

Congregationalists on Social Concerns

Articles from the *Congregationalist*, 1958-1996

Readings in the History and Polity of the National
Association of Congregational Christian Churches

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Rev. Dr. Arlin T. Larson, editor

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INTRODUCTION

How have the churches of the National Association of Congregational Christian churches responded to the social problems of our day? The first thing to be said is, with one exception, not collectively. Congregationalists have traditionally worked through ad hoc voluntary societies, such as the American Missionary Association and Women's Christian Temperance Union, for addressing social concerns. There was no national mechanism for social action to which the churches were bound. Second, the founders of the NACCC in 1957 were united in their opposition to their predecessor General Council of Congregational Christian Churches' Council for Social Action. This was in part because of its tilt toward the left and in part because of its presumption to act on behalf of the churches collectively. The NACCC was, therefore, created with no provision for addressing social concerns on either an advocacy or educational basis.

Lack of collective involvement, however, does not indicate that Congregationalists do not have a social conscience or are not affected by the issues of the day. From the very circumstances of its origins, Congregationalism has been deeply involved in reforming society. It was born in civil disobedience against the established order of 17th century England. It then set about to establish a new form of society in North America, one which rejected monarchy and instituted democracy. In the early years, when colonial Congregationalists held a religious monopoly, they worked hand in hand with "the magistrates," civil government, to reform "manners" (behavior) as well as piety. The move toward ad hoc voluntary societies began, however, as early as the eighteenth century when circumstances required toleration of other denominations, especially of the Church of England. Congregational social action on the societal level reasserted itself in the American Revolution as a "black regiment" of Congregational clergy served as propagandists as well as chaplains. In the new United States Congregationalists continued as leading reformers on a number of fronts -- abolition, temperance, education, the social gospel.

In the twentieth century, however, Christian social activism was taking directions disturbing to many in the churches -- more collectivist and critical of the Protestant/capitalist order which they had helped bring into being. The Congregationalists who merged into the United Church of Christ embraced the new forms and enthusiasms. Those who joined the NACCC, for both institutional and ideological reasons, did not. Social involvement was left to individual churches; the churches were not particularly inclined to get involved in causes of either the political right or political left.

The following articles are indicative of Congregationalism's residual social concern and its generally middle of the road approach. Most of the great public policy issues of our time have made their way into the *Congregationalist*. With the exception noted above, none of the issues have moved the NACCC to collective action, but it has been thought important for congregations and church members to care and be informed. It is, however, striking that the most pressing, controversial, and disruptive issues are touched on only infrequently and lightly. These include the civil rights movement, opposition to the war in Vietnam, the social experiments of the Great Society, the anti-abortion movement, and the rise of the Religious Right.

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The 1960's

*Youth sexuality, Marxism,
Ethical Theory,
Traditional Values,
Middle East, Liberalism,
Race, Law and Order,
Drug Abuse, Death and
Dying*

The Church and Personality

by Joseph M. Cimbor, Jr.

Mr. Cimbor, an honors philosophy graduate of Trinity College, is now in his senior year at Andover Newton Theological School.



The Church is made up of people who are all persons of individual personalities. It is the feeling of this writer that the Protestant Church is failing to make full use of personality in making manifest the Church of Christ on earth. The Church has largely ignored what personality is and the importance of its development in each individual. The Protestant Church would make great strides in helping us to live as true Christians if, in its free tradition, it stressed the development and actualization of mature personality.

What is mature personality? We are human and we are free. In that we have freedom, we must have freedom "to" and not freedom "from". This is so because freedom "from" is only illusory freedom. Ultimately it does not involve choice, whereas, freedom "to" involves a dynamic and constant choice. Freedom "to" implies responsibility. As human beings we have freedom to responsibility. This is a view held by Viktor E. Frankl in his book, *The Doctor and the Soul*.

Personality Springs From Freedom

Personality springs from man's freedom "to" the responsibility of realizing the uniqueness of his existence which is the fulfillment of his potentialities. Mature personality consists of man's freedom to be responsible, plus all that goes to make up his uniqueness, and the fulfillment of his potentialities. Man is obligated to realize his mature personality because responsibility implies obligation.

The Church comes into focus here; for it is in terms of our understanding of the Spirit of Christ and His role in our lives that we can fully realize our uniqueness and our potential. Personality developed without this understanding of the Spirit of Christ is not mature personality. A mature Christian person has as his goal the actualizing of his unique potentialities freely and responsibly.

Personality In Others

Not only are persons obligated to actualize this within themselves, but they must also strive to actualize a mature personality in other persons. A necessary part of a maturing personality is to seek out meaningful relationships; relationship with God, other persons, and environment. When we strive for fulfillment of personality in others we must deal with them on a

personal level. We can relate to people in two ways: (1) on an intellectual and thinking level where we deal with what people say; (2) We can go deeper down, to a feeling level. In the second relationship we relate not only to what a person says but to what he feels. It is in this feeling relationship that growth of personality takes place.

The Church often fails to help its members grow in personality. The failing can be seen in the institutionalism and impersonalization of the local Church. The local Church is largely made up of persons who relate to each other only on a thinking level and on an impersonal institutional level. On this level the Church becomes a machine-like entity which, by its very organization and structure, can relate to its people only as parts of a machine, rather than as unique individuals. If the Church cannot see its people as unique individuals, it cannot hope to aid its members to actualize their uniqueness and their potentialities. The Church which fails to develop personalities degenerates into little more than another secular institution in Western Society, making its members impersonal cogs in a machine, and giving little aid in the growth of people into individual mature persons.

Individual Personality

Development of personality is a vital function of the Church, since our Christian faith rests on the view that men are individuals of infinite value in the eyes of God. The inherent potential of the individual can be realized as he grows in personality until he carries the Spirit of Jesus Christ within his heart.

There is historical support for personality development as central in Church life. The role and importance of personality is apparent throughout the Bible. The prophets of the Old Testament were all persons of mature personality. They could relate as persons on a feeling level to all of those with whom they came in contact. Amos was a man of humble origins, a sheep-herder and dresser of sycamores. God took him from the flock and told him to, "go prophesy to my people of Israel". Amos was not afraid to stand out and stand up for what he believed to be the truth. He could relate to those who heard him on such a deep level that they were led to re-examine their lives. God actualized in Amos what had before only been potential.

Many persons in the Bible were conscious of the uniqueness of personality. It was evident in their lives that the power for a development of personality came from God. The Apostle Paul tells us that for many

*From time to time "The Congregationalist" will publish contributions by writers who will be appearing in a national magazine for the first time.

years before and after his conversion he was plagued by a "thorn in the flesh". Physically he was small in stature and sickly, but through the power of the Spirit of Christ, he was given the ability to endure his physical handicaps. The Spirit of Christ developed in Paul a personality that was able to withstand great physical and mental pain, all the while holding fast to his convictions in Christ. Christ gave Paul power to realize his potential and to become a developed and mature person.

Personality Of Jesus

Jesus Christ, among other things, is the truest example of a completely actualized, mature personality. Jesus was the most unique, most fully developed man the world has ever known or ever can know. Because of Jesus' fully developed personality He was able to meet people on the deepest feeling level. All who met the Master immediately felt the uniqueness of his Person. Jesus could sense with His highly developed personality the strength and weakness in every man whom He met. He knew when a man had sufficient faith and conviction in God to be healed in soul and body. He could feel it when one of the disciples was no longer trusting in Him to the point where this disciple would betray Him. He understood that Peter could not hold up under the strain of the Passion Week and would deny Him.

As a man Jesus also realized that He had limitations. This is another indication of His unique personality; for a mature person understands his feelings and emotions. The few times Jesus became angry He knew that He must express this anger, anger toward the Pharisees, toward the money changers, and toward the fig tree. As a man He felt His weakness and prayed that the decision to choose life or death might pass from Him, "yet not what I will, but what Thou wilt." There was Jesus Christ, a man among men.

Many men throughout Christian history saw God develop their own unique personality within them. They were able to stand fast in what they as individuals knew to be right. Augustine, Francis of Assisi, Huss, Wycliffe, Luther, and Calvin were all men of maturity. God had come into their lives and had given them the power to be fully realized persons. They could not have become such had it not been for the Spirit of Christ deep within their hearts.

Person To Person Experience

What then must be the Church's new perspective of personality? The Church must strive with vigor toward *personalization* in relationships. We must strive for a person to person experience. To put it another way, we must have interest in people as persons, rather than as entities or objects of only superficial value. This must be sought for both among the ministry and the congregation. Ministers cannot accomplish this alone. The people also must play a major role. But in one sense we are all ministers. We are all ministers to each other in the priesthood of all believers. In another sense the ordained clergy must especially strive for this personal relationship within the Church. For however much the minister may wish that it would not be so, the people see the minister in the role of the leader of the flock, the example which they would desire to follow. Therefore

the minister is in a special position in which he must relate to all members of the Church, individually and collectively, on a person to person level. He must relate on a feeling level; that means acceptance of all so that each person may be encouraged to realize his unique potential. The minister and the people must have a special sensitivity to what people are capable of becoming and relate to people on this level. Goethe put this idea in a very succinct statement:

If we take people as they are we make them worse. If we treat them as if they were what they ought to be, we help them to become what they are capable of becoming.

It must be noted that we must first "accept" people as they are, before we can treat them as if they were what they ought to be.

This is no easy task. It is difficult for the minister and perhaps harder for the Church members. It can be done. The same power which was at work in the personalities of Christian souls in earlier ages is and can be even more at work in us. But the Spirit of Christ cannot work best unless we desire it to work, unless we strive for its working. The Spirit cannot work best unless both pastor and people strive for it together.

"I-Thou" Relationship

To approach this same perspective on personality from a different point of view, we can say, in the terminology of Martin Buber, that there must be an "I-Thou" relationship. Buber differentiates relationships into I-It and I-Thou categories. I-It relationships are those between persons and things. Here there is not a relationship on a deep feeling level. There can be I-It relations between people, but this is only of a superficial, non-reciprocal nature. As I-Thou relationship takes place when we speak to the innerness, the *thouness* of that to which we are relating. This is a deeper level of relation. It is a relationship on the feeling level. The deepest I-Thou relationship can take place between men and God. When we speak to God on this level we speak to the innerness of God. Then there is reply to our inner being, a reply to our soul. This I-Thou relationship is what we must seek after in our contact with persons and with our God.

Developing Personality

As we seek to develop personality, the individual within the Church must prayerfully seek a re-examination of his own person and give himself an honest appraisal of who he is and who he can become. In the words of Shakespeare, "To thy own self be true and it must follow . . . thou canst not then be false to any man." Unless we can gain some insight into our own potential personality, we can be of only small value in helping others to become mature persons.

If the Church can see the importance of personality in new perspective, there will be a revitalization of its life, a greater dedication to Jesus Christ, a greater dedication to neighbor, and a greater dedication to self. Christ will then stand at the head as Lord and Master, guiding, sustaining, and being an ever-present force of maturation in our lives.



The Rev. Louis B. Gerhardt
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Young People, Sex and the Church

Don't you believe it! The young people of today are NOT more promiscuous in their sexual relations than their predecessors! In fact, I am of the opinion that despite increasing affluence, excessive permissiveness and the sex-suffused culture of our time young people are better integrated as persons, relate better to their society and possess a more sophisticated attitude toward their world than any generation in our nation's history.

There is evidence to indicate that this generation of young people is coming through its adolescence and early adult years with a greater degree of maturity, a more sensitive awareness of others' needs, and a deeper sense of responsibility for the welfare of all men than you and I demonstrated at a similar age.

Dr. Robert Fitch, a perceptive university and seminary professor for almost thirty years, and a noted observer of morality in this nation, reports that "... there is a growth of realism in the younger generation. A recognition that 'traditional controls' are deep rooted in the common sense of the race." Dr. Fitch has great respect for and confidence in our young people. And so have I.

I am aware, of course, that there

are many people who have a different point of view. Almost every newsstand carries current periodicals with lead articles concerning the apparent laxity of sex standards among young people. These articles are usually written by "popular" sociologists or medical men and almost invariably contain a few rather lurid case histories, some extremely frank quotations of a few seemingly uninhibited young men and women and several tables of statistics based on the results of a number of personal interviews and the replies of detailed questionnaires. Frankly, these articles infuriate me! For the most part they are in poor taste, inaccurate and unnecessarily alarm many impressionable readers. They give the absolutely false impression that our young people are obsessed with sex. This is simply not true.

This is not to deny the reality of the emphasis on sex in every aspect of our culture. We are all aware of the numerous sexual connotations in an ordinary day. We may be sure that the younger generation also experiences this. As Dr. Harvey Cox, Andover Newton Theological School, has written: "Our young people are constantly bombarded—through clothing styles, entertainment, advertising and courtship mores—with perhaps the most skillfully contrived array of erotic stimulants ever amassed. Their sexual fears and fantasies are studied by motivational researchers and then ruthlessly exploited by mass media hucksters."

It is also a fact that increasing

numbers of young people are speaking more frankly and freely about sexual matters. They are asking their elders many disturbing, and even shocking, questions. Disturbing and shocking, that is, to the elders. The younger generation isn't interested in embarrassed and evasive answers, moral clichés, fuzzy-minded and out-moded theology and the irrelevant pontifications they often receive to an honest inquiry. Consequently, in their impatience they occasionally say or do very disquieting things.

And it is also true that young people do engage in sexual activities which are not condoned by our society. As the minister of a downtown Church, located near a state university, I have a heavy counseling schedule. During the past several summers I have served as dean or faculty member in a host of camps for college-age people. Mrs. Gerhardt and I raised two girls. I believe I have some understanding of young people. I know there is much "improper" activity going on among our young people. This sad fact cannot be denied.

Finally, there is a certain truth to what Clifton Fadiman has written: "The average high school graduate today does not know who he is, where he is, or how he got there. He is lost. By that I mean he feels little relation to the whole world in time and space. He may 'succeed', become a law-abiding citizen, etc. . . . yet during most of his life, and particularly after his 40th year or so, he will feel vaguely disconnected, root-

less, purposeless. Like the very plague he will shun any searching questions as to his own worth, to his own identity." It must be admitted that this depressing depiction of the modern young person has at least some validity.

Many young people do seem to be "lost." Many of the younger generation apparently do delight in making unconventional statements concerning sex matters. A significant number of young people are undoubtedly engaged in unwise sexual relationships. *Even so I still insist that we have the finest generation of young people in our nation's history.*

Naturally I am aware that evidence can be offered by concerned individuals to "prove" that young people are growing more and more lax in respect to standards of sexual behaviour. I have read statistical tables demonstrating that the number of unwed mothers has increased rapidly in recent years. However, please note that most of this increase has been among older women. On page 71 of "Christians and the Crisis in Sex Morality" by Elizabeth and William Genne we read that the percent of increase of unwed mothers in the 30-34 age group was 478% between 1940-1957. And it is still climbing! Note also that while there has been some increase in the percentage of teen-agers who become unwed mothers it is the smallest increase of any age group up to 44 years. Please remember also that far fewer pregnant girls are "forced" into marriage than in the past and that the gathering of statistical information is much more thorough today with the result that most unwed mothers become "known" for the record.

Actually, statistics can be tendered "proving" that young people are NOT more lax in their standards of sexual behaviour. The latest study available substantiates my thesis. A four year study of coeds in three colleges has just been completed by Dr. Mervin B. Freedman, Stanford University. His report is probably the best statistical study available on the sex habits of American coeds. It is cited in detail in the January 11, 1965, issue of Newsweek magazine.

"The Puritan heritage has by no means passed from the American scene," states Dr. Freedman. If all the girls told the truth, promiscuity is rare and most non-virgins have intercourse only with men they eventually marry. "I'm convinced these statistics hold true at any quality school," said Freedman.

Instead of a revolution in campus morals, Freedman sees an evolution that began many years ago. "It is probable," he says, "that the incidence of non-virginity among college women has increased . . . little since the 1930s. The great change in sexual behaviour since 1900 has been in freedom of attitude and petting. Students may have evolved patterns of sexual behaviour that will remain stable for some time."

The most serious difficulty today's young people encounter is the attitude of their elders. Dr. Fitch suggests that it is our lack of faith in the common sense of today's youth that is most likely to retard moral progress in the realm of sex. In fact, he believes that these young people are doing amazingly well considering the lack of frank, relevant and helpful advice during the periods of childhood and adolescence. I agree.

There is little doubt in my mind but that the splendid young men and women of today will be finer parents than were the parents of yesterday.

However, this is not to excuse the Churches from the guilt of having been woefully inadequate in its teachings regarding sexual matters, marriage and so many other practical concerns in the field of human relations. Much unnecessary misunderstanding and sorrow and countless traumatic experiences have resulted because the church has been reluctant to more specifically advise its parishioners in many sensitive areas.

Harvard University officials were quoted only recently as deploring the fact that ". . . traditional religious teaching seems to be offering students little guidance in sexual behaviour." Yale's chaplain, the Rev. William Sloan Coffin, Jr., writes "The problem of the church is ineffectiveness." Time magazine suggested in an article within the past year that

the young people of today ". . . have parents with only the tattered remnants of a code. . . . Parents, educators and the guardians of morality at large do pull themselves together to say 'don't,' but they usually sound halfhearted. . . . Faith and principle are far from dead, but what stands out is an often desperate search for 'new standards for a new age'." Father John Thomas, a noted Roman Catholic sociologist, has said, "What is needed is a whole new attitude by the church (both Catholic and Protestant) toward sexuality." And again from the pages of Time magazine, January 24, 1964, ". . . many Americans do feel the need for a spiritual reaffirmation of the spiritual meaning of sex. For the act of sex is above all the supreme act of communion between two people, sanctified by God and celebrated by the poets."

All the people of our Churches seek relevant help in this most intimate and precious part of life. Certainly young people look to their Churches for guidance and direction. Tragically, too often they find an archaic and antiquated interpretation of a moral person's proper relationship to the people of his world. Illogical preachments that excite rather than alleviate the concerns of the seeker is too often experienced.

Your Church and mine must discuss openly and frankly, with parents and children, the physical, ethical and spiritual consequences of proper and improper sexual activity. Our Churches must modernize and adapt their methods of communication and involve themselves more directly with our society if the relevancy and urgency of their message is to be heard and applied. There can be no truly meaningful theology that does not speak to all of life. Clearly and simply, openly and frankly, in discussion and from the pulpit, our theology must apply itself to all men and to all aspects of man's life.

We have a great generation of young people, and our Churches can—if they will—assist them in becoming the finest generation of citizens in our nation's history. ■

From the Editor's Desk

"The Word of God . . . in . . . Marx and Trotsky"

The full sentence reads, "The Word of God for us is sometimes in the writings of Marx and Trotsky." It was spoken on Monday, July 5th, by Dr. Truman B. Douglass, and it is *not* "out of context." The entire revolutionary address ranges around the theme first stated (to this editor's knowledge) by the author in 1936. That theme is "The church (sic) in its dividedness is too weak to meet the challenge of the unitedness of the determinative force of the modern world." Therefore, "The New Mission in a revolutionary age will be . . . an ecumenical mission," preferably one in which "unity in mission is the fastest way forward toward genuine (sic) church (sic) unity" . . . "unity that can be had without waiting . . ." And unity which seeks . . . truth-revolution-justice. In fact "the church (sic) is doomed unless its members *can* take" . . . "being addressed in words made famous decades ago by Carl Sandburg: "*Don't give me that bunk.*"

Is the Word of God in Marx and Trotsky? We have read through the massive volumes of the collected works of Trotsky, and we have read everything we have seen in English, German or French by Marx. We have read also the three-volume collected works of Mao, and everything we have seen by Engels in English, German or French. And a great deal by Lenin as well.

Is *this* the Word of God?

Categorically, NO! "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father." *This is distinctively Christian meaning of "The Word of God."*

True, "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets." Nevertheless, the writer of Hebrews adds, "but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son. . . . He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power."

Marx, Trotsky, Lenin, Engels, Mao and their fellow travellers do NOT "reflect the glory of God" or bear "the stamp of his nature." They are NOT "full of grace and truth." Theirs works are full of violence, hate, and untruth. Their words have sought and seek violent revolutionary class struggle *to overthrow, to destroy, and to root out even belief in God Himself.*

Let it be noted *what is* the central stigma of the assertion, "The Word of God . . . is . . . in . . . Marx and Trotsky" — *it is blasphemy.*

Here the acid of revolution has penetrated beyond the form of organization, beyond the "liturgy", and beyond the creed, to the very nature of the Christian faith and to the ends for which God has created men. We are here told that "nearly all of our contemporary revolutions — from the human rights revolution to the revolution in sexual mores — has (sic) something of God's purpose in it." And let any who take shelter in the weasel word "something" read the address *as delivered*, with the ten minute addendum *omitted* from the mimeographed copy which is in front of us!

The stark and naked fact is that there are men of brilliant intellect, persuasive ability, and extraordinary power who believe that "the Word of God" is something quite other than that which speaks to us in our Lord Jesus Christ. *Him* they would redefine! Even though they take His Name upon their lips; it is not *Christ* who is "the Word"; it is their particular selection of "beautiful" revolutions, directed by them in a power-structured body which brazenly calls itself a "Church" while *at the same time* declaring "there was more of the Word of God for us in the words of (one speaker) than in the words of Scripture which were read earlier in the service" in a Chicago Church.

What is presented is the out-moded Hegelian syllogism . . . Thesis, Antithesis, Synthesis . . . under the words . . . Truth, Revolution, Justice. And this harsh and barren doctrine presumes to deny the validity of that central, vicarious love which is the grace of God in and through our Lord Jesus Christ; the speech says, "Love, prematurely introduced, is an illusion, in anti-truth, is anti-Christ."

We have now come full circle; for what is in the gospels, the undeserved love, the ever-reaching-out-to-sinners-and-to-sinful-society of God in love — that which is proclaimed in Gethsemane and on Golgotha — that is proclaimed "anti-Christ"!!!

The hour is late, much later than we had supposed. There will have to be a new Reformation, more violent than that of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, *unless* there are enough men and women and young people whose love of God is deep enough to nerve them to stand up against the demonic powers of this century; men, women, and young people uncorrupted by the yen for authority in the state and in the Churches; men, women, and young people unashamed to love even those who despise and reject them; men, women, and young people bouyed up by that word of power which upholds the universe — even by the indwelling of that Spirit of God which can *and will* overcome! ■

SECOND IN A TRILOGY

what is RIGHT or WRONG

by Russell J. Clinchy

from his book

"AN ANSWER FOR AGNOSTICS"

The first question to be asked is "What does human experience have to say about my desires or my actions?"

There is the laboratory of life for the determination of what is right and what is wrong. That is where men and women through all the ages have made experiments with human living, and the results may be read by all. Many people, and especially young people want to know if it is right or wrong to take an attitude toward life of "Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." If a person is in a mood to live that way there is no code or law to which he will listen. But surely he can discover that there has been considerable experimentation along that line. He can never say that he is the first one to try living that way, and so does not know what the result will be. Even if all the codes and standards were swept away there would still remain the stories of the hanging gardens of Babylon, the patricians of the Roman Empire, and such experiments as Louis the XIV. Is it right or wrong to live as though life were a continual nightclub? Never mind the codes. Just take a clear look at the ones who have tried that way of life.

What about the suggestion that the only course for a nation to adopt is one of intense national feeling and a decision to secure everything for one's own people at the expense of all others? Is it right or wrong for a nation to consider itself alone, and to seek to become so powerful that it can ride roughshod over all people? One has to find the answers in the history books, for there is not a nation which lived that way for any length of time that is now in existence. It is very hard to determine if it is wrong or right for a nation to be a pirate in the world's life if we study the course of those nations which have tried it.

But is it right or wrong to make one's life a constant contribution to widening areas of freedom and light? Never mind the codes. Just take a glance at Plato, at Aristotle, at Thomas Huxley, at the Pilgrims. Is anyone ashamed to trace their ancestry to them? But what if such action leads to scorn, a burning stake, or a cross? Well, find out what history says about Socrates drinking a cup of hemlock on an Athenian hill, or Jesus of Nazareth on a cross outside of Jerusalem. What does history say about what is right, and what is wrong?

The second question is, "It it useful?"

This is not an attempt to be a killjoy, suggesting that everything that is burdensome is good, and everything that is pleasurable is bad. A doctor does not always tell us to take pills, or go to a hospital. More often, he may tell us to relax from strain, to play, and to enter into life more fully. To act in a way which will be useful for our bodies may well be to live in a way which is most enjoyable.

There are some vexing moral problems which can only be answered by this question. How much money shall I seek to secure, or possess? What kind of a career shall I follow? As I go through life, and inevitably accumulate possessions, either intangible or real ones, what kind of possessions, and how much, shall I seek?

Frankly, there is no code of morals or no ethical standard which can adequately answer these questions. Even the men and women who have tried to answer them by renouncing all possessions and becoming hermits have not answered them. They have merely resigned from life, and only a few can follow them there. But we can face these ques-

tions about money, possessions, careers, and ask "Is it useful and does it make a contribution to the betterment and advancement of what we really want life to be?" That is the only way it can be determined as to whether a man should have a thousand, or a million dollars. There are some men who would spend every cent of whatever they have on themselves, and there have been people who have spent every bit of what they possess without a thought of themselves. It can never be based upon the amount of money— either small or large.

That was the question Jesus asked. To the rich young ruler, and to the fishermen mending their nets, he said the same thing, "Come, make yourselves and your resources, useful." Is it right to spend a million dollars on a yacht? There is no code which mentions yachts, but we do know that Jesus would ask why a man had a yacht, and what use he was making of it. Is it right to have a home which has been made beautiful with chosen possessions? Jesus went into home after home and what He was interested in was the kind of life that was being lived there, the kind of interests that centered there, and the spirit of unbound comradeship and fellowship which flowed from it.

Is it not fair to say, that, leaving all codes and commandments aside, the ways of life we call good are those which are useful, and the ways of life we call bad are those for which there seems to be no reason for their existence?

We must also ask what effect a certain action has upon human personality; that is, does what we do, or want to do, add to, or take away from, the quality of personality?

This quality called personality is the most important thing in life, as

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I'M FOR THE UPPERDOG!

or

We Are Not Born Equal

by President Miller Upton

I have just about reached the end of my tolerance for the way our society at the present time seems to have sympathetic concern only for the misfit, the pervert, the drug addict, the drifter, the ne'er-do-well, the maladjusted, the chronic criminal, the underachiever, the loser—in general, the underdog.

It seems to me we have lost touch with reality and become warped in our attachments, if not in fact psychotic.

In short, I feel it is time for someone like me to stand up and say, "I'm for the upperdog!" I'm also for the achiever—the one who sets out to do something and does it; the one who recognizes the problems and opportunities at hand and endeavors to deal with them; the one who is successful at his immediate task because he is not worrying about someone else's failings; the one who doesn't consider it "square" to be constantly looking for more to do, who isn't always rationalizing why he shouldn't be doing what he is doing; the one, in short, who carries the whole of his part of the world squarely on his shoulders.

Not the wealthy, necessarily; not the ones in authority, necessarily; not the gifted, necessarily—just the doer, the achiever—regardless of his status, his opulence, his native endowment.

We are not born equal; we are born unequal. And the talented are no more responsible for their talents than the underprivileged for their plight. The measure of each should be by what he does with his inherited position.



No one should be damned by the environmental condition of his life—whether it be privileged or underprivileged

It is a dying fashion to pay respect to those who achieve—who really "have it," to use the vernacular. This is the day when the fashion is to be

for the underdog. The attitude is being developed that if you really want people to care for you—and who doesn't?—don't be successful; be a misfit, a loser, a victim of one's environment. This is an occasion to honor the successful—to say it is better to win than to lose, better to receive an A than a C, that class rank IS meaningful, that those who have developed the pattern of achieving in college will go on achieving out of college, and, because of their achievement, the rest of us will live richer and easier lives.

I'm not entirely sure of the reason for what appears to me to be a general social-psychological aberration, but I suspect it springs from a massive social guilt.

Each of us individually is so aware of our personal limitations that we have developed a form of masochistic reaction to problems of the day. Instead of attempting to deal with the problems in a forthright way, we berate ourselves, we martyr ourselves, we pillory ourselves.

Or, if the problems seem too much for us to handle, we mitigate our sense of guilt by heaping all blame on convenient scapegoats or by concerning ourselves with the problems of others at a conveniently remote distance.

Let me illustrate my point by specific reference:

I have become increasingly bored and resentful of the ridicule and snide references made of the WASPS—the white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant suburbanites. I wouldn't feel the point so strongly were the criticisms leveled by those outside of the circle. Such could be looked upon as healthy social criticism and competition. But when it comes mainly from those who are part of the circle—WASPS stinging themselves—it assumes the nature of sick self-immolation.

Continued on next page

Dr. Miller Upton is president of Beloit College, Beloit, Wisconsin, and delivered this address at the honors convocation of Ripon College, Ripon, Wisconsin. Dr. Upton appeared on the panel of the Annual Meeting of the National Association this past summer, discussing "The Role of Education" in the symposium on "Building Character in American Life."

Our society's treatment of the Negro over the years is deplorable. In fact, that's too mild a term for it. The word "sinful" in its full theological sense is more accurate. But this fact does not justify us, in our sense of guilt, condemning a particular segment of society which in many ways constitutes the backbone of American social existence.

If damning by association is wrong, as I would maintain strongly it is, then how horribly wrong it is to level our guns of hostility, envy and ridicule in this fashion on the successful white man who more often than not struggled financially to get a college education, who more often than not works at his job more than 60 hours a week, who buys a comfortable home in the suburbs with the welfare of his family in mind, who is active in his church and community affairs, who gives his time to service on boards of education and social-welfare agencies, and in some cases is shortening his life span through overwork and anxiety resulting from the basic social responsibilities he must carry.

These are among the chief doers and achievers of today. And where would our society be without them? For one thing, we would not have Ripon College or Beloit College or the University of Wisconsin as we know them today were it not for the likes of these people. Nor could we afford to have a major portion of the population going to school for 12 to 20 years. Nor would we enjoy the leisure time, recreational activities and cultural advantages which are a direct product of our material welfare. However, there would be one by-product advantage:

We would have to be so concerned individually with eking out our own meager existence that there would be no time to be wasted on such irrelevant and dishonest name-calling and buck-passing.

Or, just as we point an accusing finger at those who succeed within our economic system, so we accuse the system itself of faults which are not of its creation. In short, we tend to blame the economic system for the faults of individuals who operate within it.

It is important to recognize that the quality of any society is directly

related to the quality of the individuals who make it up. Therefore, let us stop referring naively to creating a "great" society. It is enough at this stage of our development to aspire to create a "decent" society. And to do so our first task is to help each individual be decent unto himself and in his relationship with other individuals.

A decent society cannot be created out of a vacuum and imposed. It can only evolve out of the lives of constituent members. In this regard, our economic system has become the scapegoat for the failures of our educational, religious and family institutions to develop decent and responsible individuals.

Whenever one blames another or group of individuals for one or more of the ills of mankind—beware! He is expressing personal hostility and offering no solution. There is no single scapegoat for the world's ills, unless it be our own personal limitations as finite beings.

Also, the Puritan ethic and religious morality in general have come in for some heavy-handed humor and disdain. I can support that criticism which focuses on arbitrary value judgments. But we seem to be in the process of developing a much more perverse kind of moralism—a moralism which says that since love is the one absolute virtue of men, the one way we will solve the problems of poverty, crime, racial discrimination and the like is by forcing everyone to love everybody else—we must love the white man because he is white, or the black man because he is black, or the poor because he is poor, or the enemy because he is the enemy, or the perverse because he is perverse, or the afflicted because he is afflicted! Rather than because he is a human being, any human being who just happens to be white or black, poor or rich, enemy or friend.

This is a hideous abuse of the notion of love that avoids the hard fact that love is a uniquely personal experience.

If it is idle to attempt to legislate individual morality, it is even more idle, and even arrogant, to attempt to force individual love. There can be no love unless it is genuine and authentic. To love, or go through the

pretense of loving, without truly feeling that way is one of the lowest forms of hypocrisy. It is dishonesty at its worst. And the fruit of such dishonesty, as with all forms of dishonesty, is distrust, degradation, chaos. We should respect all people so much that we would not dare demean one by pretending to love him when we don't

We need to start being honest with ourselves in more ways than one. It is too bad that we have failed to heed the charge that Polonius made to his son: "This above all, to thine own self be true." For were we to do so we would have to admit honestly and joyously that love in its very essence is selfish. Were it not so, there would be none—not real love—only a martyred imitation

We have serious problems and issues facing our society at the present time. Let there be no doubt about it. But they can be solved over time if we will attack them directly and honestly—that is, if we will be willing to pay the price in time and persistent personal effort.

They will never be subject to instant solution—to wishing it so. Nor will they be solved by blaming others for their existence, or by making certain segments of society the scapegoat for the general ills of society. Nor will they be solved by running away from them by concerning ourselves with remote situations rather than those at hand. Nor will they be solved by application of the perverse notion that to love means only to sacrifice one's self.

The one most certain point is that they will be solved by doers—not people with good intentions, but individuals with good deeds. Not those who talk a good game, but those who play a good game—the achiever.

We will never create a good society, much less a great one, until individual excellence and achievement is not only respected but encouraged. That is why I'm for the upperdog — the achiever — the succeder. I'm for building an ever better society, and this will only be done by those who take seriously their responsibility for achievement, for making the most of their native ability, for getting done the job at hand. □

In the continuing crises in the Middle East, there is one forgotten factor. One half of Lebanon is Christian; there are thousands of Christians in Syria, thousands in Jerusalem, some in Israel, and many thousands in Egypt. A "Pilgrimage to Palestine" has been the life-hope for untold numbers of Christians since the early centuries to the present time. About the year 396 the Spanish Pilgrim, Silvia, left a detailed record of her pilgrimage to the Holy Land. There are gathered together in a relative small geographic area places whose very names stir our hearts and minds: Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jericho, Galilee, Jerusalem, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives, and Bethany.

been called to the attention of the American people, and it is time they were.

NOT JUST JERUSALEM

The destruction and the disregard for Christian shrines, homes, and people has not been limited to Jerusalem.

Meeting with evacuated Americans in Telran and Istanbul. I have recorded eye-witness accounts covering a wide variety of terrible happenings.

For example, in a small town north of Jerusalem, Israeli soldiers searched the business premises and dwelling places of a Christian family. Not a gun was found. Not a single weapon of any kind was found. The most that *could* be dis-

of the great Assyrians and Babylonians, it has never been controlled by the descendents of King David, except in small part. Since Titus (70 A.D.) leveled Jerusalem, there have been very few Jews living in Palestine; those who were living there lived in peace and harmony with their Christian cousins of Semitic racial derivation and later with their Islamic cousins.

THE NEW FACTOR

The twentieth century has seen the growth of antipathy between Zionists and the citizens of Palestine.

This, primarily, goes back to the "Balfour Declaration" of 1917 which promised the Jews a "national home" in Palestine, and said at the same time, "Nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine."

In 1917, eight percent of the people in Palestine were Jews; something like 95 percent of the land was owned by Arabs.

THE FORGOTTEN CHRISTIAN

Our Christian stake in the Middle East is high, but it is accorded almost no concern in the public press, mass media, or anywhere else.

CHRISTIANS IN THE OLD CITY

The pictures which accompany this article were provided by an American who was able to visit the old city within ten days after the start of the June 1967 War.

The Jerusalem YMCA has been a project of many of our Congregational Christian Churches. It was not an armed center. Its staff and leadership is Christian. In the building there has been meeting an Independent Protestant Fellowship which is the sole weekly free Church worship service in Old Jerusalem, a Church which has conducted its services in English, and has numbered among its members persons associated with the American School of Archeology. The important points to notice in the pictures are two: The number of shell holes and damage inevitably associated with war is relatively small; the senseless vandalism represented by upset drawers, slashed leather cushions in the waiting room, looting of valuable equipment, such as typewriters, is *not* small. These facts have not

covered was some leaflets presenting the situation of the aggrieved Arabs, literature of a kind common in both Israel and other lands since 1948. There is nothing unusual about this and certainly nothing unusually inflammatory. Nevertheless, the Christian family was ordered to pack whatever could be packed in one suitcase each, and to get out within one hour. When they were forcibly pushed out at the close of the hour, their place of business and their home were immediately dynamited. Shortly thereafter a bulldozer came and cleaned away the rubble. By late afternoon, the land had been awarded to an Israeli who started to ready it for the construction of his own dwelling.

Stories like this from eye witnesses and from our own Christian brethren naturally are disturbing to any Christian.

PROMISED LAND?

Palestine is a "much promised" land. Before Abraham reached it from Ur, it was already the dwelling place of another people. Before Gideon fought his way through Jericho to Ai, it was occupied by the Canaanites, Philistines, and Phoenicians, chiefly. Since the days

SCAPEGOAT

The horrible atrocities of Hitlerism aroused sympathy for the Jews in the minds and hearts of Christians all around the world.

But, instead of opening the doors of *our own country* to the immigration of the persecuted refugee Jews, the United States and Britain forced open the door into Palestine.

There arose very quickly an internal situation of extreme discontent. Aided and abetted by such terrorist organizations as the Stern and Irgun gangs; some Arab groups responded in kind.

THE PARTITION PLAN

Palestine was partitioned by the United Nations into Jewish and Arab states in 1947. Israel was given 54 percent of Palestine including the fertile plains, although Jews formed only one tenth of the total population and owned less than one tenth of the total land. In the area that was proposed as an Arab state there were to be almost no Jews, but in the Jewish state almost half the population was to be Arab.

The British mandate ran out, and on May 15, 1948, the State of Israel declared itself in being. In the con-

fusion that followed, it is very difficult to tell just who was responsible for what. Certain results are quite clear. Because of terrorism like the Massacre of Dier Yassin in April 1948 when 250 inhabitants were killed, the Arabs fled.

Israel proceeded to occupy far more than the segment allotted by the Partition Plan.

GUARANTEED TROUBLE

The following factors existent in 1948 and aggravated thereafter have guaranteed trouble in the Middle East, and have made the whole area dangerous for Christians. A million Arab refugees Occupation and use without compensation of land in Israel (90 percent) owned by Arabs No compensation and no chance to return to their homes for the refugees There were lines that divided villagers from the fields they cultivated A sort of second-class citizenship for the Arab population within Israel The constant exploitation of water resources on a unilateral basis by Israel and an incredible number of border incidents for which Israel was condemned by the nations of the world.

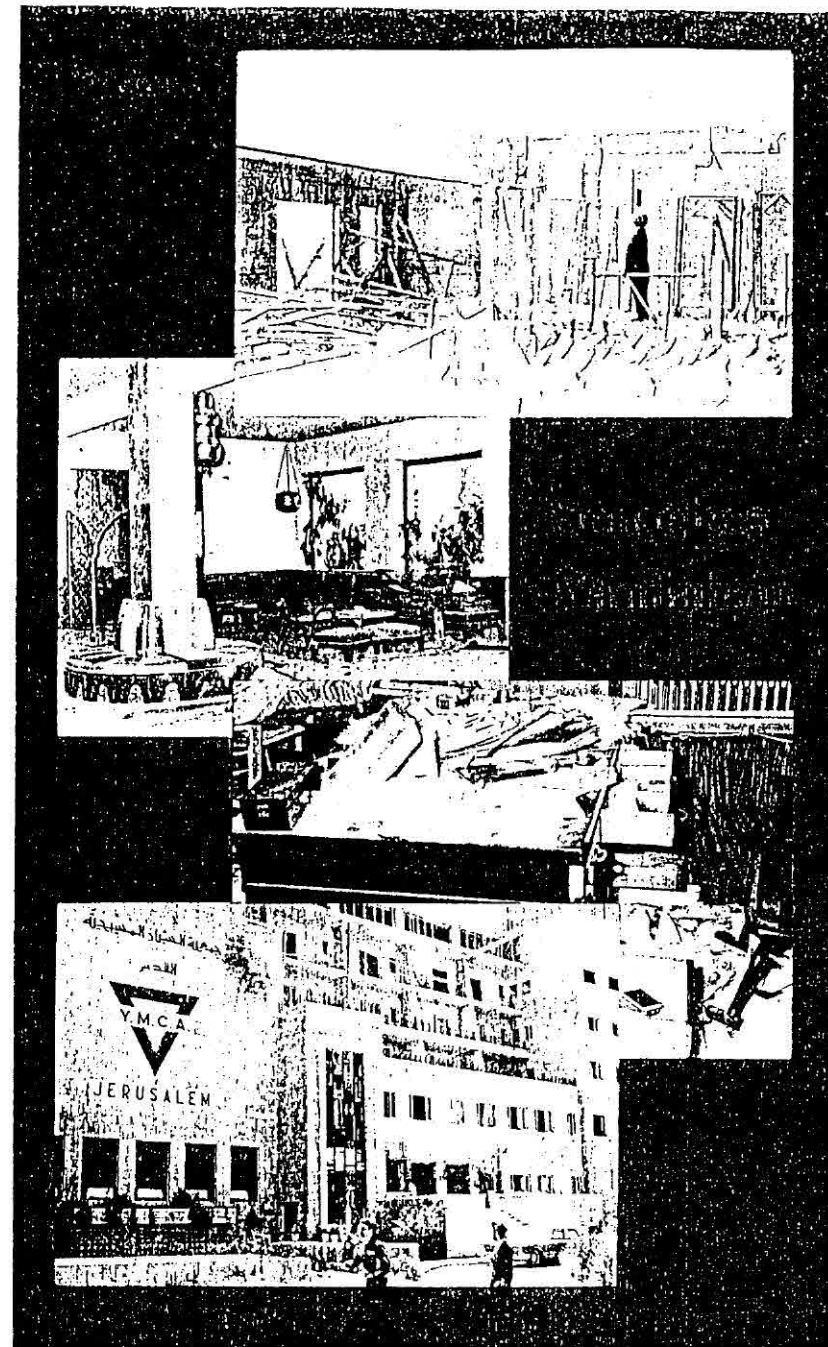
TODAY AND TOMORROW

Obviously, the involved historic facts complicate every possibility for present peace.

We in the United States have been subject to a constantly managed news, so fantastically extreme as to amount in a great many instances to a complete black-out of the truth.

The time has come for Christians to insist that we have a stake in the Middle East, that we cannot tolerate aggression designed primarily to grab tourist dollars from shrines which are holy because of their association with the Scriptures, and particularly with the life of Jesus of Nazareth. We should inform our elected representatives that it is their duty to represent the Christian majority and not simply the Zionist minority.

We should insist that acts of destruction be properly compensated by the Israeli government. We should, as a nation, cease to give tax deductions for contributions to someone else's war. Either our



Jewish citizens are citizens of the United States or they're not. If they are, they owe their allegiance to the United States of America, and not to Israel.

Primarily, there is the element of justice which, at its minimum, means restoration of the West Bank into the hands of its citizens, restoration of Sinai and the "Syrian Heights", and the decision at the conference table of some sensible and geographically sane lines for the borders of the state of Israel. Our government promised to protect the "territorial integrity" of the Middle East lands. *We have not done so.* □

Editor's Note: The Middle East situation is one of great concern to Americans, and receives wide coverage in the press and other media. Dr. Henry David Gray, pastor of South Church in Hartford and former editor of THE CONGREGATIONALIST, has traveled much in the Middle East and has more information on the area than the majority of Congregationalists. The views expressed in this article are Dr. Gray's and not necessarily those of THE CONGREGATIONALIST or of the Churches of the National Association.

