

Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID

Volume 10 Number 7

MAMMOTH SPRING, ARK. 72554

January, 1969

The Moral Crisis in America

by Reuel Lemmons

Karl Marx laid down the strategy for communist revolution in the following formula: Tension - Pressure - Crisis - Revolution - Progress.

This strategy seems to be working in America. Tensions as we have never known them are at work in the land. It seems that every move that is made is designed to increase these tensions rather than relieve them. A situation that cries for relief receives the greater pressure. A crisis is produced at every point possible, and these crisis are fanned into explosions. It is the communist theory that by this process society inches forward a little. The idea is that by continual repeating of this process we may someday arrive at the faceless, common level society of the ideal communist state.

Behind this formula is the belief that society is forced to bootstrap itself up. Faith in God and in the fact that God lifts society through teaching a better way is completely rejected. Communism is completely atheistic and materialistic. There is no hope in communism that brotherly love will produce a better society. A better society must be forced out of man by Tension - Pressure - Crisis - Revolution - Progress.

Some brethren are falling for this line. Most all of society has accepted this hard line long ago. Religion, and its power to elevate the race has been discontinued and rejected by the multitudes long ago. The power to pull up has given way to the power to push up. Instead of trusting the power of God and the principles of the teachings of Christ to produce in us an ideal society, we have abandoned that and have made the church into an institution that, through its pressure on the crises - its marching and its resolutions to congress - seeks to force mankind into brotherhood. You cannot substitute pressure for drawing power.

It leaves us a little cold when we hear of inflammatory speeches being made to brethren to "put on the pressure" for this or that. If the principles of Christ infused into our hearts cannot make better men and women out of us, then certainly putting pressure on the tension points cannot make us better.

Another thing that leaves us cold is the wild and irresponsible charges made against brethren. According to the speeches of some we are a bunch of fanatical racists and all headed for hell. We do not believe that. It simply isn't so. That kind of pressure on the tension area will produce a crisis all right, but it will not advance Christianity.

To hear some of us speak you would think that Christians were the coldest, hardest, cruelist, most bigoted and prejudiced bunch that the Lord ever let live. While our sins are admittedly many, we do not believe that all this wild talk is in order, nor do we think it is in any way justified. It is an attempt to replace God's pulling power with human pushing power. You do not elevate society by tension - pressure - crisis - revolution - progress; you elevate society by putting the teaching of Jesus into the hearts of the people and making these teachings live. The world has been civilized by this process. Most of our present progress can be traced directly or indirectly to the influence of the teachings of Jesus on human hearts. Every good thing, and every worthwhile contribution made by an athiest or communist was either borrowed or stolen from Jesus. This process has lifted - not pushed - humanity upward. Instead of putting pressure on the tension points, Christianity relieves the tension area. Instead of contributing to the crisis, the principles of Jesus relieve crisis. Instead of feeding the fires of revolution it cools the spirit of hate and teaches men to live together without tension - pressure - crisis and revolution.

There could be nothing more dangerous to the church of the Lord than the formation of pres

(continued on page 2)

sure groups bent upon fanning to flame the smouldering fires of passion. When a group direct its effort in this decreation it only succeeds in splitting off another faction.

Words can be devilish weapons when they are used to divide and destroy. And words rush upon each other with such ease and profuse abandon! They create tension. They increase pressure. They precipitate crisis. While they can be apples of gold in a network of silver, they are sometimes like poison darts and have the sting of an adder. Wild, inflammatory statements, and the hurling of charges that in more sane moments would be recognized as indefensible, are anti-christian. It is the part of a Christian, rather, to pour oil on the troubled waters. A crisis in the church does not rise by natural process. Someone has to precipitate it. Someone has to create the tension and apply the pressure.

Most of the divisions, if not all of them, which have plagued the ranks of the heirs of the Restoration, have been caused by the consistent use of this formula: They have resulted, rather, in shattering what might have otherwise been the leading force in all Christendom today.

We get too soon old and too late smart, it seems. The same moral crisis that effects America affects the church. And to about the same degree. It is almost laughable when brethren deplore it in the nation and champion it in the church. Christian is as Christian does. If we would be New Testament Christians, we must first of all be Christians. The real dynamic of the churches of Christ lies in the complete absence of a power structure. We must keep it that way.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

Clovis Ragsdale

This article concludes a study of the use of instrumental music in worship. It was stated in previous articles that members of the church of Christ are not opposed to instrumental music except when used in worship to God. We oppose its use in worship because God has instructed that we sing, Col. 3: 16, Eph. 5: 19, but did not authorize the use of mechanical instruments. To make it a part of our worship is adding to the word of God and we have learned that God has nowhere tolerated man to go beyond that which is written and been pleased by such action.

In conclusion we would like to offer one more reason as proof that it is sinful to practice its use. Paul clearly states in Romans 14: 23 THAT WHATSOEVER IS NOT OF FAITH IS SIN. Let Paul tell us how we get faith. Romans 10:17, "so then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. If the New Testament does not mention the use of mechanical instruments, and it does not, and if the Law of Moses was replaced as Paul states in Col. 2:14-17, then where is our source of faith come from for its use. Its source must be the opinions of men. But Paul has said that faith can come from the word of God. Then its use can not be of faith, because it did come from the word. The serious fact is that Paul said that it is sin if it does not come from the word. A good rule to follow in Bible study is that where God has spoken, man does not have a right to his opinion. God has spoken concerning singing in worship. Man rebels at the teaching and adds his opinion. Rebellion against God has always been sinful in his sight. It began in Eden, continued in every age, and is with us today. But this does not make rebellion any less sinful. God must be true, though every man be a liar. Rom. 3:4.

We have touched most of the reasons why the church of Christ does not use the instrument in worship. Though it is used by most all other religious groups this does not make it right. Because we believe it to be sinful it becomes our duty to teach our fellowman against its use. To fail to oppose it would not be fair to those in error, to ourselves, and to our Lord. In trying to reproduce the pattern of worship as outlined in the New Testament it is necessary to touch on this subject. There are many differences in the Apostolic church and the churches of today.

These departures were brought about by either adding to, or subtracting from, that which is written. Satan, working through man, has been able to deceive the hearts of many.

The great need today, is for man to go back to the Bible, for his guide in all things pertaining to faith and practice. To restore the church as it was in New Testament days is the goal of all who are known as the Church of Christ. If you would like to study this subject further, feel free to contact any member of the church of Christ and he will assist you, or write or make an appointment with the editors of this paper.

Editorial

This paper is starting the sixteenth year of publication with this issue. In its beginning, no one thought of a permanent publication. Several times we decided to cease publication. At one time the paper was dropped for several months. Even now we do not know whether we will be publishing after this year. The determining factor will be the popular demand and support we receive during this year.

Fulton County Gospel News requires considerable time and effort on the part of those who edit and mail the paper. There has always been a shortage of articles and material for the paper. We always appreciate well written articles on Bible truths.

Gospel papers have an important work in the affairs of the church. In our present day we carry out the great commission by word of mouth, example of life, radio, and TV, and by the printed page. By these methods we can take the gospel to every creature. Because we believe this paper has a small part in this great work we have carried on despite all obstacles.

Rising mailing costs makes it necessary for us to ask for more donations this year. In the past the brethren have always responded to this need. We believe they will do so now.

We are mailing eighteen hundred copies of the paper each month. Most of those receiving the paper live in this area, but some copies find their way to more than half of the states in the union. Your encouragement and support is needed and appreciated.

The Gospel of Christ

by Glynn V. Purdy

"GOSPEL" means "GOOD NEWS" "THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST" is "GOOD NEWS" for man. It tells what God did for man, what man can do to be saved and what else is promised him.

FACTS OF THE GOSPEL

The death, burial and resurrection of Christ is what makes this "Good News" to man, 1 Cor. 15: 1-4. If Christ had not done these things NOTHING man could do would bring him salvation. If Christ was ABLE to do this, he can do the same for us. Therefore this being a "FACT" we can not OBEY it, but must BELIEVE it!

If we do not believe this fact, we of course would not believe that Christ could raise us up also.

COMMANDS OF THE GOSPEL

After BELIEVING the FACT of the Gospel, we then should have enough interest insalvation and a complete assurance that what Christ could do for himself he can do for us if he SAYS HE CAN! So with this assurance, as in Acts 2, we ask HOW WE MAY HAVE THIS SALVATION? The ANSWER comes in the "COMMANDS" of the Gospel. These we must OBEY! AFTER BELIEVING, we "MUST REPENT OR PERISH", Like 13: 5. Acts 3: 19. AFTER REPENTANCE, we MUST CONFESS CHRIST WITH THE MOUTH BEFORE MEN, Romans 10 :9-10. Then be baptized for the "remission" of sins. Acts 2:38. We BELIEVE the facts and OBEY the commands, then and only then can we RECEIVE the promises.

THE PROMISES OF THE GOSPEL

1-REMISSION OF SINS, ACTS 22: 16.

2-GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, ACTS 2: 38

3-ETERNAL LIFE, 2 TIMOTHY 4: 8

HOW DOES THIS CONCERN YOU? YOU MUST BELIEVE THE FACTS, OBEY THE COMMANDS AND THEN RECEIVE THE PROMISES! YOU CAN NOT RECEIVE THE PROMISES WITHOUT OBEDIENCE!

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR DECEMBER

W. W. Horton	\$ 5.00
Ring Church of Christ	1 0.00
Calico Rock Church of Christ	5.00
Elizabeth Church of Christ	5.00
Viola Church of Christ	5.00
Agnos Church of Christ	5.00
Nova Gault	1.00

NEWS:

There will be a gospel meeting at the South Curry St. Church of Christ in West Plains, Missouri, January the 17 through the 19th. W.A. Bradfield will be the speaker. In conjunction with the meeting the young people of West Plains are having devotional Saturday the 18th at 2:30 in the afternoon. Brother Bradfield will be the speaker.

The FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS is a monthly publication distributed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name, be SURE to include the Zip Code Number, It must be with each address according to the Postal regulations. This paper is supported by unsolicited contributions for which we are grateful. If you care to know of its financial status and expenses, that information will be furnished upon request.

EDITORS: Clovis Ragsdale and James E. Henley

The Virgin Birth

The virgin birth of Jesus is a topic of magnificent design. The more comprehensive the study of the work of Jesus, the more fitting the virgin birth appears. How else could the Christ so convincingly demonstrate his kinship with man while retaining his divine nature and spiritual independence?

There should be nothing repulsive to the modern mind in the account of the virgin birth narratives of Matthew and Luke. If the personal God of the Bible (whose existence is indicated by the design of the universe and whose presence is demanded by the psychological needs of man) is regarded, there is no more difficulty in accepting the virgin birth than there is in accepting the mystery of everyday life.

Seeing that there is nothing inconsistent in the virgin birth in regard to the dealings of God with man, it may be asked "Why do so many who profess to believe in God deny the miraculous birth account?" The answer to this query necessitates an historical search. The preceding three centuries have witnessed the rise of such skeptical systems as English Deism, French Encyclopedism, and German rationalism. These ideologies had one thing in common. . .the denial of any supernatural intervention in human affairs. Consequently the virgin birth, the miracles, the resurrection along with the belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures were cast aside as being intellectually obsolete. The Protestant Reformation Movement degenerated under the influence of these faith-destroying philosophies. The liberal school of theology which has flourished in recent years, has adopted the basic idea that Christianity must be accepted on the principle of human reason alone. . .that nothing supernatural be regarded as necessary

Christianity does not fetter thinking. Truth is never harmed by honest examination. It is fair for anyone to ask, "Why do you believe in the Virgin Birth?" Since the virgin birth is in the realm of history, the answer must correspond to the nature of the query.

Luke is the star witness for the virgin birth. His statements are pertinent because; First, he possesses the characteristics of an accurate historian. "Luke was not only a doctor, and an historian, but he was one of the world's greatest men of letters. He wrote the clearest and the best Greek written in that century...Since arguments (for the virgin birth) were sufficient to convince Dr. Luke, we know that we are dealing with no ignorant childish fancy." (Dr. John A. Scott, We Would Know Jesus, pp. 124,131). Luke's writings have met the test of zealous criticism. The accuracy which has made it possible for his works to successfully withstand this criticism is further testimony of his truthfulness in the virgin birth narrative.

It can also be asserted that Luke's writings are pertinent to the question of the virgin birth because he was a competent medical scientist. As Dr. D. M. Blair, a noted physician and scholar stated, ". . .but Luke was a product of the Greek medical school that flourished from the time of Hippocrates to the second century of the Christian era, and is recognized as having been imbued with a true scientific spirit. **Diagnosis**, in this school, meant logical deduction from careful observation. . ." (Therefore Stand. p. 102).

It would be impossible, then to select a more adequate witness than Luke. He is an historian, concise writer, and scientist. There is no reason to suppose that he is trying to deceive his readers. Neither is there any reason to assume that he is unable to discern between legend and historical fact.

Let us rejoice that Christ has come! The abundant life is possible through Him!

—Virgil R. Trout

Mammoth Spring
Arkansas 72554

Second Class
Postage Paid

Rosa Ragsdale
Mammoth Spring, Arkansas 72554