

THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

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THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

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March of Dimes

January is March of Dimes time in Greensboro and Guilford County, as well as throughout the nation, and volunteers will be campaigning for funds to finance research and treatment programs to conquer birth defects.

Birth defects is one of the major health problems today. It is estimated that about 250,000 defective babies are born each year in the United States. This means one of every 16 children born has some serious birth defect which can be a handicap throughout his life. The National Foundation, through the March of Dimes, is engaged in a wide and varied program aimed at finding ways to reduce the toll from birth defects.

A portion of the money raised locally remains in the community for use in aid to birth defect victims, and in other programs. We should remember that when we give to the March of Dimes we are helping ourselves, as well as helping the unfortunate parents of children with birth defects.

In the past year, the local chapter of the National Foundation has granted several thousand dollars in aid to help cover the costs of surgery and other medical treatment for babies with birth defects. In many cases, these operations and treatment have helped to assure that a child can grow up to lead a normal life, rather than being handicapped by a birth defect.

The local chapter also contributes to the support of the Birth Defects Treatment Center at North Carolina Memorial Hospital, Chapel Hill. Dr. Loren G. MacKinney is director of the Center. At the Center, a team of medical experts uses their combined skills in seeking more effective ways to treat birth defects. Children with particular problems are brought to the Center, where they receive individual therapy and attention.

Another activity supported by the Guilford chapter are scholarships for young people preparing themselves for careers in the health field. Each year, the chapter awards eight scholarships valued at \$500 each. The eight young people to receive the scholarships are selected by a committee of educators and community leaders. Any young person in the county considering a career in health may apply for the scholarships.

For many years, the March of Dimes concentrated upon the problem of poliomyelitis. Finally, the discovery of the Salk vaccine helped conquer polio as a threat to children and adults.

The success in the fight against polio is an indication of what we may look for in continuing programs of research into the cause of prevention of birth defects. However, the problem of birth defects is so complex, we may not soon see anything as dramatic as the polio vaccine. Recent discoveries in the area of birth defects do give us reason for hope for the future.

The National Foundation continues to extend a helping hand to persons who suffer polio before the development of the vaccine. The Guilford chapter, for example, still provides wheel chairs, braces, and other necessary devices for persons crippled by polio.

A major event in the March of Dimes campaign is the Mothers' March, which will be held late in January. Hundreds of volunteers will go door-to-door, to request contributions.

I hope everyone will give a friendly welcome to these marching mothers. They are giving their time and efforts to help in an important way. For many people, this will be the most convenient way to make their contribution to the March of Dimes. All of us involved in the campaign will be most grateful for all contributions, large and small.

A large part of the work of the National Foundation in regard to birth defects is through public education, to help create public awareness and understanding of the program. For example, more and more people are now coming to realize that there is much that can be done to correct birth defects.

Today, unless there is irreversible damage to a vital organ, it is nearly always possible to control the disease resulting from a birth defect, repair the damage, or in

This Week's Sunday School Lesson

That All Might Believe

WHAT IS OUR CONCERN?

The recent movie, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* has caused much heated discussion. This discussion usually centers around the language used and the frank or crude display of sex in the all-night capers of two college professors and their wives. In our preoccupation with these matters or in our admiration for the skillful acting of the cast, we may overlook the significance of the fact that whenever the characters are on the verge of understanding themselves as they really are, they cover up this realization with a frantic singing of a senseless song, "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?"

Is this the best answer we can find for the pain of life's absurdities? Is life as absurd as it sometimes appears to be?

Another profoundly moving film raises an even more disturbing question. In *The Pawnbroker* we see life in the heart of a great city. Memories of the horror of life in a Nazi concentration camp keep the pawnbroker from risking involvement with persons around him. All the characters are real and believable. Almost every human motivation and emotion is laid bare. The disturbing impact of this portrayal is how a person who is wrapped up in his own tragic past can hurt others.

Must life be this way? Is there no greater refuge than our own despair?

Many of us have reacted strongly to the currently popular "death of God" theology. Some persons have rushed to God's defense. Others have said, with a shrug, "I've suspected this was true all along." Do not both these responses reveal a high degree of uncertainty about God?

Less dramatically, but more generally, many persons who would deny any disbelief about God live their lives and make their decisions without any thought of God.

The issue is this: How real is God in our lives? What experiences do we have and can we have that point us to certainty about God?

BEFORE YOU READ THE SCRIPTURE

John 20:30-31 indicates that the author of the Fourth Gospel had as his purpose this evangelizing objective: to bring persons to believe that Jesus is the

some other way restore the child to good health and a creative life.

There are still, of course, birth defects which are invariably fatal. In other cases, it may be best for both the child and his family for him to be cared for in an institution. But many, many children's lives are saved and then made worth living . . . thanks to recent medical advances, especially in early diagnosis and surgical techniques.

Prompt diagnosis and beginning of treatment can often make the difference between control of a birth defect disease, and tragedy. Widespread use of the Apgar score — a technique for swift check on a baby's condition in the first 60 seconds after birth — is helping to spot signs and symptoms of trouble requiring emergency action. Often this reveals defects easy to overlook until too late. Outstanding examples of other new diagnostic methods are blood tests for detection of body chemistry errors in time to begin treatment before damage occurs.

The dime you give may help some child have a chance to live.

Christ and through this belief to find new life in his name.

This purpose is important to have in mind as you begin to study John 1:1-14. This passage seems like a philosophical treatise or a poem with theological impact. We need to remember that these familiar and profound words point us to Jesus, the Christ.

A fact to keep in mind as we read and study John 1:1-14 is that this Gospel was being addressed to a world that had been greatly influenced by Greek culture and Greek ideas. Four centuries had passed since Alexander the Great had made his world conquest. During this period every means had been used to bring the conquered peoples to adopt Greek ways and ideas. The coming of Roman civilization had not greatly changed this cultural emphasis. If the Christian gospel was to be understood by persons outside the Jewish faith, it had to be interpreted in terms of Greek culture.

On the other hand, the Gospel of John is not a Greek document. Throughout the Gospel we find many evidences of the writer's rich Hebrew heritage. He may have been speaking to a Greek culture, but he was doing so as one who drew deeply from the wells of an Old Testament faith, one who knew intimately the history and expectations of God's chosen people.

Overriding both his intent to speak to persons who were Greek in culture and his Old Testament color and flavor was the burning reality of the author's experience of new life in Jesus Christ. Without a full realization of the depth of John's faith in Jesus Christ, a reading of his Gospel will not yield up its true meaning.

WHAT THE SCRIPTURE SAYS

The Scripture for today is John 1:1-42; 20:30-31. Selected verses are printed below. See Home Bible Study suggestions in the back of the quarterly. John 1:1-14

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God; 3 all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came for testimony, to bear wit-

ness to the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness to the light.

9 The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. 11 He came to his own home, and his own people received him not. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God; 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. John 20:30-31

30 Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name.

Memory Selection: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. —John 1:14

HOW WE UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURE

The Fourth Gospel begins with a term fully Greek in its origin — *Logos*, which is translated into English as "Word." The translation does not reveal all that *Logos* meant in Greek culture. A word once spoken had power to create ideas on its own. The word (*Logos*) was the creative power and energy of the universe.

We should notice in studying this first chapter how quickly the Gospel writer backed up his use of *Logos* with words that were rich in meaning in Hebrew thought. Such words are *light* and *darkness*, *truth* and *life*. Read or recall passages from the Psalms. How often all these words appear! Perhaps for us, too, they can deepen the meaning of *Logos*.

He Dwelt Among Us

This chapter deals with abstract ideas. The discourse begins with the Greek concept of the creative, eternal *Logos*. This concept is interpreted by Hebrew ideas that are easier to understand: *light*, *darkness*, *truth*. We are told that God sent a man to bear witness to this Word, this light, this truth. The witness was that this Word, this truth, was coming into the world. Indeed, it had come into the world, and some people had received it for their very own. Others who should have recognized it did not, and some who did recognize the light rejected it.

In the fourth paragraph John returned to the concept of the *Logos*. He made a direct assertion: "The Word (*Logos*) became flesh and dwelt among us."

Here we need to recall what the word *flesh* stood for in the Hebrew-Greek mind. It stood for the whole physical life of man. This verse, then, makes quite an assertion. The universal, eternal, creative activity of God came into the whole physical life of man and dwelt among men.

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