

Capital Punishment: A Perspective

by Bill Haynes

"Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death." (Exod. 21:12.) To some Christians, the debate on capital punishment is settled in this verse. On further examination of the biblical perspective though, questions arise immediately.

Perhaps instead of being a properly sanctioned penalty by God for certain offenses, it is now an act of revenge by society. The Christian community should be concerned with this, for as the message of the Bible shifts from the Old Testament legalism to the New Testament message of mercy, the stance on capital punishment shifts also.

After a thorough study of the Old and New Testaments, the Christian stand must be against capital punishment.

Throughout the Old and New

Testaments, there are examples of God's desire of mercy rather than death. In response to the first murder, God put certain restrictions on Cain but did not kill him. God instead protected Cain.

Joseph's brothers who kidnapped him and sold him into slavery committed offenses punishable by death but the brothers were forgiven. When King David repented over the killing of Bathsheba's husband, the prophet Nathan told him that he would not have to suffer death and that the Lord had put away the sin.

In the New Testament, one of the most striking examples of God's mercy is in the story of Paul, who helped to murder Stephen. God was not interested in the death of Paul, but instead was interested in the development of a new creature who would be his "chosen instrument to carry my

name before the Gentiles and their kings and before the people of Israel." (Acts 9:15.) It is sad that a Christian community could possibly support the death penalty.

In Matthew, Jesus said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." (5:17.) Many supporters of the death penalty believe that this verse confirms their stand that the Old Testament legalism is still in effect.

The point to be made is that Christ fulfilled the law and that "by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code." (Romans 7:6.) An example of this "new way of the Spirit" occurs when Jesus faced a decision about a woman who

was caught in the act of adultery.

Though the woman had committed a sin for which the penalty was death, Christ had mercy on her and did not condemn her." (John 8:1-11.) James 2:13 states that "mercy rejoiceth against judgement" and Christ states that, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." (Matt. 9:13.)

Christ states why we should have mercy. He said, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." (John 8:7.) The Bible states that "The wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23.) Life is granted by the grace of God, not because any of us deserve it.

As God has given us mercy, and forgiven us, so we should also have mercy on those who have sinned against us, our society, and God.

ELECTION '84

by George Stewart

November 6th has come and gone. As the saying goes the best man did win. He won with a landslide victory; not only was it a victory for President Reagan, it was a triumph for the American people. The reason for the great majority voting the way they did may easily be traced to what the losing candidate epitomized.

He represented to many Americans the way in which the Federal Government can and will act if given the chance to mess things up for the locals. Namely, busing, affirmative action (a euphemism for reverse discrimination), abortion; are all vast social programs that do nothing but take away the incentive to support oneself. These are all factors that led to the welcome demise of a candidate who represented them.

The list goes on, but enough is derived from the above to help one realize the frightening thought of having a socialistic monster such as Walter Mondale inhabit the White House. What America can expect from the next four years is a return of the moral fibre, a stronger national defense -- thereby creating a stronger global respect for our nation, a stronger economy meaning more employment, cuts in government programs that are being abused or are unnecessary meaning control and decrease of taxes. The list goes on and we hope so.

Why Should We Christians Go To The Mission Field?

by James Cline

Why should we Christians go to the mission field? There are nearly five billion people in the world today. More people are alive right now than the total number who have ever lived on the face of the earth in all human history. This simply means that we can populate either Heaven or Hell. There are approximately eighty-five thousand missionaries worldwide. There is definitely a need for more missionaries.

One of the biggest arguments for not going into the field is, "I'm not called to be a missionary." Well, the truth of the matter is that we have all been called according to the Holy Bible. In Mark 16:15, Jesus says, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation." If you consider yourself a "believer", then you must consider yourself a disciple of Christ, no less called and chosen than the very first twelve. As Keith Green once said, "There are no such things as 'first class' and 'second class' Christians."

Another argument used quite frequently for not going is, "My family would frown upon me for leaving home." The Lord said, "He

who loves father or mother more than he loves Me is not worthy of Me." (Matt. 10:37) We should be ready to leave "houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms" for His sake and "for the Gospel's sake." (Mark 10:29) Jesus wants us today, not tomorrow. We must be willing to go anywhere and give up anything for His sake.

What happens to our lives if we listen to this call? Let's take a look at Abram in Genesis, chapter twelve. The Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, your father's house and your relatives, to the land I will show you." (Gen. 12:1) Abram listened to the Lord and left his homeland. He was seventy-five years old at the time of departure. His age is an example to us that we are never too old or useless in God's hands. The Lord made seven wonderful promises to Abram. They were as follows: "And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; And so you shall be a blessing, and I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you, I will curse. And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Gen.

12:2-3). Each and every one of these promises have been fulfilled. The Lord took care of Abram in a strange land as He will all of us.

Many of us might say, "But we are needed to be missionaries right here in our own countries." This is so for some, but as Oswald J. Smith once said, "No one has the right to hear the Gospel twice while there remains someone who hasn't heard it once." One of the worst arguments, or should I say excuses for not going is, "But I can't afford training nor can I get support to go to the field." If the Lord wants you in the field, He'll supply financial support, even if it means helping you get a job. Most of the time, all of these excuses are just cop-outs because we are not willing to give our life to Jesus as He gave His life for us.

In a recent survey done by *World Christian Encyclopedia*, statistics show that over eighty thousand unsaved people die every day. That's three thousand, three hundred and thirty-three every hour. Nearly fifty-five every minute die and face the Judgement Seat of Christ. There are an estimated two billion, seven

see "Mission Field" P 7.

Exams Will Test Our Priorities

by Jay Guffey

Along with the semester drawing to a close comes those dreaded final exams. We will all be under a lot of pressure to do our best. In order to study, some of us will miss an entire night of sleep and many others will be up until the early morning hours. We will have to cut several of our normal daily activities so that there will be time to prepare for our exams.

Unfortunately, our walk with Christ is one of the first things to be cut out of the day. It's very easy to put off God when our studies are so demanding. However, we must remember our priorities. God is the one who gave us this school. He is the one who gives us the opportunity to learn and along with learning comes exams. God does not want to be put second in our lives, with our exams first. In the

Gospel of Matthew, Christ says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you." (Matt. 6:33).

Exams are just a small part of the difficult times. Throughout our lives we will encounter many trials; therefore, He has given a promise to those who overcome the difficult times. We are told in the book of James, "Blessed is a man

who perseveres under trial; for once he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to those who love Him." (James 1:12). During the difficult times of exams, let's try to put God first, remembering His promise for our perseverance.