

Editorials

Holy War Sets Poor Example

"Our planet is at war with God. Since the first transgression, man has never lived at peace with his neighbor." These words are from Edward W. White's book, "The Prisoner Wouldn't Cry," the story of the imprisonment of the apostle Paul.

White would undoubtedly be happy to believe his words are incorrect but in fact, sad to say, they accurately reflect the truth of man's relationship with his fellow man. As far back in this century as we can remember, Indian Hindus and Moslems have been waging religious wars with each other. Likewise, in the Middle East, Israelites and Arabs have been killing each other for years in another basically religious-political wars.

Likewise, too, in South Africa the minority white rule government of so-called Christians subverts the Bible by treating the majority population of black people as if they really don't count for anything. They deny black people the right to vote, dictate where they live, who they can associate with socially and politically, and severely limit their educational opportunity - all in the name of a biased totally wrong interpretation of the Bible.

While we Americans like to sit back and judge how inhumane these conflicting groups are to each other, if we look over our shoulders we will see equally bad signs of conflict when we should see peace being exhibited.

We are, of course, referring to the bitter battle, possibly going on as you read these words, between the ultra-conservatives or fundamentalists and the liberal-conservatives of the 14.3 million member Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

The SBC's three-day convention this week in Dallas, Texas, is expected to be the most ideological battle ever engaged in the 140-year history of the nation's largest Protestant denomination in both the nation

and in the Carolinas. The prize is the election of the SBC president and the control of 20 denominational agencies, including six seminaries by appointing their trustee, numerous book stores and other activities.

The Rev. Dale Lawson, pastor of Charlotte's Mulberry Baptist Church, put the conflict in perspective when he said, "The bottom line is, how do you compromise deeply held religious beliefs? Peace is not worth that."

If peace is not an aim of this religious organization, then the organization is denying the very Bible it supposedly follows in its theological teachings. Failure to seek peace will result in losses for "a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city," says Proverbs 18:19. Equally important, if there is anything that this nation needs desperately, it is examples of self-restraint in the cause of peace and harmony.

Therefore, with the more than 32,000 messengers (delegates), 10,000 more than any previous year, engaged in a crucial confrontation along such strong ideological lines it is no longer a religious convention of brothers in Christ who can agree to disagree in brotherhood and understanding but is rather a political holy war that sets a poor example for everything that both sides profess to believe. We, like Edward White, hope that we are wrong in that somehow these Baptist messengers can act out their hoped for true Christian faith.

Class Of '85 - A New Beginning!

Last week ended with some 4,415 Charlotte-Mecklenburg seniors receiving their high school diplomas and for many, if not most, stepping into a world of unknowns for a new beginning.

Aware, though hesitant, to take the first steps in their new beginning, the classes of 1985 echoed a sense of uneasy reality and heard words of wisdom, encouragement and hope: Salutatorian Tracy Traynham told her 655 South Mecklenburg High graduating classmates, "There will be few, if any, times, we'll be together again. We are the new generation entering into a new world filled with microtechnology and threatening nuclear arms."

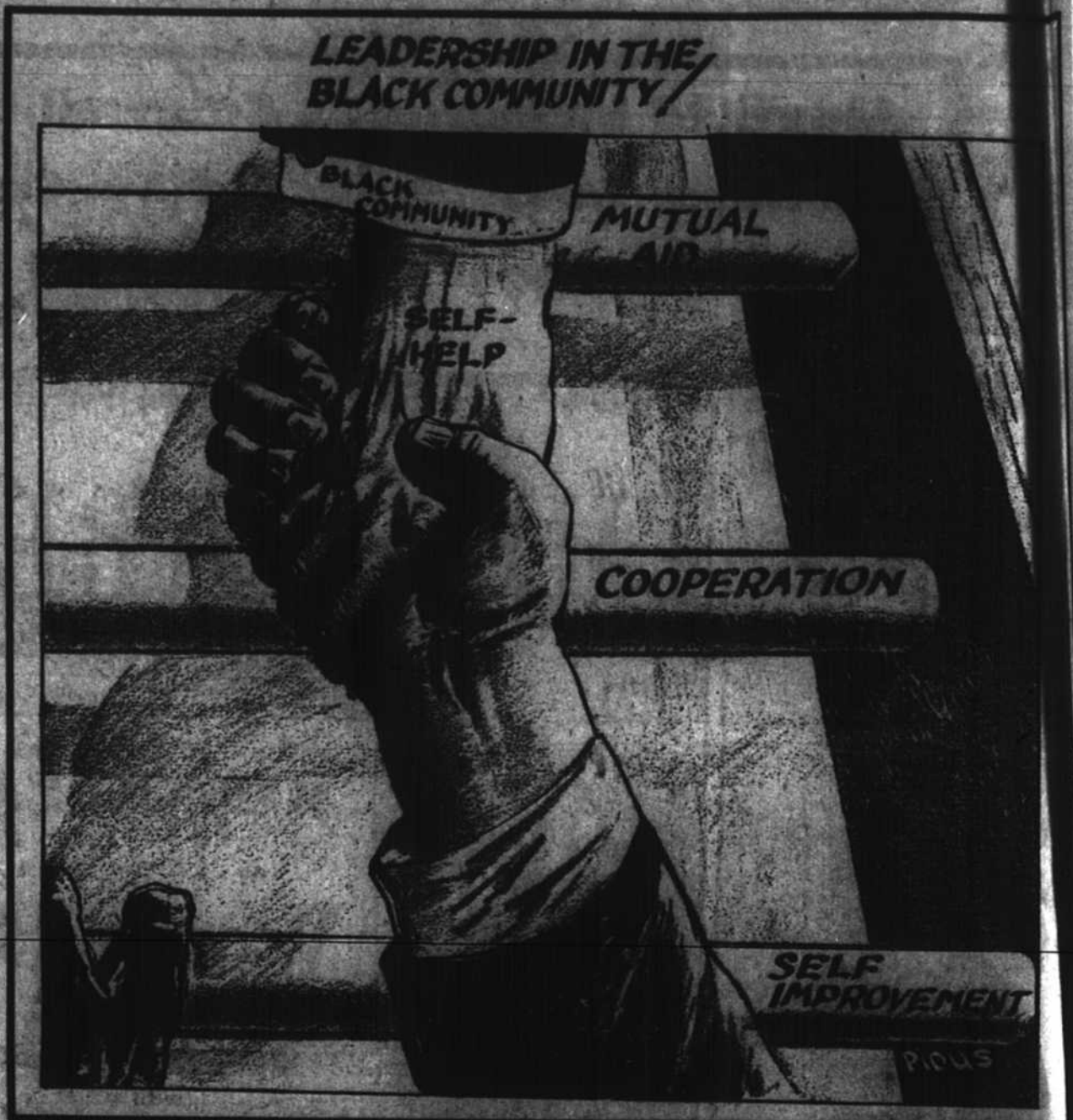
Mecklenburg County Commissioner Fountain Odom offered a somewhat more hopeful message to Harding High graduates when he said, "Be aware that you have closed this very short chapter in your lives and you're now free to pursue happiness. You're free to find the joy in the problems of life."

Speaking on a similar theme of hope for a good and prosperous life Dr. Robert Albright, president of Johnson C. Smith University, told the 582 seniors at Independence High School, "You must believe you can be anything to reach new heights in life."

One excited and nervous senior at another high school said to a few classmates just before graduation, "Oh, Lord, don't let me mess up." Let us parents, teachers, school administrators, ministers of the gospel,

responsible journalists and others who have helped directly or indirectly to mold these graduates hope that we have been positive influences upon these parents, voters, builders and leaders of the coming century.

Whatever these graduates are and whatever they become will be, for good or bad, partly the result of our influences upon them. Let us hope we have adequately prepared these youth for their new beginnings.



Is It Right To Set A Time For Prayer?

On the subject of the recent Supreme Court ruling concerning the issue of school prayer...many people in the United States want their children to pray on a daily basis. Fine. The recent case concerning the constitutionality of prayer in school was one decision made not solely of moral just but constitutional just. The root of the question is - is it right to inflict the time of prayer on a child on a daily basis regardless of his family's beliefs and practices? The Supreme Court upheld the idea that the founding fathers, in writing the Constitution, drew a defined, clear line between church and state. Thus stating that no representative of the state (public officials, elected officials, or school teacher) can cross or break that line by dictating, forcing or encouraging prayer in the school.

Many states passed legislation to make prayer possible in schools by providing a moment of meditation-silent meditation. Through this approach parents can



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instruct their children to pray silently during this time; they can help the child memorize a prayer or write it down for them. Other parents can tell their children to dream, read or do nothing if religion is not an important part of their family lives.

Where does the Alabama case come into play? Originally, Alabama's legislature passed an act that provided a period of silent meditation in school. In 1982 the act was changed to require a period of prayer in school. This is the point that the Su-

preme Court considered church crossing over to state.

Since the ruling, crusaders have attacked and criticized the Supreme Court, calling its members ungodly liberals and the like. Liberals? When four of the Justices were appointed by conservative Presidents! The Judges who participated in the decision have beliefs just as strong as crusaders and some do not.

These modern day crusaders claim to have some type of divine vision about what the founding fathers of this nation had in mind when drafting the Constitution. And what they would say or how they would feel about the case decision. It is common knowledge as to the reasons the founding fathers wrote the Bill of Rights as they are: They had rebelled against a nation whose leaders and crusaders used the state to force religious beliefs and prosecute nonbelievers. If prayer in the school is mandatory then is it not going against a basic principle this nation was built upon? The law draws the line between church and state. Modern day crusaders want to erase that line. The line is fine but this nation's principles of religious liberty require that the line be drawn.

The First Amendment to the Constitution states, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion." Well, if Congress cannot do it, then why do states feel they can do it? The "establishment" clause forms the line between church and state.

The United States is such a pluralistic county in that it has people from all over the world as its citizens. And these varying people have varying ideals and religions. Christianity is not the only religious philosophy in the nation; it is one of many. But when it comes to the question of prayer in the school, Christianity runs out to the spotlight and says that prayer is a must in school. Well, this creates a problem in schools where there are Christians, Jews, Hindus, Agnostics, and atheists in one classroom and more than that in an entire school. Children should not be forced to pray to a God if he or she does not believe in God in a specified form such as Christianity.

Prayer is the key word here. Not all religions practice praying in the same manner.

From Capitol Hill

Conference Stresses Stoppage Of Rights Erosion

By Alfreda L. Madison
Special To The Post

In 1950, President Truman's Committee on Civil Rights issued an historic report. For implementation of this report, Roy Wilkins, A. Phillip Randolph and Arnold Aronson organized the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. Thirty years ago, the conference began with 30 organizations. Today, it is composed of 175 organizations, which represent blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, labor, the major religious groups, women, the handicapped, aged, minority businesses and professions.

Although diverse groups are members of the organization, with some specific interests - all are committed to an integrated, democratic, plural society which accords every individual equal rights, equal opportunities and equal justice. They believe these goals can and must be achieved through peaceful means within the American political system.

The Leadership Conference has been in the forefront in the passage of all Civil Rights Acts since 1957. Important as these rights are, they are insufficient to assure these rights. So the Conference expanded its definition to include along with the establishment and enforcement of rights, the realization of social and economic conditions, in which all rights become a reality for all people.

Leadership Conference is divided into two distinct groups. One is Legislative Action, which is headquartered in Washington. It analyzes bills and issues, plans strategy and lobbies members of Congress and Cabinet members. The Law



Alfreda

Enforcement group divided into different segments, each of which monitors a particular federal agency for compliance with civil rights laws and congressional mandates. Members of these groups submit suggestions for rules and regulations. They also conduct intense lobbying of members of Congress. The Leadership Conference, Executive Director, Ralph Nease who has a hairstyle which is between an Afro and a traditional caucasian, is constantly seen buttonholing key members of Congress on civil rights issues. He just might take the quiet, mild-mannered, extremely forceful and untiring, the deceased Clarence Mitchell's positions as the 101st Senator.

The Leadership Conference has just concluded its 35th annual meeting.

Theme of this year's conference was "Civil Rights Under Siege: The Threat of a Second Post Reconstruction Era." The meeting was also a celebration of the 20 years of passage of the Voting Rights Act.

The Conference heartily attacked

the Reagan Administration's colorblind policy, its wholesale assault on civil rights. Assistant Attorney General Reynolds for civil rights, the Reagan civil rights hater man who is before the Senate for confirmation for a promotion, came under heavy fire by conference participants. They stated that Reynolds not only does not deserve a promotion, but a dismissal for his flagrant refusal to carry out his duties of enforcing the civil rights laws and mandates, but that he tries to overturn and subvert them. He is increasing racism. Emphasis was placed on Reynolds' attempts to overturn over 50 consent decrees - many of which have been, successfully, implemented for around 12 years. Reynolds bases his actions on a misinterpretation of the Stotts case, said participants. The Attorney General says that in the colorblind policy, race cannot be used; that the use of race in remedying injustices gives rise to racism. The conference showed that these injustices arose because race was greatly considered and as Chief Justice Burger said, "Just as the race of a student must be considered in determining whether a constitutional violation has occurred, so also must race be considered in formulation of a remedy." In the Bakke case, the Court failed to adopt a colorblind interpretation. The Fifth Circuit, en banc, Court belittled the Justice Department's attack on race-conscious relief.

The first panelist to speak on the Reagan Administration's civil rights actions was the very forceful, dedicated, energetic Civil Rights Commissioner, Dr. Mary Berry. She stated that during the 70s, we became somewhat complacent. We

praised and honored past hero leaders and foot soldiers. We saw older people not being victimized by age, the beginning of women lib, student increase in black colleges equalled the student increase in white colleges, Hispanics and the disabled marching toward Jericho.

All of these had bi-partisan support. She said, then the assault began. Some said minorities were getting too much too soon. Women began working more because of the need and the family became undermined. She said, the propaganda debates began in the media and everywhere. Propaganda statements were; what is America? What are the constitutional mandates?

The connotation is, there were no groups in America until civil rights groups invented them. The Reagan emphasis on remedying by intent versus effect. The reelection of Ronald Reagan campaigning on the politics of feeling good which ignores his opposition to comparable worth pay, ERA, not only his failure to enforce the civil laws, but using every means to subvert and overturn them.

The 35th annual Leadership Conference on Civil Rights meeting strongly stated the job that is facing all groups, but rich white males. Members must energetically and actively become involved to see that the '85 Civil Rights Restoration Act, which is now before Congress, is passed, the defeat of the nomination of William Bradford Reynolds and the passage of the South African Apartheid bill.

At conclusion of the annual meeting, the conference members picketed the South African embassy.

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