

THE FUTURE OUTLOOK

J. F. JOHNSON Editor & Publisher
 MISS EMMA P. JOHNSON News Reporter
 L. A. WISE Staff Photographer

Make all checks payable to and mail to:

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PLIGHT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

By BEATRICE HERBIN

It seems today that the public schools are drawing a great deal of attention, not only from local citizens concerned, but from the State and Federal government as well, and rightly should be so. It has now been sixteen years, come May 17, that desegregation of the public schools was rendered a unanimous mandate by "The Nine Ole Men," with former Chief Justice Earl Warren speaking for The Court. Perhaps many had forgotten it during the slow pace of compliance by local schools, and those in the other seventeen Southern States directly affected by the Court Decision; many had not been born, or were very young at the time. Hence, the turmoil concerning the public schools is nothing new today. The people have just been asleep.

From this fact, the impact of the Nixon Administration on immediate desegregation has really shaken them up, black and white alike, and both are to blame for the possible consequences of bussing. Negroes who first sought equal opportunity of education lagged in the deal while the whites busied themselves in moving out of integrated districts into new housing units that set the races apart. Hence, if bussing must be, they asked for it.

Several factors may be attributed to the change of attitudes on desegregation — the violence of the late '60's instituted by a few self-styled revolutionists, the aged old fears of intermarriage and social assimilation of the races, and the added flame of prejudices and hate of both races towards each other. Yet, the theory still holds that a true government of people must be a united truce, that by learning and playing together, working and living together makes the truce stronger and indivisible. Equal opportunity in every facet of American life is the only answer to the realization of the American dream.

The belling and hollering of "black" this and "black" that is certainly not the answer to the Negro's ills; nor is white supremacy any longer a way out. If people are really human, it's high time each race came to a recognition of it, and long over due that they should conduct themselves accordingly. The only answer to the ideals of peace and domestic tranquility in this city, this state and nation is found in equal treatment and in equal opportunity, with liberty and justice for all, and may I add, in the boundaries of law and order as each warrants it.

Idealism is one thing; realism, another. All will never be entirely equal to each other because of human limitations found in all of us. And the scriptures say that "to one he gave a talent, then to some three or four, and to some even five." It depends a great deal on how many each person has, the extent of his potential, his ambition and drive and on his use of common sense in the race for success, to set as his first objective that of knowing to what degree he can best serve his fellowman, and then striving to prepare himself to do it in the realm of his capacity.

No, integration will not make a multiplicity of Einsteins, nor Kings, nor Lincolns, nor what you will, but it will certainly help to allay many of the fears and myths concerning who is inferior or who is superior. Neither as race is, as individuals, yes, but this depends on the person. If bussing, in this stage of the game is the answer, then I say "bus."

POET'S CORNER

"Lord, when Thou seest that my work is done,
 Let me not linger on,
 With failing powers,
 Adown the weary hours,
 A workless worker in a world of work.
 But, with a word,
 Just bid me home,
 And I will come
 Right gladly,
 Yea, right gladly
 Will I come."

This Week's Sunday School Lesson**DEMANDS OF DISCIPLESHIP****Beginning Where You Are**

When Jascha Heifetz was asked the secret of his marvelous technical proficiency on the violin, he answered without hesitation, "Sixty thousand hours of practice."

A highly successful track coach in a southeastern university goes down the hall of the athletic dormitory at six each morning, routing out his men for a two-mile run before breakfast.

If a young person wants to be a doctor, he knows he must submit to long years of college, medical school, internship, residency, and perhaps graduate study.

If anything is certain in this life of ours, it is that nothing of value is achieved without effort. From membership in a fraternal order to competence in a profession, from homemaking to business success, from athletic skill to recognition in the arts, one must pay a price.

Our basic decision is really not what we want to do or be, but whether we want it badly enough to pay the cost. We will not be surprised, therefore, that the same principle holds true in being Christian.

The passages selected for study in this lesson are examples of this principle. Read them all, including those not printed below.

Searching The Scriptures

The Scripture for this lesson is Mark 8:34-38; Luke 14:25-33; 1 Kings 22:1-36; Matthew 10:16-39; Acts 6 and 7. Selected verses are printed below.

Mark 8:34-38

34 And he called to him the multitude with his disciples, and said to them, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. 35 For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will have it. 36 For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? 37 For what can a man give in return for his life? 38 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

Luke 14:25-33

25 Now great multitudes accompanied him; and he turned and said to them, 26 "If any one comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. 27 Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. 28 For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? 29 Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, 'This man began to build, and was not able to finish.' 31 Or what king, going to encounter another king in war,

will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an embassy and asks terms of peace. 33 So therefore, whoever of you does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple."

Memory Selection: Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me, cannot be my disciple. —Luke 14:27

Exploring The Questions

Most scholars believe the Book of Mark was written soon after Nero's persecution of the Christians. Its first readers were Christians who had seen some of their friends martyred and who might themselves be called to die for their faith.

Mark 8:27-30 tells how Peter first declared the disciples' belief that Jesus was the Christ. Jesus then began to prepare them for the fact that his messiahship meant not triumph but death. (Verses 31-33) It is against this background that we must read verses 34-38. The disciples, too, must be ready to give up their lives in loyalty to Christ. (You may want to read the parallel passages in Matthew 16:24-27 and Luke 9:23-26.)

In Luke 14:25-33 the admonition to take up one's cross is included in a series of teachings on the conditions of discipleship. We are warned that loyalty to Christ may involve a break with family and friends. We must say No to self and take up our cross. In view of these absolute demands, the disciple is advised to consider carefully whether or not he is prepared to pay such a high price.

First Kings 22:1-36 tells of the prophet Micaiah, whose fate is a vivid reminder that those who speak forthrightly for God are often rejected and persecuted.

In Matthew 10:16-39 we read of Jesus' preparation of his followers for future persecution. In the coming time of troubles not only the leaders but ordinary Christians as well must be constant and loyal. Various advices are given as to what situations they will meet and how they shall conduct themselves.

Acts 6 and 7 tells the story of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. He is, of course, a supreme example of one who was faithful to the end. He used his ordeal as an occasion to make strong witness to his faith. In his defense he cited three examples from Israel's history to illustrate the principle that those who obey God meet opposition from their fellows.

These "hard sayings of Jesus" naturally raise many questions. We have seen that the passages in Matthew, Mark, and Luke were written for a church that was living in a time of persecution, while the Acts chapters report an actual case of martyrdom. Does this fact mean that these teachings can guide us only in situations where the church is under attack? Or do they also have meaning for everyday Christians in ordinary situations?

What does it mean in late twentieth-century America to "take up our cross"?

Is Jesus the enemy of family life and loyalty?

Can you think of any situations today where applying Jesus' teaching seriously could lead to family and community opposition?

Finding Help**With Your Questions**

Several aspects of these words of Jesus challenge our attention.

First of all, we notice the forth-right honesty of Jesus. He stated the claims of God and his kingdom in the starkest terms. He did not gloss over the issues or hold out rosy promises. Instead he promised trials, persecution, misunderstanding, separation from families and friends, and possible death. This seems a strange way to attract a following.

However, Jesus wanted his hearers to count the cost before enlisting. (Luke 14:28-33) In our nation, where the majority of people belong to churches and membership brings prestige rather than danger, persons tend to take rather lightly the matter of joining the church. Most of our members are recruited from the children of our own families.

The Discipline declares that "youth who are completing the sixth grade shall normally be the youngest persons recruited for . . . full membership." Frequently, children much younger are admitted. In any case, both adults and children are to be instructed "in the meaning of the Christian faith and the history, organization, and teaching of the United Methodist Church" before they are received.

The Discipline further states: "A member of The United Methodist Church is to be a servant of Christ on mission in the local and worldwide community. This servanthood is performed in his family life, daily work, recreation and social activities, responsible citizenship, the issues of his corporate life, and all his attitudes toward his fellowmen. . . . He is to identify himself with the agony and suffering of the world and to radiate and exemplify the Christ of hope."

What Does the Cross Mean? Before we can understand the Scripture passages for this lesson, we must explore the meaning of the cross.

For Jesus himself, the cross was literal. The cross or other forms of death were also the fate of many of his followers. Was he therefore telling us that we are to seek martyrdom? Scarcely so, since in one of our passages his hearers are told to flee to another city if they meet persecution where they are. (Matthew 10:23) A Christian should be ready to accept whatever hardship his faith requires, but for most of us the cross will be figurative rather than literal.

What, then, is the cross we are to take up? People often speak of the patient acceptance of illness or misfortune as "bearing one's cross." But such a situation hardly fits Jesus'

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