

Other Editors

WRAL Viewpoint

Sacrilege on the Civil Rights Front

From time to time, there comes an effort to deify some public figure who has managed to capture the imagination or seized upon the emotions of great masses of people. Even some political programs have been described as having been inspired by Providence. We recall, for example, a politician of some years ago who was described by his supporters as "the most Christ-like man who ever lived."

One views such aberrations, of course, in the context of the times in which they occur. For a man who presents himself, or allows himself to be presented, as "Christ-like" generally is later revealed as anything but. In the case of the politician just referred to, he was subsequently revealed as ineffective and without real achievement, and doomed to live out his latter years in virtual obscurity.

So this deification of mortal man — any man — is a very sad, very arrogant, very dangerous thing. At the very least, it discloses that those who attempt it know very little about the life of Christ. At the worst, it hints a disrespect for the meaning of Christ's teachings.

At this, of all seasons, it is important that distinctions be clear between the mortal and the Divine. It is perfectly possible, of course, for any man to contend, or pretend, that his conduct parallels the methods of Christ. But to do so invites an examination of contrasts, as well as comparisons.

Jesus never advocated a governmental program; indeed, He drew a careful line between His purpose and the functions of government when He held up the coin with the admonition to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's. Though crowds followed Him wherever He went, He never once sought to use them as instruments of power or intimidation. To the contrary, He repeatedly emphasized that His ministry was one of dealing with the minds and souls of individual men.

It is, then, hypocrisy to suggest that if Jesus were among us today in mortal form, He would support this movement or that one, or any political or governmental program. Chances are, in fact, that He would refuse to become an activist on either side of the many social questions of our time. Instead, He would look into the hearts of individuals, and again lift His mortal voice to urge us all to seek our individual salvation by doing what we ought to do.

This would undercut a great deal of the human judgments that swirl about our heads. It would strengthen the sense of personal responsibility of each of us. And it would solve the problems that plague us most.

The trouble with mankind is that we have the teachings of Jesus before us, but refuse to apply them to what we do. Any number of Parables come to mind, not the least of which is the Parable of the Talents. And though He perhaps was most dramatic when he healed the sick, Jesus always demanded faith. Yet today we would try to heal our national infirmities without that faith.

Jesus is often portrayed as a meek, sorrowful man — even physically frail. What a travesty! He was not, as we see Him, any of these. He was a carpenter who had swung an ax and pushed a plane, hence He must have

been strong physically. He was the most popular dinner guest in all Jerusalem — and a sorrowful killjoy could hardly have managed that. He was meek only in the sense that He took advantage of no man. He talked about faith and hope and charity — and He meant it all. He sought to win the souls of men only by showing them the way to their personal salvation.

That was His program, and it has survived the test of 2,000 years of conflict among disbelieving men who have sought to substitute in the place of it pretense and piety, selfishness and hate, and irresponsibility and greed. Powerful men have come and gone, some of them dying as martyrs. But Jesus Christ, whose resurrection the Christian world prayerfully celebrates at this season, lives on. Bad men as well as good men have claimed to be walking in His footsteps. But it is only in the heart of each of us that we know the extent of our failure. Our hope is that we may win salvation as individuals; our certainty is that we shall not win it as a group — and certainly not as a mob. For, after all, it was a mob that crucified the Son of God.

DEATHS

Robert Lee Becton

Funeral services were held Friday for Robert Lee Becton, 76, of Kinston route 6, who died last Wednesday night.

Miss Jennie Maxwell

Funeral services were held Thursday for Miss Jennie Maxwell, 86, retired Seven Springs school teacher, who died last Wednesday.

Robert Henry Phillips

Funeral services were held Friday for Robert Henry Phillips, 57, of 1707 Queens Road, who died last Tuesday night after a long period of poor health.

Mrs. Anna Pittman Purvis

Funeral services were held Friday for Mrs. Anna Pittman Purvis, 89, widow of W. T. Purvis of 807 Carey Road, who died last week.

Mrs. Hattie Whaley

Funeral services were held Sunday for Mrs. Hattie Whaley, 66, wife of Kenyon Whaley of Kinston route 3, who died last Friday.

Harriett Ann Mobley

Funeral services were held Saturday for Harriett Ann Mobley, 25, daughter of Mrs. Hattie Carrow Mobley of 305 West Washington Street, who died last week in Raleigh.

W. J. Thomas

Funeral services were held Sunday for W. J. Thomas, 45, of Stallings Drive, who died last week after a long period of poor health.

Herman Daniel Sutton

Funeral services were held Saturday for Herman Daniel Sutton, 64, of Grifton route 2,

who died last Thursday.

Elwood Lee Adams

Funeral services were held Saturday for Elwood Lee Adams, 30, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clifford Adams of Comfort, who died last week in Durham.

Mrs. Cottie White Perry

Funeral services were held Sunday for Mrs. Cottie White Perry, 72, widow of Joseph Perry of 137 Collier Road, who died Friday.

Mrs. Evelyn Sutton Harris

Funeral services were held Saturday for Mrs. Evelyn Sutton Harris, 52, wife of Nick Harris of Ayden, who died last Thursday.

John Carl Howard

Funeral services were held Tuesday for John Carl Howard, 67, of Kinston route 4, who died Saturday.

Mrs. Callie Mae Wiggins

Funeral services were held Wednesday for Mrs. Callie Mae Wiggins, 47, wife of Robert Lee Wiggins of 1307 John Drive, who died Monday.

Perry White

Funeral services were held Monday for Perry White, 6, son of Mr. and Mrs. Bobby White of 904 Jefferson Drive, who was murdered Friday night.

Haunted



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