirdly, the church should be willing to assist a parent(s) in finding a home for an unwanted child. If the church refuses to help solve the problem on unwanted pregnancies, then it is being negligent.

What should be the church's response to a woman who has had an abortion? Salvation is a gift of God. Forgiveness is offered to all who confess their sins (I John 1:9) God extends an invitation to begin anew in Jesus Christ.

Responsible Christians should help others understand the value of human life. At the same time, we must always be prepared to extend an offer of new life in Christ to any who will receive it.

<sup>1</sup>William Welch, *The Art of Political Thinking*, Totowa, N. J.: Littlefield, Adams, and Co., 1981, p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>The Reverend Canon John W. Howe, *Charisma*, Vol. 10, No. 3, October, 1984, p. 40.

<sup>3</sup>Robert and Mary Joyce, *Let Us Be Born*, Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1970, p. 6.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>5</sup>Daniel Callahan, *Abortion: Law, Choice and Morality*, London: The MacMillan Company, 1970, p. 486.

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## SEXUAL IMMORALITY —- AN AMERICAN DILEMA

By Pastor L. Joe Miller

“Jane is pregnant, pastor,” the mother whispered. Immediately she dissolved into anguished grief, her body shaken by uncontrollable sobs.

“The boy and his parents won’t have anything to do with it. They say it’s Jane’s problem. That she should have known better. They say she should have prevented it. They want her to have an abortion.”

“Oh, pastor, I’m so ashamed. I feel like such a failure as a mother -- as a Christian. How is the church going to feel about us? I can never teach my Sunday School class again. Clark’s going to resign from the council. What are we going to do?”

Few pastors have not had this kind of counseling experience in the recent past. Teenage pregnancy multiplies phenomenally in our country. In fact, the United States is the only developed nation in the world where teenage pregnancy is increasing.

What about the explosion of homosexuality in our country? San Francisco alone has an estimated 70,000 homosexual men. AIDS and other venereal diseases coming from surging sexual promiscuity threaten to become epidemic.

### **What Is Happening to Our Culture?**

Teenage pregnancy and homosexuality are merely parts of a tragic corrosion of American society.

“We’ve been living together for eleven months, Pastor. Would you marry us?”

Or, “Jake just walked out on us. Says he doesn’t love me any more and he’s got to think of himself. He’s moved in with another woman. After all we’ve gone through together. I just don’t know what we’re going to do.”

“Someone she works with, pastor. She just took off. When I came home from work she had moved out. One minute I love her and want her back. The next I want to kill them both. It’s about to ruin my job.”

So the mournful refrain reverberates from grieving hearts throughout the land. No way around it, this country faces ominous danger! The basic plank of human society is being destroyed -- the love-trust relationship created and nourished in the family by marriage.

Why this disintegration of family life? Our culture is accepting an age old perversion of human sexuality. Most broken relationships in any community center in, or are accompanied by, sexual misconduct or betrayal.

Distortion and perversion of human sexuality find their source in false, hedonistic philosophy. “If it feels good, do it. Pleasure and self-gratification are the highest goals of human existence. Do what you want to do. Right and wrong are relative terms, determined by each situation. Morality changes as the values and attitudes of society are modified by experience. What is immoral in one generation may be honorable in the next.” So says the pagan world of today.

Through secular humanism this attitude has seized our society -- ousting moral education from our schools and infiltrating the church.

By the 1970’s moral training in our nation’s educational system had been replaced by “values clarification.”

“Schools adopted programs that essentially said, ‘There is no right or wrong. We are going to throw out all these values, and kids can pick and choose between them. Kids came out with no values at all...became very wishy-washy,’” declares Marilyn Rauth, executive director of the Educational Issues Department for the American Federation of Teachers (The Indianapolis Star, September 8, 1985).

### **It Is Here That the Church Has Failed.**

Depending on the public school system to do the task that belongs to the church was evil neglect to begin with. Now it is a national catastrophe. We are reaping the ruinous results of failure to sow the biblical definition of human sexuality.

Agreed that this is a painful, frightening, and dangerous task. But, what could be more painful, frightening or dangerous than the disintegration of family life we are experiencing now?

It is time for God’s church to mobilize for action to reclaim and rebuild family life in America. Survival of the family and our nation hinge on whether or not we teach forthrightly and efficiently the biblical view of human sexuality.

### **What Is the Biblical View of Human Sexuality?**

Few issues are treated with more clarity in the Scriptures than God’s design for the physical expression of love in human life. There is little to question about what the Bible says. The debate centers in, “Is what the Bible says valid?”

### **The Bible teaches that sex is a good gift of God to the marriage relationship.**

“God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him, male and female He created them” (Genesis 1:27).

“The Lord God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him!’”

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united (spirit, soul and body) to his wife, and they will become one flesh. The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame” (Genesis 2:18, 24--25).

In that unashamed oneness given to husband and wife at creation, sexual pleasure is encouraged and expected.

“May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. A loving doe, a graceful deer -- may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love” (Proverbs 5:18-19).

Physical expression of love is to be shared between husband and wife as gifts of pleasure and enjoyment to each other.

“The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife’s body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband’s body does not belong to him alone, but also to his wife.”

“Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control” (1 Corinthians 7:3-5).

In generations past the church has failed to make it clear that sex is God’s good gift. Young people were taught, indirectly but unmistakably, to be ashamed of sexuality - - to repress and deny it. Instead of a good gift to be anticipated and prepared for in childhood, adolescence and youth, it was treated as a shameful, negative problem best ignored. Celebration and thanksgiving for God’s gift of sexuality were distorted into legalistic condemnation and fear.

For a church committed to the Bible as “the inspired, infallible authority, the Word of God, our only rule of faith and practice,” that must change!

### **The Bible teaches that God’s good gift of sex belongs only to the marriage relationship.**

Sexual intercourse outside marriage is expressly forbidden -- without exception. That includes both premarital and extramarital relationships.

“Among you,” declares the Bible, “there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or any kind of impurity, or of greed (including sexual), because these are improper for God’s holy people” (Ephesians 5:3).

“The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body” (1 Corinthians: 6:13).

“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body” (1 Corinthians 6:18).

How is sexual intercourse outside marriage sin against one’s own body? It is betrayal and contamination of the “one flesh” relationship created in marriage between a husband and wife committed to giving themselves completely to each other -- spirit, soul, and body. Premarital or extramarital sex is giving and taking part of each other that already belongs to another. Unmarried persons are as responsible to their future mates as married persons are to each other.

“The wages of sin is death.” Sexual sin produces inevitable penalty. “Can a man scoop fire into his lap without his clothes being burned? Can a man walk on hot coals without his feet being scorched? So is he who sleeps with another man’s wife. No one who touches her will go unpunished” (Proverbs 6:27--29).

“For the lips of an adulteress drip honey, but in the end she is bitter as gall” (Proverbs 5:3-4).

The temporary sweetness of immorality’s stolen waters is soon replaced by guilt, fear of discovery, disease, pregnancy and abandonment or broken relationships.

Immorality’s ultimate penalty is separation from God. “Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders. . . will inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

### **Homosexuality is an immoral distortion of God’s good gift.**

At man’s creation God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

“Then the Lord God made a woman...and He brought her to the man.”

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh” (Genesis 2:18, 22, 24).

Male and female are designed to complement and complete each other -- in body, soul, and spirit. The act of creation continues in the fruit of husband and wife’s becoming “one flesh” as children are born and the family established.

Nowhere in Scripture has that original creative plan for sexual relationship been either rescinded or modified. Homosexuality is a perversion of human nature, expressly forbidden in both Old and New Testaments.

“If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable” (Leviticus 20: 13).

Then how did this perversion become part of human experience?

Homosexuality originated in man's abandonment of God. Because "they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator."

"Therefore, God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another."

"Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones."

"In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion." (Romans 1:24-27).

Life without God become "filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity." (See Romans 1:18-32.) Homosexuality is one kind of depravity.

### **Here Again the Church Has Failed.**

We have generally either **ignored** or **condemned** homosexuality instead of developing ministries of prevention and cure. It is past time to confront and deal with this menace to wholeness.

Homosexual tendency is learned and acquired through childhood environmental factors.\* The church, therefore, is responsible for teaching its members parenting skills for enabling children to achieve healthy sexual orientation.

Thorough understanding of biblical teaching about masculinity and femininity, parental domination, acceptance and rejection, overindulgence by mothers, healthy contact with the opposite sex, warm openness in relationships, and joyous celebration of life are indispensable fundamentals of preventive Christian education.

Because these are sadly neglected in many congregations, the epidemic proportions of homosexuality in our country are partially generated by the church's sin of omission.

That makes condemnation of homosexual unconscionable. Alongside preventive teaching must be developed effective treatment centers and counseling programs. Homosexuality can be cured if compassion and ministry displace condemnation and rejection. Meeting that responsibility will require time, effort, personnel and money. Needed most of all are faith, hope, and love.

### **Temptation is not sexual immorality.**

Scripture draws a clear line between temptation and sin. Almost every person is tempted sexually. Certainly Jesus was. He was “tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). Because of that He is able to “sympathize with our weaknesses.”

“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man” (1 Corinthians 10:13). Through the desires of our sin nature\* Satan sends temptation to commit sexual immorality. Whether that temptation is toward heterosexual or homosexual immorality is not so important as how we respond to temptation. The Bible lists them together as equally abhorrent to God and harmful to man. All immorality is forbidden, God does not favor one sin over another.

It is essential for God’s people to learn how to deal with temptation. Instead of feeling guilt, we need to develop resistance. A person who yields to his own evil desire “is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire is conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death” (James 1:14-15).

Christ’s Church must give all who are tempted toward sexual immorality unconditional love, acceptance, and forgiveness. We must encourage and support one another in the battle to resist the evil desires of our sin nature.

“We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves” (Romans 15:1).

“Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective” (James 5:16). Christians, as brothers and sisters in God’s family, should be able to trust each other enough to share the anguish of temptation without fear. When that happens, the church becomes a supporting, interceding fellowship that generates strength to overcome temptation. Such a fellowship creates victorious life for God’s people.

“Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not stop meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

### **The Need For the Ministry of Reconciliation**

There is hope of cleansing and reconciliation with God for the sexually immoral.

The same Scripture passage that says, “Neither the sexually immoral...adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders...will inherit the kingdom of God” also declares, “And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Corinthians 6: 9-11).

Instead of God's "Heavenly Bureau of Investigation" or court for prosecution, the church must see itself as Christ's agent for healing and reconciliation. God does not call His people to reject or condemn. He calls us to the ministry of restoration; to help those in bondage to sexual immorality receive divine forgiveness and deliverance.

"Who are you to judge someone else's servant?" asks the Bible. "To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand" (Romans 14:4).

"Brothers, if a man is trapped in some sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself; you also may be tempted" (Galatians 6:2).

"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).

As we follow Christ in preventive teaching and compassionate training, the tide of sexual immorality will turn and we will see restoration of family life in our country. Love, joy and peace will be returned to our nation's home life. The future can be reclaimed. Only the church has the potential for solving this American dilemma.

\* Collins, Gary R., Christian Counseling, pages 319-321, Word Books, Waco, Texas

\* Galatians 5:17-21; Romans 7:15-23.

## ON CHILD ABUSE

By Diane Selcher

We believe that all persons are created in and uniquely reflect the image of God (Genesis 1:27). “Made in the image of God” refers to man’s capacity for rational, self-conscious, self-determining behavior in accordance with moral law. This capacity exhibits itself increasingly in children as they grow mentally, emotionally, physically, and spiritually toward adulthood. This places unique value on every human being at every stage of development from conception to death. Jesus Christ Himself came to us as a helpless baby and grew up to adulthood without bypassing childhood (Luke 2; Matthew 2). He “increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52).

The Lord Jesus demonstrated the value of and His love for children on many occasions. He healed sick children, as well as adults (Mark 7:25-30; Mark 9:17-27). He raised children from the dead (Mark 5:22-24, 35-43). Jesus stressed that his followers needed childlike receptiveness and trust to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 18:1-14).

Child abusers take full advantage of this receptiveness and trust in children. Parents are the most frequent child abusers, followed by other caretakers, such as relatives, parents’ friends, and babysitters. The six recognized forms of child abuse include physical abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, emotional deprivation, verbal assault, and sexual abuse. Children’s behavior may trigger the abuse, but it is not the cause.

Child abuse occurs in poor, middle-class, and wealthy families, in rural areas, cities, and suburbs. It occurs frequently. In Pennsylvania more than 15,500 cases were reported in 1982 alone. Many more cases go unreported.

Child abuse brings tragic results. Hundreds of children die from abuse each year in the United States. Thousands of children are left with emotional and physical handicaps. Child abuse leads to “acting out” behaviors in which children behave in criminal, violent ways.

Child abuse may be the church’s best-kept secret. Research by Alice Husky, herself abused as a child by “Christian” parents, showed that more than half of survey respondents at a Christian liberal arts college were abused as children. Focus On The Family, an organization founded by Christian psychologist James Dobson, reports a large number of child abuse situations occurring in Christian homes.

Common signs of child abuse include repeated injuries, neglected appearance, disruptive behavior, passive and withdrawn behavior, supercritical parents, and families that are socially isolated.

Why do parents, including Christian parents, abuse their children? Usually it is a reaction to past or present problems or stress with which the parent cannot cope. Common causes include:

- 1) Immature parents with unrealistic expectations of the child
- 2) Lack of parenting knowledge and skills
- 3) Unmet parental emotional needs
- 4) Drug and alcohol problems
- 5) Frequent crises in the home
- 6) Parents who were themselves abused as children.

Every parent, including the Christian parent, has the potential to abuse a child at some time. Most abusive parents are normal people. Few are criminals or mentally unbalanced.

Why should Christians help prevent child abuse? Child abuse is a tragedy that affects us all. Child abuse leaves a heritage of permanent physical and mental damage which prevents children from growing into independent, productive adults. Delinquency, drug and alcohol addiction, and criminal lifestyles often result when children are abused.

In Matthew 18:6, Jesus sternly warns, "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea." Christians are responsible to stop those who harm and abuse children.

Abused children and their families cannot help themselves. They are trapped in a vicious cycle of abuse which often perpetuates itself generation after generation. Yet they can be helped. Child abuse can be stopped. The vast majority of abusers can learn to feel better about themselves, to enjoy children, and to stop abusing.

### **How can Christians help stop the tragedy of child abuse?**

**LEARN** the facts about child abuse: causes and treatments.

**HELP** abused victims and families with time, resources, and understanding.

**SUPPORT** legal and social efforts to combat child abuse.

**REPORT** child abuse when you see it.

**APPLY** church discipline to Christians who refuse to stop abusing children (Mt. 18:15-17, 1 Cor. 5:11-13, 2 Cor. 2:5-11, Gal. 6:1-5)

Treatment for child abuse involves detecting and reporting it. Too often, child abuse goes unreported because people who could have helped did not want to get involved. In Pennsylvania, a person making a child abuse report in good faith has immunity from any liability, civil or criminal, that might otherwise result from reporting. Child abuse can be reported in Pennsylvania by calling CHILDLINE: (800)932-0313, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. In an emergency, the local law enforcement

officer should be contacted. Upon receipt of a request on CHILDLINE, an investigation must be started within a twenty-four hour period with an in-person contact with the child and his parents or guardian. A thorough inquiry is conducted. Immediate treatment may be given for urgent problems such as physical injury, serious neglect, or malnutrition. Children may be given developmental testing, psychiatric therapy, or medical treatment. Support services are brought in from a visiting nurse, homemaker, social worker, concerned friend or relative, to give a helping hand. In some cases, a helping hand and knowledge that someone cares are all that are needed. Extended counseling for children and parents is required because child abuse develops over a long period of time and it requires time for professional treatment to work. Permanent separation of the child from family is a last resort, although at times it is the only answer.

Every person has a moral responsibility to stop child abuse. When there is reasonable evidence to believe that a child is being abused, this must be reported. Not reporting child abuse is child abuse.

Every Christian has the responsibility to stop child abuse. As the Lord Jesus said in Matthew 25:40, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye do it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

## ON LONELINESS

by Carole Whetsel

As we look at the condition of loneliness, we don't even have to give it a definition. For loneliness is a universal feeling that all of us have experienced to some degree at one point or another in our lives. Just saying the word paints the picture of darkness, solitude, coldness and separation. Even thinking about loneliness gives rise to a certain feeling of anxiety. We think -- I'm not lonely now but some day I may be.

“When Billy Graham is asked what problem plagues more people today than any other, he surprises most of his questioners by answering ‘loneliness’.”<sup>1</sup> Although loneliness is an extremely personal experience, our society today contributes much to this condition. “We live in a highly mechanized environment. As a part of the impersonal urban and suburban community, we strive to acquire the latest in comfort, convenience and fashion at the expense of personal relationships.”<sup>2</sup>

All causes of loneliness are not from without. Many persons are not capable of establishing relationships. They have a basic fear or mistrust of others and are unable to reach out in a meaningful way. “Also, ‘to love is to be lonely.’ We know that every love is eventually broken by illness, separation, or death.”<sup>3</sup> To avoid the pain of separation, persons will opt not to become involved in the first place.

Because of the above reasons, everyone in our society is at risk of becoming or being lonely. Extremely vulnerable are teenagers who suffer from poor self-esteem and difficult family or school situations. Single adults feel alone because “everyone else is married and getting on with their life.” Older folks, who may or may not be alone, don't feel productive or useful to society any longer.

Numbers do not remove the feeling of loneliness. “Good” marriages and large seemingly stable families harbor some of the loneliest people alive, for within these structures individuals exist isolated by themselves or others. Some of our loneliest people are the busiest people. They fill their lives with “busyness” to avoid the disenchantment they feel with life itself.

The feeling of loneliness not only causes sadness and despair within the individual, it can isolate that individual from society rendering him helpless and unfulfilled. He does not see himself as a productive person capable of making positive contributions to the world around him. Therefore he not only loses, but the people around him lose also.

The feeling of loneliness is one so strong and powerful it can cause us to make decisions extremely detrimental to ourselves. People choose drugs and alcohol as an escape from loneliness. People choose to have affairs or marry the wrong person to escape loneliness. People will become involved with the wrong crowd to escape loneliness. People will commit suicide to escape loneliness. Christians as well as non-Christians are affected by this problem.

Because of this, the church must feel a responsibility to this condition. If there were ever a body of people who should be able to deal with the situation, it would be the church. In looking at the church in its earliest stages we see that fellowship among the believers was quick and intimate. They met together often and shared their joys and sorrows. They were concerned about each other's needs. The basis of this fellowship was the personal relationship each member had with Jesus Christ. In 1 John 1:3 it says, "We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

Our relationship with Jesus Christ is what helps us overcome the loneliness that can engulf us. Not only do we feel a fellowship with God, but we realize we are special people capable of doing many things. In His love, Christ builds our self-esteem and also makes us sensitive to the needs of others. Through this, we are able to reach out in a caring and loving way to those who are hurting and lonely. You can not be a caring, loving person and withdrawn in isolation at the same time. One situation will ultimately overpower the other.

What we have described is the ideal, but in reality it doesn't always work. Why is this so? "In The Cocktail Party, T. S. Eliot suggests that the reason the cocktail glass has become so important is that the Communion Cup has lost meaning. The Communion Cup, he explains, represents a special relationship in which persons become close in fellowship and yet are most fully themselves. They find the mastery of Him who is their Lord."<sup>4</sup>

Our churches are filled with people who wear their "churchy" masks. They look so contented and at peace and would never reveal how they really feel deep inside. Conversations are surface pleasantries rather than deep sharing of problems and feelings. It would be impossible to reach out to anyone in these churches because there is no atmosphere of openness and no way for real communication or fellowship to exist.

Usually such churches are more interested in numbers than people. They are more concerned about finances and maintaining a beautiful church building than they are about the needs of the people. The atmosphere is more like a social organization than an outreaching church.

However, the potential is always there to develop into the kind of church that Christ established in the very beginning. Where Christians are really interested, where Christ is central and His way of life is put into practice, a Christian fellowship can develop that will reach out and meet the needs of all its people especially its lonely people.

How do we develop into this kind of church? As with all problems, we must first begin by examining ourselves. At the very foundation of our being must be a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is where we must start, for we can not be the Christians we need to be, if we do not have Christ within us. At this point we need a commitment of time toward personal prayer and Bible study in order to examine

ourselves. In 2 Corinthians 13:5 it says, “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves....”

We also need to take time to realize the characteristics of a caring, outreaching person. Not all of us can be the bubbly, personality plus; but we can concentrate on wearing a smile and saying hello to those around us. Offering to shake hands with someone you don't know very well may open up a whole new relationship for both persons. There are many study books on this subject for Sunday School classes to use as a way of self-awareness and study.

Next, we must examine our church. We can not solve a problem unless we realize one exists. Are we the kind of church that cares for its people? Do we accept people exactly the way they are or are they expected to shape into a certain mold before they are considered “In?” Is our church structured for the formation of “cliques?” In general, what is the attitude of the church population toward its people? Is the attitude of the church the same as that described in Philippians 2:1-11?

As we look at ourselves and our church, we should also look at our outreach. How much do we visit or call one another? As was mentioned before, the older people of our congregations are sometimes the loneliest. If a personal visit is impossible, the phone is just an arm's length away.

One of the greatest services a church can have is a hospitality service -- taking meals to families whose wife or mother is sick. This is a great opportunity to really talk to people in need and also provide a practical service.

Social events are a time when people can interact with one another. Usually these need to be structured so that people don't just talk with those they know best.

Groups for Single Adults are a real necessity in today's church. Many times single adults feel like they don't “fit-in” with the family-structured events. Sometimes it is necessary to arrange with other churches to form an interdenominational Single Adults Group. Christian singles usually enjoy meeting other single adults.

These are just a few ideas to help the church meet the needs of lonely people. There are many ways that we can reach out and help one another in this area. Those who are constantly reaching out to others generally experience very little loneliness within themselves. When we draw from the love of God and spread it out to others, we always reap more blessings than we sow.

<sup>1</sup>Marion Leach Jacobson, Crowded Pews and Lonely People (Wheaton, Illinois:Tyndale House Publishers, 1975) p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Clarke E. Moustakas, Loneliness (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1961) p. 15.

<sup>3</sup>Moustakas, p. 101.

<sup>4</sup>Jacobson, p. 41.

All Scripture quotations are from the: The Holy Bible, New International Version  
Copyright 1978 by Zondervan Bible Publishers, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Other Resources:

Escape From Loneliness, Paul Tournier, Westminster Press, Philadelphia. 1948.

## ON HUMAN RIGHTS

by Pastor William H. Reist

The Human Rights Concept is much like love: everyone's for it, but no one can exactly define it. On its face, "human rights" seems so simple to define: it consists of the basic privileges due each person because he is a person. Such privileges may include, from a political perspective, freedom from physical and emotional torture; from an economic point of view, the right to support oneself and family by gainful employment; and, in a social context the right to personal privacy, to familial solidarity, to free religious and intellectual expression, as well as freedom from discrimination based on race, creed, sex, and even sexual preference.

But, in spite of the supposed simplicity of the issue, "human rights" is as difficult to define as it is to practice. At the edges of life -- at birth and death -- it is becoming increasingly difficult to define "human." Notice, for instance in a discussion on abortion, how difficult it is for the church -- let alone the world -- to agree when a fertilized egg becomes a human, and whether or not it is ever appropriate to kill that life. Because of such ambiguity, the rights of the mother for control over her own body compete with the rights of the fetus for life.

Because of similar ambiguity, it is difficult to define "rights." What is a human's privilege because he is a person? Which, for example, is the privileged human right: the right of a person suffering from a painful terminal illness to die with dignity, or the right of society to preserve life; the right of a person to own and carry a handgun or society's right to security from armed citizens; the right of society to mete out capital punishment, or the right of the condemned murderer to live; the right to a broad range of social services paid for by taxes, or the right to preserve an increasingly large portion of one's earned income.

The church needs to be careful that it does not take a definition of human rights from the world, lest we have no transcendent center. Even though the concept of individual human rights is not specifically articulated in the Bible -- it was a movement that grew out of the Enlightenment of the Eighteenth Century -- it has its roots in Scripture, most appropriately, in the word shalom. Shalom is usually translated "peace," and comes from a root word meaning "to be healthy, complete, whole, balanced." It describes a life in which one's every need is met, in which a person experiences security, safety and fullness of life, in which one practices justice and is the recipient of justice. Shalom describes the caring for human needs (Judges 19:20); returning safely from battle (Joshua 10:21, 1 Kings 22:17); upholding truth (Zech. 8:13) and uprightness (Mal. 2:6); enjoying economic prosperity (1 Chr. 4:40); and practicing justice (Isaiah 59:8). Shalom describes life as God intended it to be lived.

From the Judeo-Christian perspective all persons are entitled to shalom -- and the human rights that make for shalom -- because of the relationship between God and His creation: because God created each person in His image and likeness (Gen. 1:26); because God cares for all people (meeting the basic needs of the just and unjust alike),

(Mt. 5:45); because God acts in behalf of the poor and weak who are overcome by the strong (Ezek. 34:17-24, Luke 1:46-55); because in Christ God breaks down every barrier that would separate and divide persons, whether by nationality, or economic and sexual discrimination (Gal. 3:28).

To provide for peace and wholeness, God gave His People the Ten Commandments, which among other things, specifically prohibits killing (the Sixth Commandment), kidnapping (the probable origin of the Eighth Commandment having to do with stealing a person), maligning a person's character and reputation (the Ninth Commandment), and stealing his property (the Tenth Commandment). To provide human example to both the letter and spirit of the Decalogue, God sent His Son as witness of life as it was intended to be lived. Jesus was known for recognizing human worth in the lives of those whom society discarded, namely, publicans, prostitutes, and the poor.

But in spite of God's intentions, Scripture makes clear the fact that persons have not lived well with each other. The story of Cain and Abel is the first example of the violation of human rights. These two men -- who incidentally, were brothers -- lived side by side, equal to one another, both with equal rights to live at peace with one another and before God (Gen. 4:1-16). But one violated the other without cause, killing him. In the succeeding trial, God asked Cain, "Where is your brother, Abel?" and was answered, "I don't know," -- which was a lie -- "am I my brother's keeper?" Am I responsible for my brother?

The implication of this entire narrative is that Cain was not responsible for his brother's occupation and sacrifices, or for creating a better life for his brother. Each was free to pursue his life and occupation and goals as he chose. But Cain was responsible to keep his hands off his brother's throat; at the least, his brother had a right to life, at most, he had a right to shalom.

History, these days, chronicles the contemporary story of Cain and Abel, the contemporary violations of human rights. In this century alone 40 million persons have been executed by the Russians, 26 million by the Red Chinese, 6-8 million by the Nazis (Luis Kutner, ed., The Human Right to Individual Freedom, 1970, p. 206), 4 million by the Cambodians, and countless millions by assorted dictators and oppressive governments. Even more than these are the countless violations against one's person: child abuse, spouse abuse, poverty in a world of affluence, homelessness, disease.

The church needs to be clear about this issue of responsibility for one another. Society dare not make people dependent on each other. But since the goal of human life in the presence of God is shalom for all persons, society, in the negative sense, does have the responsibility to protect people from one another (keep your hands off my throat); and in the positive sense to provide for those whose basic needs are not met. The church, being sensitive to all persons' relationship to God and to one another, needs to articulate this responsibility to the world.

Much has been done in the world to meet both the negative and positive need for

human rights. Since World War II the human rights movement has seen development of the United Nations Charter (1945), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948 by the UN General Assembly without dissenting vote, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966). Amnesty International was formed in 1961 to address the issue. In 1975 the Helsinki Act was signed by 33 European governments plus the United States and Canada. Included in this accord was a statement on human rights:

“The participating states will respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief, for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.” (Cited in Academic American Encyclopedia, Vol. 10, p. 298)

But much more needs to be done, especially by the church. The church can begin with prayer for shalom, that there will be justice for the abused and basic provisions for those in need. But the church must act in service as well to practice shalom, whether in making changes to the church building to provide equal access for the handicapped, or providing refuge and shelter for victims of spouse or child abuse, or sanctuary for political refugees, or temporary shelter for the homeless, or intervention in helping the unemployed acquire a job.

These are “social service” activities, ministering to individuals in need. But the church must be engaged in “social justice” activities as well. Social justice consists of working in the political process to influence policy and change the system that may create violations of human rights.

Finally, the church needs to be about the business of evangelism. It is useless to try to change the world without changing a person’s heart; but it is selfish for that changed heart to live as if his relationship to his brother does not matter. The Good News is that Jesus has overcome the principalities and powers that separate persons from God and from one another.

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## **ON MILITARISM**

By Pastor Oscar C. Schultz, Jr.

### **PREAMBLE**

This statement is being written at a dangerous and distressing time. Our national leaders have chosen to confront, in a direct way, forces of opposition in Libya. It is an awesome responsibility to control so much military might. The temptation to strike out at an opponent must be very great.

In the forefront of our minds is one purpose -- to stay and to prevent further bloodshed, especially when directed against our own citizens. It is our sincere hope to stop such acts of violence as quickly as possible. In one way of thinking it is self-defense; however, one critic has called such retaliatory military actions "self-indulgence."

Seemingly, not enough consideration nor importance has been given to the background of this situation. Feelings of deep hatred against the United States and its policies, especially in the Near East have developed over a long period of time. Neither can we expect a quick or easy solution.

### **BACKGROUND**

When Jesus said, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword," (Matt. 26:52 RSV) He was reflecting the spirit of the prophet Isaiah. (2:4) Jesus has shown us how to meet (and to overcome) aggression. It is not easy; nor is it the way our carnal nature operates. Jesus calls His people to be like He is.

"...Our task as a church is to wrench ourselves away from the powers of this world...The church is to be a sign that the unbroken dominion has come to an end... Our task is to hold the powers at a distance lest they seduce us...Ours is a defensive stance....girdles, breastplate, shoes, shield, helmet, sword (short sword)... No mention anywhere of offensive weaponry." (Roger Lovette, "They were not able," Journal for Preachers, Vol. 9 No. 4, Pentecost 1986, pages 7, 8.)

Throughout its history the Churches of God have spoken forcefully against war/military solutions as an accepted way to solve problems, whether between nations or within a nation, (cf. General Eldership Journal, 1933, page 174)

### **DEFINITION**

Militarism has been around a long time. Samuel cautioned the people of Israel against it when they asked for a king. (I Samuel 8:10-17)

In many present day nations "strong" leaders keep themselves in power, and many others seek for political power by the use of military force.

According to K. U. Suter, militarism is when a nation or a people (whether a police state or not) allows “progressive militarization of all sectors of life reaching a point when it (the military) becomes self-sustaining.” (Suter, “The Christian and Militarism,” Ecumenical Review, Vol. 30, April 1978, p. 130)

Our present situation is unique in history; never has there been a time when so many have depended so much upon the force and power of arms and armament. The use of force of arms has become the prevailing option in settling disputes. The strong one is the victor.

Christianity is founded on the principle of love. Christian love sets a different kind of example.

Whereas our Lord Jesus Christ is called the Prince of Peace; and we His followers are to be peacemakers (to be called the children of God);

Whereas, the Churches of God explicitly opposes war; (see above).

Whereas, militarism fosters force/military power as a major strategy of operation;

Whereas the economics of armaments is capital intensive and very expensive, i.e. there is little return on the investment;

“The arms race is the product of a society where the facade of peace is built upon the threat of nuclear war. Even without war the arms race is destructive. The contest between the super powers deprives Third World countries, and even the citizens of their own nations of funds that could be used to feed, house and educate the poor. This military focus stifles the possibilities of peaceful scientific research, since virtually half the scientists in the world work for military related concerns.” (Publisher’s comments about Dorothee Solle’s The Arms Race Kills, Even Without War, 1982, Philadelphia, Fortress)

Whereas, each nation has learned to settle internal disputes by means of law and negotiation, but disputes between sovereign nations far too often lead to fighting, killing and the long years of hatred; (Militarism fosters the ‘barracks mentality’ by portraying all others as ‘the enemy.’ A good soldier in combat ‘needs’ to hate the opponent.)

Therefore, should we not work diligently for peace (and justice)? “Justice is the cornerstone of the universe... foundations of cosmic order are shaken in the presence of injustice... justice is the issue on which the very claims of deity are settled. Justice, just rule, is that central activity by which God is God. Without it the very universe cannot survive.” (Patrick D. Miller, “When the Gods Meet: Psalms 82 and the Issue of Justice,” Op. cit. p. 5)

## ON MINISTRY TO THE SINGLE ADULT

By Pastor Thomas E. Pauquette

Ken is twenty years old. He is tall, thin, and a little on the shy side. Ken recently completed a two-year television repair program at a nearby school of electronics. He is excited about his new job at “TV World” and about having his own apartment just a few blocks from your church.

This morning Ken walked through the front door of your church and was given a smile and a bulletin by today’s greeter. He was then introduced to Henry, the Sunday School superintendent, whose job it is to direct newcomers to the right class.

“It’s good to have you with us this morning, Ken. You look like you’re about eighteen. Am I right?” Henry asked.

“I’m twenty,” Ken replied.

“Well, that would put you out of the Senior Youth Class. Are you in college?” asked Henry.

“Well, actually, I just finished a TV repair course at Vo-Tech,” Ken answered.

“Hmmm,” Henry pondered, “I guess that rules out the Campus Christians Class for college students. I don’t suppose you’re married?”

“No sir,” Ken replied.

Henry struggled for a moment then responded, “Gee Ken, I’m sorry to say that we don’t have a singles class right now. But our Golden Band Class is a group of fun-loving couples and I’d just bet they’d be willing to let you sit in on their class. Follow me.”

“Actually, Henry,” Ken struggled, “I really, uh, well that is, I really don’t know if I have time for Sunday School right now. I mean with my new job and all. I guess I got the times of your services mixed up. I’ll be back in an hour for worship service.”

Needless to say, Ken did not return an hour later. Nor did he return a week or even a month later, It is likely that Ken had similar experiences at two or three other churches and gave up his search altogether.

We live in an age of specialization. We have become accustomed to consulting with a long list of different physicians depending on which part of our body is hurting or sick at the moment. A similar phenomenon may be occurring in the church. In our attempts to address specific needs of individuals, we are becoming very specialized in our approach to ministry.

A sad effect of this specialization is that we often tend to herd people into categories that have become convenient for those who plan the program of the local church. Occasionally, however, we encounter a person who does not easily fit into one of our predetermined “pigeon holes.” We are instantly at a loss to know how to react to that person, let alone minister to his specific needs.

The single adult often becomes one of these “Christians without a category.” Since from a statistical standpoint most people do get married, we are usually left with a relatively small number of single adults in our congregations. Our tendency toward specialization then teams up with limited resources to create classes, fellowships, and other programming for practically everyone but the single adult.

Some churches have endeavored to address this concern through the formation of “Single Ministries.” Though the initial intentions are often good, these fellowships tend to become glorified “leper colonies.” Here the church simply hides its single adults instead of welcoming them as valued members of the church family. Some churches have allowed heterogeneous groups to form but have then made the fatal mistake of letting their real attitudes show by calling them something like “Pairs and Spares.” The single adult is still left feeling incomplete and less than valuable as a “spare.”

The answer to this problem is simple though it may not always be easy to implement. The solution begins by putting the emphasis on “adult” instead of “single.” While the unique needs of single adulthood are real, they are usually not primary. Single adults are still adults, with other adult needs.

Do we formulate special groups for tall adults (The Goliath Class), or heavy adults (The Dieting Disciples), or adults who demonstrate a good sense of humor (Christian Cut-Ups)? Of course not. Then why would we want to alienate people on the basis of their present marital status as though that were the most important determining factor in their lives?

This new emphasis can be implemented in the local church by choosing new ways to assign people to groups such as Sunday School classes and fellowships. Some Sunday Schools have implemented a totally elective system for their adult classes. This program offers a variety of classes and the adults are given opportunity to choose for themselves which class they will be in for a given period of time. These classes typically continue for one quarter at the end of which a whole new set of electives is offered. This system automatically includes single adults as valued members of the Sunday School without making their singleness a determining factor in their participation. This also helps to include a number of other “categories” that we often overlook in our programming efforts. Another exciting feature of the elective system in adult Sunday Schools is that it brings a wide range of ages to any given class providing a variety of interesting perspectives and viewpoints.

Another area of concern involves the formation of fellowship groups within the church. Once again, will we emphasize marital status as a determining factor? Must the

“Singing Singles” meet on Friday night and the “Hitched in Heaven” on Saturday? Is there some reason to keep them separate as though they were fire and fuel? Another option is to create one exciting adult group for fellowship and spiritual enrichment. In the event the group decides for a teaching or discussion format, could not both references of single and married be considered at once? If the discussion is family life, are not single adults families too? If the discussion concerns sexuality, are not single adults sexual creatures also? If the discussion is finances or personal ministry or depression, do not both married and single adults face these very same issues? In fact, a group comprised of both single and married adults often produces far more interesting and insightful discussions on these and other topics.

The unique needs of single adults are real, indeed, and need to be addressed by the church. But they do not require isolation to do so. The basic needs of being a Christian adult (a sense of belonging, spiritual nourishment, a place to make a valued contribution) far outnumber the unique needs of singleness.

The bottom line is this: If we keep putting the emphasis on SINGLE instead of ADULT, we are going to continue to turn Ken and a thousand others just like him away from the Family of God. Come to think of it, we might not even have a Sunday School class for another very important single adult visitor. His name is Jesus.

## ON CHURCH AND FAMILY

### What is a Church to Do?

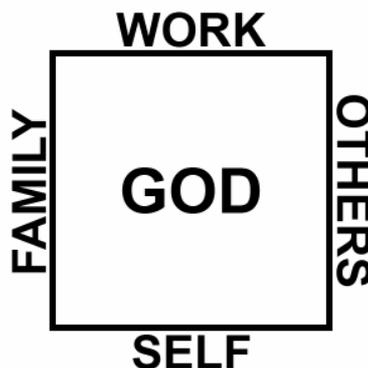
by Pastor Howard L. Ruley

There is an old hymn that goes something like this, “There will be peace in the valley for me, some day; there will be no sadness; no sorrow, no trouble I’ll see; there will be peace in the valley for me.” This hymn is true in the prophetic sense; yet there are many around us who are literally crying for a moment of this peace.

Look at what is happening around our country today. Divorce, although dropping at some levels, is still occurring at a disgraceful pace. Suicide has attained epidemic proportion, especially among our teenagers. The farm struggle has resulted in losing not only their livelihood but their very heritage. Street people, in a nation that could feed the entire world, yet have no idea where their next meal is coming from. Millions fall victims to ulcers, heart disease, AIDS, abortions, immorality. The list could go on and on. Where will it end? What should the church, the Body of Christ be doing to help combat these situations? An even greater question is why aren’t people turning to the church for help when the church has the very answer to their needs?

It is my belief that the hope for the individual, as well as the hope for the family, comes from having a proper balance in lifestyle. Too often our lives lean too much toward one direction (work, kids, recreation, home) and that creates an imbalance somewhere else. This imbalance causes stress, turmoil, and crises that are destroying the individual and the family. What can a church do? Simply this, help create the proper balance needed to assist the family.

If you were to diagram an individual’s properly balanced life, I wonder if you would not diagram it something like this:



I realize that this may be very simplistic, so I should like to expand on this and give ideas on what the church should do.

First, notice that to keep our life in the proper balance, the center must be God. Any other hub will not set up the balance our lives should have. Where do I get this idea? from the Scripture itself:

Exodus 20:2 “Thou shall have no other Gods before me”

Luke 14:26 “If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea and his own life also; he cannot be my disciple.”

The church, the Body of Christ, must always emphasize that we are to be brought unto a personal salvation and then to worship and glorify our heavenly Father. The church needs to encourage, to feed, to teach our people that by making God the cornerstone of our lives, our relationships to all other areas will improve and become greater. Yes, the church should be concerned about social issues but this must not, this cannot take the place of the message of salvation and of worship in our relationship to God.

Second, this may seem selfish and we may feel guilty, but we must have a right relationship and perspective of ourselves if we are to be all that God wants us to be. How can we build relationship with others if we have no perspective of who and what we are?

Project LEAP, a ministry and survey taken by the Churches of God, develops a lot of vital statistics for the church body. One of the most overwhelming facts that came forth in several age groups is that people have such a low self-esteem. We feel that we are not very worthy of anything. This is especially true in the adult male. The church needs to teach the value of the soul, the worth of each individual in God’s master plan of creation, and the special spiritual gifts that God has so wisely granted to each and everyone who has accepted salvation.

John writes these beloved words that we know so very well but seem simply to quote instead of making them the center of our being. John 3:16 says,

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

How many times have we heard this verse, and yet do we really value the meaning? We are of such great importance that God sent His Son Jesus to walk this earth, die on the Cross of Calvary, rise from the grave, and go back to heaven to prepare a place for all who believe. What greater value can we find in this world?

Paul writes that not only does God love us through Jesus, but also that He deems us worthy of special gifts that can glorify the Father in Heaven. Look into Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4 and see some of the different lists of gifts that God grants to those who have accepted His Son for salvation. What a great honor this is and what strength it should bring to our lives.

Third, we must maintain a right relationship with the family. The Apostle Paul writes in I Timothy 5:8,

“But if any provide not for his own house, and especially for those of his

own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel.”

It is my belief that this means not merely the physical needs such as food, clothing and shelter, but the emotional needs as well as the spiritual. I believe that the husband and the wife need to keep their relationship first and then their relationship to their children. How many times does the husband or the wife feel alone or guilty because there is not enough time for each other? A proper relationship puts both at top priority, and we need to emphasize this if our lives are going to work in proper balance.

What can the church do? I’ve heard Dr. George Weaver, Winebrenner Seminary President, state several times that “our church bulletin schedules are an abomination to the ministry of Christ because, instead of bringing the family together, we have meeting after meeting that divides the family into separate groups.” Let us as the church teach our families how to be a family. Let us as a church teach our families how to deal with strife and anger in a wholesome manner that can bring the family together instead of destroy it. Let us as a church teach our families how to worship both in the church and in the home to bring all into a better understanding and witness of God. Let us as a church teach the family to minister to all ages, young and old alike, in the love that God so richly gives. We need to teach the family the importance of the individual and how each adds an additional blessing to the family unit.

Fourth, there is our relationship with others. How can this possibly be fourth? Did not Christ tell us to go forth to evangelize the world? How am I going to have time for God, myself, my wife, my children and then others? It’s just not possible!

You know, a person may be right about the above statement; that is, if he tries to do it on his own, Jesus did command in Matthew 28:19-20,

“Go ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and lo I am with you always even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

Jesus also said in John 14:18 and 26,

“I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you”...

“But the comforter, which is the Holy Ghost whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you.”

The church can teach this balance by communicating to all that we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to do God’s work. We can do nothing without His leading and, therefore, if we place things into proper perspective, we will be His witness to others in the time He, the Heavenly Father, deems necessary.

Fifth, there are financial obligations. How can this be last? I've got bills to pay; how can we meet our needs if this is not top priority? Remember the promise that "My God shall supply all of your needs?" When we again put things into proper priority, then needs will be met and work will become a blessing instead of a necessity.

The church needs to teach that there is a definite work ethic within the Bible. Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 3:10,

"For even when we were with you this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

Paul again writes in Ephesians 6:5-6 these words,

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ; not with eye service as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."

What greater witness to our family, and to others than to give an honest day's labor for an honest day's pay; to do each task assigned to us without grumbling or without gaining praise but doing it because we believe that this is what God would have us do. I firmly believe that the way we handle our vocations will be the most effective witness we can have to a world destined to hell without the Christian witness.

Dr. Lloyd John Olgivie, in the book The Beauty of Caring, writes this, "So often we ask what's on the agenda? . . . The great need is to ask what is on the Lord's agenda for me today?" (page 8)

The church needs to help all of its members to make priorities according to God's principles. There are times we need to be alone, there is a place for work, there is the need for the family to do things together, there is a need to be a witness to others; but on God's schedule, not ours. For if we work on His time frame, then we can see things accomplished that will truly bring honor and glory to His Name.

May we as a church hear those faithful words as we come face to face with Jesus, "Well done, thy Good and Faithful Servant." In the name of Jesus. Amen.

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## ON APARTHEID

By Pastor K. Edward Brandt

### INTRODUCTION

Apartheid, (pronounced a-part-hate), is the practice of racial segregation and discrimination against Negroes (Random House College Dictionary, 1975, p. 61). Such discrimination and segregation against Negroes has existed in the United States. The fifteenth amendment to the United States Constitution granting black males the right to vote was adopted in 1870, (The American Pageant I, p. 442).

The Churches of God, General Conference responded to the plight of people who are black during the General Eldership at Pittsburgh in 1845. The following “Resolutions on Slavery,” were drawn and offered by Winebrenner himself:

Whereas, it is the duty of the ministers of God to testify against sin in every form and place,

Therefore,

1. Resolved, That it is the unequivocal and decided opinion of this General Eldership of the Church of God, that the system of involuntary slavery, as it exists in the United States of North America, is a flagrant violation of the natural, unalienable and most precious rights of man, and utterly inconsistent with the spirit, laws and profession of the Christian religion.
2. Resolved, That we feel ourselves authorized by the highest authority, and called upon by the strongest ties and obligations, to caution our brethren in the Church of God, against supporting and countenancing, either directly or indirectly, the said iniquitous institution of involuntary slavery; and should any of our ministers or members ever become guilty of this great and crying sin, we do most earnestly and religiously recommend and advise, that all such be excommunicated, or cast out of the church, and denied the right of Christian fellowship among us, (John Winebrenner: 19th Century Reformer, p. 109.)

The Churches of God need to continue the tradition of our denominational founder and more importantly the founder of our faith to oppose practices which violate the rights of God’s creatures.

### THEOLOGICAL RATIONALE

Ironically, proponents of Apartheid and people opposing Apartheid affirm each position using a biblical basis. The question immediately becomes one of legitimate interpretation and a practice of sound exegesis.

Abraham Kuyper promotes a theological rationale for Apartheid using Genesis

11:1-9 as a biblical basis for his position, (The Theology of Apartheid, p. 14). The passage, of course, concerns the Tower of Babel. The people attempted to build a “tower with its top in the heavens” (Gen. 11:4). However the Lord’s response was: “Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” (Gen. 11:5-7)

The next verse simply says “the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the earth,” (Gen. 11:8). Kuyper designates the building of the tower as sin. Sin, therefore, has divided the human race into various national states. According to Kuyper, the act of scattering them abroad affirms that God intended diversity of races and people. Kuyper concludes that apartheid “protects the authority of the God-given, historical inner law of each individual ethnic group in the country,” (The Theology of Apartheid, p. 10).

Emphasis is placed on the role of nation by Kuyper. Dr. D. W. F. Boshoff is a professor at the University of Pretoria in South Africa and concludes that “when a people becomes aware of itself the birth of a nation must follow,” (The Theology of Apartheid, p. 11.)

Both Kuyper and Boshoff stress the importance of national government. They believe that governmental authority is designed by God as a “mechanical remedy” to the rule of God which has been broken by the sin of humanity.

Kuyper further explains the responsibility a nation has towards God when governing people. A nation must maintain the purity of each people. By practicing apartheid, according to Kuyper, God’s creation and image is reflected when the purity of each people is maintained.

Mr. Kuyper extends biblical support for apartheid into the New Testament. He chooses Galatians 3:28, an unlikely passage, emphasizing unity. The verse reads, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Ironically, this verse was also quoted by Bishop Desmond Tutu, Anglican Bishop of South Africa, in a presentation, 1982, September, to oppose apartheid. However, Kuyper stresses what the verse does not say. Galatians 3:28 emphasizes unity. It does not deny the existence of individual and diverse communities.

A third passage of scripture used to support the position of apartheid is found in Acts 17:16 and 27. The concept of nation is emphasized once more in 17:26: “And he made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation.” Consequently scripture dictates, according to Kuyper, that people in every nation have set boundaries in which to seek God. Those boundaries should not be crossed and in order to define boundaries, apartheid needs to be practiced.

Dr. A. P. Treurnicht, a leading Nationalist and former Dutch Reformed Church minister concludes: "I know of no other policy as moral, as responsible to scripture as the policy of separate development. . ." (p. 3 The Theology of Apartheid).

Apartheid is perceived by white rulers, therefore, as a fulfillment of scripture. However, when one examines the biblical basis for as opposed to the biblical basis against apartheid, the biblical argument opposing apartheid is much more acceptable and illustrative of the Gospel message.

### **BIBLICAL BASIS OPPOSING APARTHEID**

Bishop Desmond Tutu views the biblical witness as a story of liberation which begins in the Old Testament and continues into the New Testament. Notably, the story of the Exodus is the focus in the Old Testament.

In one sense, the story describes the formation of a new nation, but specifically it tells of slaves being liberated. Bishop Tutu writes:

And the Exodus was not spiritualized or etherealized out of existence. For the Israelite it was a tangible action, datable, happening in human history, which could be vouched for by those who had witnessed and experienced it. It was a thoroughly political act by which God was first made known to the Israelites. Nothing could be more political than helping a group of slaves escape from their bondage. For the Israelite, therefore, the liberation of the Exodus was not just a spiritual or mystical experience. It was highly materialistic and had to do with being protected from an enemy in pursuit, being fed when hungry, being provided with water to quench their thirst. But it also had to do with the religious and spiritual dimension of forging relationships with God. . . . They must be holy because their God was holy. They must be compassionate, especially to the stranger and the alien, because they had been strangers and aliens themselves in Egypt. . . . And they had been liberated from bondage for the purpose of being God's people, (Hope and Suffering, p. 55-6).

This view of liberation is total and comprehensive. People are set free from bondage. The theme of liberation continues into the New Testament. Jesus refers to himself in Mark 10:45 as the ransom indicating what he has come to do; to release the captives.

Alan Boesak, a black minister and apartheid opponent, specifically describes the harsh reality of apartheid in light of efforts to preserve the purity and to establish the power of the White race.

Whatever grandiloquent ideal this ideology may represent for White people, for Blacks it means bad housing, being underpaid, pass laws, influx control, migrant labor, group areas, resettlement camps, inequality before the law, fear, intimidation, White bosses and Black informers, condescension and paternalism; in a word, Black powerlessness." (The Theology of Apartheid, p. 22)

When the statistics are examined, the interest in purifying a race of people to maintain an image of God becomes very dubious. White people in South Africa own 87% of the richest land while constituting only 23% of the total population. 13% of the land is occupied or owned by 17,745,000 Blacks. . .all in the name of God given diversity, (The Theology of Apartheid, p. 23). These figures indicate there is more concern to preserve white civilization rather than establishing a Christian civilization. Although proponents of apartheid quote passages of Scripture which convince themselves that apartheid is legitimate, one cannot dispute that the multitude of nations emerged from one stock and were created by one God. (Galatians 3:28 readily repudiates the injustices of apartheid by what it states rather than defending the inhumane practice by what it does not say. “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus,” (Galatians 3:28). To accept this portion of the biblical witness is to commit oneself to the principles which will allow this verse to be true.

Jesus proclaimed the will of God for God’s people and for his own life when Jesus said: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord,” (Luke 4:18-19). Consequently, mission for the Christian and for the Church is defined in terms of obedience not race. And this verse soberly suggests that the concept of “calling” is not election to privilege, but a beckoning to suffering and martyrdom, (The Theology of Apartheid, p. 29). There is no messianic mission without a Cross of Calvary.

The white Supremist government in South Africa believes they are a privileged people who are fulfilling the will of the church, and the biblical witness by enforcing apartheid. Unfortunately, the role of the Dutch Reformed Church has proven quite disheartening. In fact D. P. Botha showed conclusively that the present policy of apartheid is essentially the missionary policy of the white Dutch Reformed Churches. Since 1932 these churches have sent delegation upon delegation to the government to get proposals for racial legislation accepted, (Apartheid is a Heresy, p. 6).

## **DEVELOPING POLICY**

Apartheid continues to rob people who are black of the pure image God endowed upon humanity at the time of creation to male and female. Other parts of the body of Christ scattered throughout the world must not ignore the plight of her brothers and sisters who are denied the comprehensive liberating love Christ offers. Alan Boesak stated in his address to the 1983 Vancouver Assembly of the World Council of Churches:

The Church takes this stand because it refuses to believe that the powers of oppression, death, and destruction have the last word. Even when facing these powers the Church continues to believe that Jesus Christ is Lord, and therefore, the life of the world. . . The life of the world, the destruction of this world, are therefore the concern of the church. We have a responsibility for this world for it is God’s world. If this world is threatened by the evils of militarism, greed, racism, it

is very much the concern of the church.

The church has heard these words: "Today I am giving you a choice between good and evil, between life and death. . . choose life!" And the church has heard these words: "I have come so that they may have life. . . abundantly." Because we have heard this, and because we confess Jesus Christ as the life of the world, we dare not be silent.

Paul emphasized the oneness in Christ. He writes in 1 Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- Jews or Greeks, slaves or free -- and all were made to drink of one Spirit." When the "oneness of the body" is disrupted, Christians should be concerned. In Colossians 3:11 the writer states, "Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all."

Matthew 25:31-46 provides a biblical injunction to care for others. The scene is the "Great Judgment" and the King says to those at his right hand;

"Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me." (Matthew 25:34-36)

The righteous were puzzled by the King's statements and inquired as to when they did such deeds. The King answered, ". . . as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:40)

Of course, the biblical account continues, presenting the King chastizing ones who did not feed, offer drink, welcome, nor visit, (Matthew 25:42-43). They also inquired when they did not do such deeds. And the King replies, ". . . as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me." (Matthew 25:45). By virtue of our citizenship in the world and in the church, we have the responsibility to gain human rights for others through every possible avenue. The people in the Churches of God are affected by apartheid by virtue of oneness in Christ, the biblical injunction to care for others, and due to the biblical theme of liberation.

The people of God have a responsibility to oppose dehumanizing practices throughout the world. South African citizenship is denied to the 18.5 million Africans; Blacks cannot live where they choose; and since 1960 the government has physically moved 3.5 million Blacks to the "homelands," and another 2 million are slated to be removed in a similar fashion; Blacks' movements are controlled; Blacks are subject to stringent "security" laws; Blacks have grossly substandard social services, (it is common in homelands to have one doctor for more than 100,000 people); and Blacks were only allowed to form unions in 1978 ("South Africa Divestment", p. v).

## **RESPONDING TO THE ISSUE**

A proper response to the continuing unchristian practice of apartheid is a verbal statement of opposition to the practice, as well as a statement of support for the people who are black. However, additional steps must be taken to put teeth into opposing apartheid in South Africa.

Robert Van Waesberge writes in his book, Do We Participate In Apartheid?, “While foreign investment increased five-fold during the past five years, per capita income for Africans decreased by about 1.7% a year.” (p. 18). Investments in South Africa do not benefit Africans. The National Conference of the South African Council of Churches reiterates their position that foreign investment and loans have been “used to support prevailing patterns of power and privilege in South Africa;” and that “church leaders and Christian people in South Africa are in favour of (selective) divestment and economic sanctions. . .” (“South Africa Divestment,” p. xi).

Economic investment in South Africa support cheap labor practices and indirectly supports a government which dehumanizes people because of race. The Reformed Church in America and the American Lutheran Church, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church, the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the United Church of Christ, the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, the Unitarian Universalist Association, and the National Conference of the South African Council of Churches have passed resolutions calling for total or selective divestment of South African related stock (see Appendix A).

The Associated Press reported that Black Anglican Bishop Desmond Tutu and white anti-apartheid activist the Rev. Beyers Naude said after meeting three foreign ministers from the European Common Market that advocating sanctions against South Africa is one of the few remaining peaceful ways to fight apartheid from inside the country.

The list of U.S. firms doing business with South Africa reads like a “Who’s Who” Among Blue Chip Companies: General Motors, Ford, Coca-Cola, IBM, Westinghouse, General Electric, Bethlehem Steel, Burroughs, Chevron, Citicorp, and Texaco to name a few.

The Churches of God ought also oppose the reprehensible practice of apartheid. The opposition must take form verbally and financially, if church investments support business in South Africa. Critics of divestment often claim that black unemployment “will greatly increase if U.S. companies pull out. This claim camouflages the profitmaking result of continued investment and overstates the reality that U.S. firms hire less than one percent of the black South African workforce, (“Divestment for South Africa,” p. xvi).

The Churches of God, General Conference has a responsibility to maintain financial integrity in order to reflect the mission of the church and the mandate of Christ to bring wholeness to people in the world. The people in South Africa are our brothers

and sisters in Christ. We must be willing to travel on the side of the road where they lay and hurt. Christ instructed the one who inquired, "Who is my neighbor?" "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:37).

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