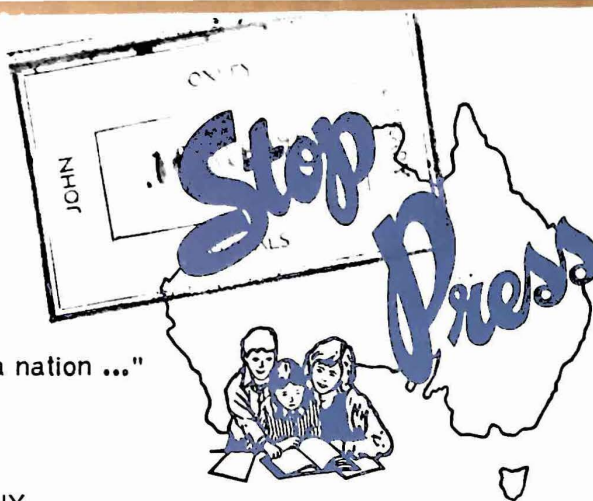


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7th SEPTEMBER, 1982
Vol. 11, No. 10



"Righteousness exalteth a nation ..."

SOCIETY
O
UTLAW
ORNOGRAPHY

'Seek that you may excel ...'

COMMITTEE
AGAINST
REGRESSIVE
EDUCATION

[OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF 'STOP & CARE']

(Registered by Australia Post - Publication No. QBH2921)

Editor/Director: Mrs. H. S. Joyner PO. Box 162, Margate, 4019. Phones (07) 284.1311 & 284.3575

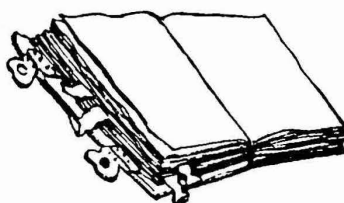
A Christian Concept of Human Worth

(Contributed by L. Smallwood)

It seems that most, if not all, people and philosophies have some concept of human worth, even if it is only an individual concept of self-worth. It also seems that the major contemporary social issues find their point of conflict in the extent to which people qualify their concept of human worth.

This article will endeavour to show that the Biblical perspective stands firm on the concept of equal human worth, and will see how this understanding should affect the development of our philosophies in various areas, and how it will cause the Christian view to differ from other views.

CREATION



"In the beginning God created ..."

The first truth that the Bible teaches is that "In the beginning God created." For the purposes of this article, it is significant that He created mankind. It would seem reasonable to draw the conclusion that since God is Creator, and all men are human creatures, that all humans are equal in their creaturehood, and therefore, that all individuals within mankind have equal human worth.

Such a belief seems to be reflected in Jesus' command to "Love thy neighbour as thyself", and in the many instructions to the people of God to "Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy: deliver the poor and needy from the hand of the wicked ... all of you are children of the Most High." (Psalm 82) Through the prophet, Isaiah, God says, "Learn to do well, seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." (Isaiah 1) The essence of the message is that those who are poor and weak do not, for that reason, have less worth. This idea is certainly consistent with the Christian understanding that all believers are equally brothers with Christ; that there is neither male nor female, rich nor poor, bond nor free, etc., but that all are equally accepted by God through Jesus Christ, and that we should all equally accept one another on that same basis.

(Cont. on page 2)

In this Issue:

A Christian Concept of Human Worth	.....	.....	Page 1
How Ethical is "Situation Ethics"	.....	.....	" 3
Controversy over New Christian Schools (Reprinted from 'Light' by FOL, August 1982)	.....	.....	" 5
Letter from 'Coalition for Better Schooling'	.....	.....	" 6

If this is in fact a correct answer, how well do you think your child would fare, firstly, in being able to formulate it in the face of the teacher's two reminders, and secondly, in face of opposition from class-mates who may easily accept the teacher's instruction that they are fit people to make such a judgement on the lives of others. Consider too, that such exercises may be the only training some of the next generation are ever likely to receive in the area of decision-making. What kind of basis for any hope for the future does this give us?

SITUATION ETHICS OPPOSED

The 'situation' example quoted in this article has been used on Queensland school children, and the book from which it comes is used widely in other Australian states. The example cited is only one of many, many 'moral dilemmas' which the children are expected to resolve, and in none of them are the students given any guide which is absolute or independent of their own (or their peers') interpretation.

Naturally, there are many who oppose the inclusion of 'situation ethics' philosophies in the education system, and who are fighting vigilantly to have them removed. To them we say, "May God speedily bless you and the work that you are doing."

Bishops reject test tube baby program

THE Catholic Bishops of Victoria have issued a statement strongly opposing in vitro fertilisation.

The statement was signed by Archbishop Little of Melbourne and said in part:

"No process is morally or socially acceptable, nor condonable by the law, which involves destroying, discarding or 'freezing' human embryos, using them as objects of experimentation, or using them as therapeutic resource material.

"Out of the mouth of one of the world's first successful pair of IVF practitioners we have the statement that the zygote is 'a microscopic human being.'

"If it is the law's business to protect anything, it is to

NEWS WEEKLY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1982

protect human beings — of all colors, shapes, sizes, and stages of development or decline.

"For the law to acquiesce in the destruction, the abortion of normal development or the 'use' of this or any other sort of human individual, would be for it to take a giant stride in the direction of the attitude, 'Some human beings are not worth keeping.'

"Quite apart from such treatment of human zygotes, not implanted in the mother's womb... what of the long-term relationship between the parents and the child so atypically conceived?

"That relationship is crucial for the long-term emotional and psychological health of a child.

"And what of the relationship between husband and wife?

"Who can say, a priori, that it is irrelevant to that relationship and to that transformation of it, whether their child was

conceived in utero or in a Petri dish?

"Considerations of that sort were explicitly at work in the mind of Pope Pius XII when he twice voiced his objections to IVF.

"His most celebrated point was made in the following words:

"To reduce the shared life of a married couple and the act of married love to a mere organic activity for transmitting semen would be like turning the domestic home, the sanctuary of the family, into a biological laboratory."

"In pursuit of the admirable end of helping an infertile couple to conceive and have their baby, IVF intervenes in their supreme expression of mutual love.

"It separates 'babymaking' from 'lovemaking.'

"Now perhaps there is no harm in this.

"But those who say so have yet to produce hard evidence,

or clear arguments, to establish it.

"The law's business"

"This is precisely why IVF has to be 'the law's business.'

"It is asking too much of flesh and blood to expect the scientist on the brink of a fascinating discovery to rein himself back by some self-regulating ordinance.

"It is asking too much of flesh and blood to expect parents longing for a child, who want to believe the IVF practitioner's reassurances, willingly to suspend belief.

"We realise that it must be tiresome for serious practitioners of IVF when lay persons make alarmist predictions of what one journalist called 'the Brave New World scenario.'

"On the other hand, it would be unrealistic to ignore the extensions of the process foreseen as perfectly possible by well-informed and sober experts."

NEWS WEEKLY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1982

Divorce rate has steadily increased since Family Law Act

WHEN the Family Law Bill was passed in 1975, supporters of the bill claimed that more permissive laws would not lead to more people getting divorced.

Predictably, they were proven wrong as divorce rates have increased steadily and the 1981 figures just released, are 5.5 per cent more than in 1980.

Last year there were 41,412 divorces involving 49,616 children, compared to 38,258 divorces in 1980 involving 46,836 children.

What's more, nearly the entire increase in the divorce

rate since 1975, has involved marriages of less than five years duration.

Sadly, the incidence of mental illness is many times higher for divorcees than for married couples and the children compared to 38,258 divorces in 1980 involving drug abuse, alcoholism, stealing and poor learning, far more frequently than children of intact families.

"The Occult" on television

Sir:

Visual pollution on our TV has passed the bounds of probability to improbability, and I wonder how many parents know what is dished up to their kids during peak viewing time, especially by the ABC.

Rock pop programs are now

showing a heavy accent toward occultism, in particular songs like "AbraCadabra" and Ray Parker (Jnr.) singing "I'm in Love with the Other Woman."

Film clips of the latter show the singer nonchalantly strolling through a cemetery whilst writhing female figures adorn the crosses and monuments, in drooping, clutching and frolic attitudes.

From there we are taken on a tour of a haunted castle, naturally creeping with ghouls, skeletons, female vampires, satan worshippers, death symbols, spirit mediums, etc, ad nauseam.

A sick promotion gimmick? Perhaps... it would not have been tolerated ten years ago.

When a society stops believing in God it will believe in anything, and in the words of Jesus, Matt. 6:23, "If the light that is thee be (come) darkness, how great is that darkness."

Mrs Helen Cameron, Gunalda,

This extract from an article in *Biblical Fundamentalist* tells of problems in Nigeria West Africa that parallel ours in Australia

"EDUCATION:

God ordained the Church to handle the education of man, and when this was allowed, man had a complete and better education, that affected his heart, his head and his hands. Since the Government took over this role from the appointed source, the reverse has been our portion. The undue emphasis on head knowledge has led to the present rush for education and the results are here with us: Campus - demonstrations and unemployment. (Daniel 12:4: Ecc. 12:12)."

(*Biblical Fundamentalist*, 1st August 1982)

A CHRISTIAN CONCEPT OF HUMAN WORTH (contributed by L. Smallwood)

This article presents the proposition, drawn from God's revelation both in Creation and in Scripture, that the worth of all human beings is equal. It suggests that the major contemporary social issues find their point of conflict in the extent to which people qualify their concept of human worth. For example, if people qualify their understanding of the worth of the unborn baby by determining that weakness may reduce worth, they will have no problem in accepting abortion.

The first truth that the Bible teaches is that '*In the beginning God created.*' Because all humans are equal in their creaturehood - in the image of God - they are deemed to have equal worth. The Bible instructs us to love our neighbour as ourself, and to ensure that widows, the poor and fatherless receive justice equal to that received by the strong and rich, thereby reinforcing the concept of equal human worth.

There are many examples in our own lifestyle where we can apply this principle:-

MARRIAGE & DIVORCE: A marriage truly based on a concept of human worth will not be threatened by divorce, separation or unfaithfulness, etc, because each partner is deemed to be worth the total faithfulness of the other.

FAMILIES: This does not mean that each member of the family will have an equal role or equal responsibilities, but it does mean that each member is equally worthy of life, of quality of life and of due consideration - parents and children, both!

PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS: In business, this concept will generate honesty and fair-dealing. In romantic relationships, faithfulness is essential. Our involvement with another person should be limited (both verbally and physically) to the extent to which we are prepared to be faithful. To mislead another person in this regard is to devalue his/her worth. The Biblical view is that a sexual relationship is a lifetime commitment to faithfulness.

THE AGED AND THE VERY YOUNG: A concept of equal worth has no age distinctions, and certainly no human classifications of 'useless' or 'unwanted'. The unborn child may be the weakest of all humankind, but its worth is unqualifiedly equal to the worth of all other people.

Consider how this concept also affects our response to the handicapped, the unemployed, other races, to welfare for the poor, to strikes, and to the sick and injured.

Equal worth does not mean that all people are equal, for this is obviously not true. However, it does mean that all the unequal people in our world have equal WORTH and should be respected accordingly.

HOW ETHICAL IS SITUATION ETHICS? (contributed by L. Smallwood)

"Situation ethics" is the philosophy which allows 'right' and 'wrong' to vary according to different situations. By means of contrived 'situations', it is also a psychological technique, becoming increasingly common in the classroom, which is designed to develop a child's 'moral' code and decision-making ability.

The children are placed in decision-making dilemmas where they must decide who in a group has been 'least wrong' when they have all done something wrong; must make judgements on parental decisions; or must choose, for contrived reasons, to eliminate four people out of a group of ten, etc. In this last exercise, the children are given character sketches of 10 people from which they must choose four to die. Presumably they are expected to base their assessment of each person's worth on the information in the character sketch - age, profession, sex, colour, ability, etc. The clear Biblical teaching that each of these individuals has equal human worth is ignored.

If schools are going to give such lessons in decision-making to children, and if they are not at the same time going to give them a Christian concept of human worth, then parents and R.E. teachers and Christian teachers will no doubt see a need for emphasising this truth as much as possible. This is a sound principle on which to base all our decisions regarding people. Can you see how easily young people may be led to despair if they have no firm touchstone by which they may resolve their personal dilemmas?

This is an excellent article, in the form of an interview between 'Light' magazine and Dr. Adrian Geering, BA, Adv.Dip.Ed., Dip.T., M.Ed.Admin., Ph.D., of Adelaide, SA, who has been an educator for 20 years, six of them as a High School teacher.

Dr. Geering attended a training course for teachers using the ACE programme in 1978. He is currently lecturing in education at the Underdale Campus of the SA College of Advanced Education. Here are his answers, in brief, in brief, to questions put to him:

"ACE is a very well planned way of teaching core material. It frees the teacher to deal with each pupil as an individual, as well as including time for group discussions."

"The basis of individual instruction is centuries old - long before Piaget and Skinner streamlined the method. One-teacher 'bush schools' used it to cope with classes with a wide range of maturity and ability."

"I recommend 'A History of Christian Education', by C.V. Eavey, which shows that much of education in Biblical times was rote learning of Scripture, totally content-orientated."

"In Biblical times parents had the most important role of all - as in Deuteronomy 6:6,7. Parents still have that responsibility, and ACE helps by integrating the understanding and memorization of Scripture with all core subjects."

"The real issue in the deregistering of schools using ACE is NOT, 'Should government money be used to support an educational system that inhibits the education of children, even though the parents want this?', BUT the question is, 'Should government money be used, against the wishes of parents, to support a State school system which inhibits the education of children?' For I believe that the secular humanist philosophy which underlies many modern curricula is inhibiting the spiritual growth and education of our children."

"I believe that governments have overstepped the mark recently in refusing to acknowledge that schools should reflect and teach the life values that parents want for their children. For Christian parents, ACE schools are a genuine attempt to lead their children to know, love and glorify God, to ensure that their children are not 'enslaved by the worthless deceit of human wisdom which comes from the teachings handed down by men and from the ruling spirits of the universe, and not from Christ.'"

"The ACE instruction booklets and the individual teachers and the underlying philosophy and value system of the school are all equally important. ACE booklets do a lot of the curriculum management (and in my opinion, do it well). They enable pupils to work at their own pace and level; they encourage pupils to set goals for themselves and take responsibility for their own progress. Teachers can take time to deal with individual pupils - unlike conventional classes where only the 'naughty' or extrovert pupils receive much attention. The ACE schools I have seen also have plenty of time outside core periods for pupil-pupil interaction."

On the other side of the coin, I believe that some government schools these days are spending so much time on subjects like PE, craft, health education and personal development that the basic core subjects are being neglected."

LETTER FROM 'COALITION FOR BETTER SCHOOLING'

Members of this organization wrote voicing their concern about unsavoury books being used in schools, e.g. 'Pigman', 'Lord of the Flies', 'Language 3', 'The Crucible', 'To Kill a Mockingbird', etc., and asked 'STOP PRESS' to publish their request for other parents to contact them with names of unsuitable books that are being used in the schools attended by their children.

Your Editor responded with the offer to supply additional information regarding school books of this nature, and reminded readers that current regulations in Queensland give parents the right to choose substitute books if unhappy with those listed by the schools. Moreover, parents have a right to be supplied with set books from the school so they can read and evaluate them before deciding to purchase them for their children's use.

Controversy over New Christian Schools

In the last edition of LIGHT (May 1982) we published a letter from T.R. Smith of Toongabbie NSW, which strongly criticized the ACE system used in many new Christian schools in Australia. In part he wrote:

Secondly you said that the inspectors recommended that the school be deregistered because of the content and approach of the main teaching material, "Accelerated Christian Education". The ACE method is based on programmed instruction, an educational model worked out by the secular humanists in the US. I too would be concerned at this form of learning. It reduces interaction between people to a minimum and tends to reduce knowledge to a collection of concrete concepts, to be mastered, retained and produced as required. In contrast, education in Bible times involved much interaction between the teacher and pupils, and between pupils and pupils.

Thirdly you develop a tenuous connection from the opposition of "some State school teachers" through to the UN Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, that all parents have the right to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions. I don't believe that this is the real issue in the Cnaan College dispute. The real issue is: "Should government money be used to support an educational system that inhibits the education of children, even though the parents want this?"

We asked Dr Adrian Geering of Adelaide to comment on Mr Smith's remarks. Dr Geering, B.A., Adv. Dip. Ed., Dip. T., M. Ed. Admin., Ph. D., has spent 20 years as an educator, six of them as a high school teacher. With an open mind, as a "curious educator", Dr Geering attended a training course for teachers using ACE in 1978. He is currently lecturing in education at the Underdale Campus of the SA College of Advanced Education.

Dr Geering, do you think that Mr Smith's strong criticisms of ACE (Accelerated Christian Education) are fair comment?

No. I don't think Mr Smith fully understands the ACE method, which is really a very well planned way of teaching core material. Because it does this so well, it frees the teacher to deal with each pupil as an individual and allows time for group discussions in the afternoon after the core material has been dealt with in the morning.

Was this method of individual instruction first "worked out by secular humanists in the US?"

No. The basis of individual instruction is centuries old. It evolved long before Piaget and Skinner streamlined the method. Indeed, it has long been used in various forms in one-teacher "bush schools" to cope with classes where there is a wide range of maturity and ability. My own maths teacher used it for our class when we were preparing for matriculation. He set the problems in advance, having carefully graded and annotated them. We then worked through his sheets at our own pace, signalling the teacher when we needed individual attention.

What about the comparison with education in Bible times? Mr Smith said that Biblical teachers used much interaction between teacher and pupils and pupils and pupils.

I'm wondering how he knows that for sure. I recommend to him C.V. Eavey's book, "A History of Christian Education", which points out that much of the education in Biblical times was straight out rote learning of large slabs of Scripture, and was totally content-oriented. I doubt if there was very much pupil-pupil interaction in the synagogue schools.

What about the role of parents in Biblical times?

Parents had the most important role of all. In Deuteronomy 6: 6-7, God commands parents to: *Never forget these commands that I am giving you today. Teach them to your children. Repeat them when you are at home and when you are away, when you are resting and when you are working.*

Parents still have this responsibility, and that is an area where ACE can help. ACE integrates the understanding and memorisation of Scripture with all core subjects.

Do you agree with Mr Smith that the real issue in the deregistration of ACE schools is, "Should government money be used to support an educational system that inhibits the education of children, even though the parents want this?"

I would turn his question the other way: "Should government money be used, against the wishes of parents, to support a State school system which inhibits the education of children?" For I believe that the secular humanist philosophy which underlies many modern curricula is inhibiting the spiritual growth and education of our children.

Should parents be the judge of whether an educational system is right for their children?

Yes. I believe that governments have overstepped the mark recently in refusing to acknowledge that schools should reflect and teach the life values that parents want for their children.

Do ACE schools do this?

For Christian parents, ACE schools are a genuine attempt to lead their children to know, love and glorify God. The ACE instruction booklets are only a part of the total influence of the school. Equally important are the qualities of the individual teachers and the underlying philosophy and value system of the school as guided by the Principal. ACE booklets simply do a lot of the curriculum management (and in my

Dr Adrian Geering



opinion, do it well). They enable pupils to work at their own pace and level; they encourage pupils to set goals for themselves and take responsibility for their own progress. Teachers can take time to deal with individual pupils — unlike conventional classes where only the "naughty" or extrovert pupils receive much attention. The ACE schools I have seen also have plenty of time outside core periods for pupil-pupil interaction.

On the other side of the coin, I believe that some government schools these days are spending so much time on subjects like PE, craft, health education and personal development that the basic core subjects are being neglected.

Should all Christian parents support ACE schools?

Not necessarily. But Colossians 2:8 is becoming especially relevant today. Christians should not condemn others for trying to do this: for trying to ensure that their children are not "enslaved by the worthless deceit of human wisdom which comes from the teachings handed down by men and from the ruling spirits of the universe, and not from Christ".

Protest against act

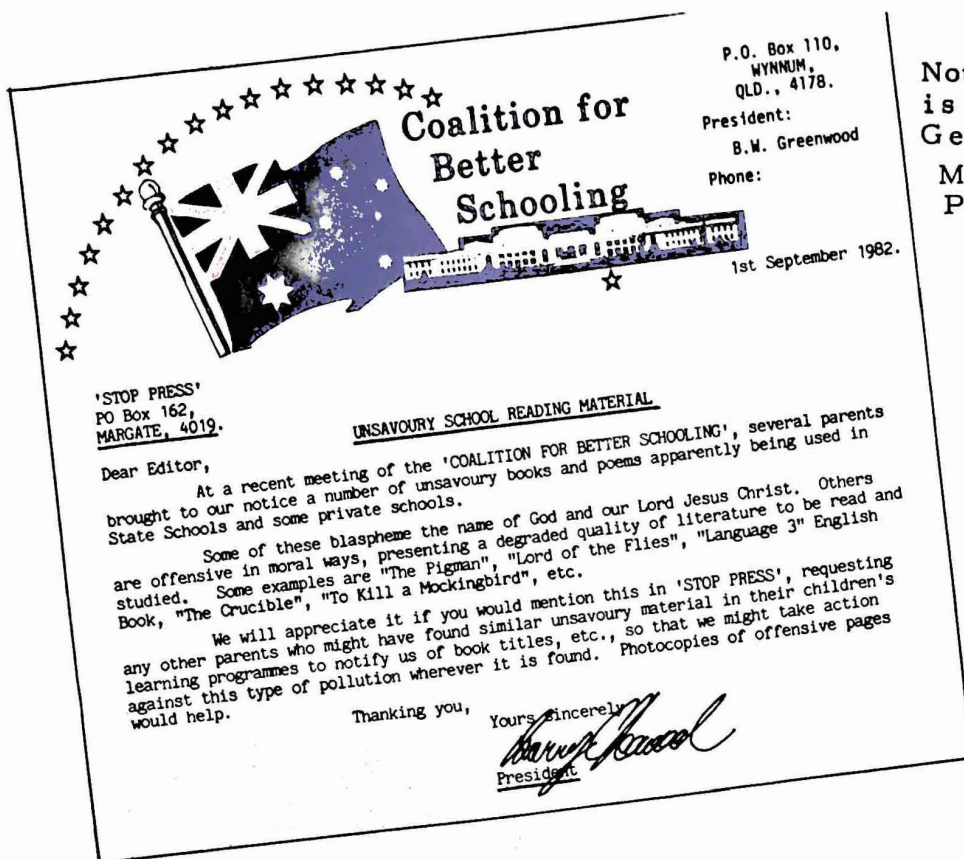
Sir — I write to protest against the Education Act and another act amendment bill, because I feel it is discriminatory.

It discriminates against parents by limiting their freedom of speech. A parent will be liable for a fine of \$500 if he/she chides a teacher in the hearing of a child. There is, however, no attempt to prevent a teacher from discrediting a parent in front of the whole class.

A parent may be refused permission to enter the school grounds and a reason does not have to be given. Again a large fine is held over the parent's head.

I think the Education Act could probably do with some improvements and certainly the education system could, but I don't think the way to do it is to assume that the only problems are caused by parents. — MRS CAROL OBERHARDT, S.A.L.T. P.O. Box 27, Springwood.

R'TON MORNING BULLETIN Wednesday, September 1, 1982



Note: The next meeting of C.B.S. is on 7/9/82, at 6 Suncrest St. Geebung.

Meetings are fortnightly - Phone 2653360 if you can come

Dear Rev. Greenwood,

STOP & CARE has over the years campaigned to have numerous objectionable text and library books either read and accepted by parents or else removed from classrooms and not used for reading or study purposes.

We WARN our many readers to WATCH out for the books mentioned in your letter, as well as many others of like nature that have caused parents to remove their children from the State Schools to private Christian schools. Lists and extracts are available but only for financial STOP & CARE members who send 50¢ for postage, etc.

PLEASE REMEMBER that the regulations in Queensland give parents the right to choose other books as substitutes for any unsavoury ones listed by the schools. Likewise, parents have a right to be supplied by the schools with copies of the listed books on loan, for evaluation by the parents. However, it may not be easy to get your rights!

Yours sincerely, *RF* Director.

"GOSPEL & KINGDOM" by Graeme Goldsworthy

BOOK



REVIEW

ON CREATION

"The creation story must never be regarded merely as a sort of Biblical "once-upon-a-time". The fact that God is Creator and that man is his creature establishes at the outset the basis for understanding the Kingdom of God. The creature is ruled and belongs within the sphere of God's perfect rule. If we believe in God as Creator, we may not divide the world into spiritual and secular. All reality depends on the Creative Word of God. God's Word created what is and must interpret what is."

Dr. Goldsworthy presents in this book a reliable method of interpretation of the Old Testament. He discusses the different types of literature used, the nature of the contents, the significance of the events, and the necessity of seeing Jesus Christ as indispensable to a true understanding of the Old Testament. This book is highly recommended, and is excellent value at \$4.45.

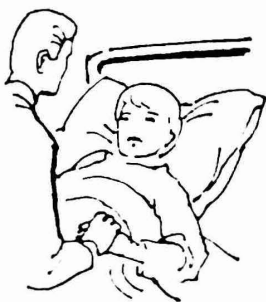
TWO QUOTATIONS FROM THE BOOK:

ON O.T. HISTORY

"What kind of history is O.T. history? It is not merely a history of Israel, for part of it deals with a period before the birth of the nation. Nor is the O.T. history a religious history, for that would entail nothing more than the attempts of historians to deal with religious thought and activity. Biblical history is theological history. It is God's record of God's own dealings with the world and with men."

THE HANDICAPPED:

"Thou shalt not kill."



"Do justice to the afflicted and the needy."

THE AGED:

"Thou shalt not kill."



"Deliver the poor and needy from the hand of the wicked."

THE VERY YOUNG - ABORTION:

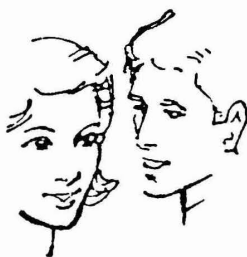
"Thou shalt not kill."



"The Lord ... formed me from the womb"

"Labouring ye ought to support the weak."

DISCRIMINATION:



"Love thy neighbour as thyself."
"Relieve the oppressed"

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

If we honestly believe that all people have equal human worth due to their creaturehood, there is no reason to suggest that people who are crippled, retarded or otherwise handicapped should be relegated to a position of less than equal worth, for they too are creatures of God.

Therefore, it is inconsistent with a concept of equal worth to advocate any treatment of the handicapped which suggests a 'less than equal' worth. The view which advocates the 'mercy killing' of the handicapped, even in the few hours after birth, or the abortion of the handicapped foetus is quite contrary to the concept of equal human worth, for it denies the handicapped the basic right to life and to a quality of life, which it readily allows the non-handicapped.

Euthanasia is perhaps the most surprising of all the modern day social innovations, for the people who advocate this method of ridding society of its 'unwanted' and 'useless', will all one day become one of the 'aged'. A concept of equal human worth, on the other hand, has no knowledge of age distinctions, and has no human classification of 'unwanted' or 'useless'.

Those views which advocate or allow euthanasia are contrary to a concept of equal worth, as too, are views which allow a treatment of the aged in the home, in society or in institutions which does not give due respect to their worth.

Because the concept of equal worth does not imply also a concept of equal ability, we have the many Biblical injunctions to the strong to care for the weak. The unborn child may be the weakest of all human classifications, but its worth is unqualifiedly equal to the worth of all other human beings.

It can be clearly seen that any view which advocates abortion on demand, or abortion of the handicapped or potentially underprivileged is quite outside the view which espouses equal worth. Similarly, the view which says that the decision to abort should rest with the mother and/or physician is equally outside the concept of equal worth, for it suggests that the decision should be made by one whose life has equal worth to the life under judgement.

People who do not advocate any of the above views, but who do concede their validity have also failed to grasp the full significance of the meaning of equal human worth.

Christianity teaches that there is no distinction between 'Jew and Greek', but that all races are equally subject to the laws of God. Jesus illustrated this truth in His life's dealings with people, notably Samaritans. His attitude to women, who were attributed little worth in His day, is sufficient teaching against that form of discrimination. He communicated alike with 'sinners', rich, poor, Pharisees, tax-gatherers and children.

Legislative discrimination which devalues the worth of any group of people is clearly outside the concept of equal worth. This includes discrimination both 'for' and 'against', for a philosophy which seeks to raise the one who has been discriminated against in the past to a position of prior worth has also failed to recognize the true nature of equal worth. We need to examine legislation which is formulated to counter discrimination, to ensure that it is not engendering further discrimination, but in a different direction. (Cont. on page 8)

A LESSON FROM HISTORY

It is interesting to note that the many, many advances throughout history with regard to the recognition and implementation of the concept of equal human worth have found their starting point with Christians.

The Early Church: From the inception of the Church, Christians were recognizable as a people who had love for one another. James wrote to Christians that *"Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world."* (James 1:27) Even in the beginning, the Church is actively aware of the worth of those whom the world would so easily cast aside. In the 2nd century, it was recorded of Christians: *"They marry like the rest of the world, they breed children, but they do not cast their offspring adrift."* (Epistle to Diognetus V.7) At a time when babies were considered to have inferior worth and were exposed to die, a Godly respect for all human life constrained Christians to behave in their own distinctly humane manner. When, during times of plague, the sick were being cast into the street to die by their families, Christian families were caring for, not only their own sick, but the outcast sick also.

As we progress through history, we find that the spread of Christianity was in many ways connected with the impact that caring and loving Christians have made on their friends and relatives.

Birth of the Reformation: It was Martin Luther's belief that the common peasants of Germany had inherent worth that fixed in him the desire to see the Bible in the language of the people, so that they too might have a knowledge of salvation. He wrote hymns in German and set them to popular tunes so that the peasants could sing and thereby learn more about their God. And he wrote new forms of worship which allowed the common people to participate.

The Poor in England: Prison reform movements, health schemes which enabled the poor to afford medical treatment, universal education, orphanages, insurance companies, trade unions and savings banks were all innovations which flowed from a Christian motivation based on the belief that the downtrodden poor also had worth. Insofar as these same institutions today have lost their concept of equal human worth, we find that they have lost also their Christian identity. It is possible that banks which began as an aid to the poor, now seem to favour the rich; and trade unions which sought to declare the equal worth of the worker, now seem to deny the equal worth of 'the boss'. One of the most notable of English reforms came in the abolition of the slave trade. William Wilberforce was a strongly evangelical Christian who struggled for 25 years against the slave trade, and then against slavery itself. He was supported with funds and enthusiasm from men who were also Christians, who shared his belief that slaves too had that inherent worth shared by creatures of God.

The Twentieth Century: In more recent times, organisations against pornography, child pornography, regressive education, abortion, and organisations supporting the family, the right to life, responsibility in education, etc. are also being founded and funded by Christians committed to a belief in equal human worth and a wish to maintain a quality of life for all people.

"EQUAL WORTH" DOES NOT MEAN "EQUALITY"

The concept of equal human worth does not suggest that all people are born equal, for this is patently not so. It does not suggest that people will develop equality if given equal opportunity, for diversity is inherent in mankind. It also does not suggest that people have equal duties, functions and responsibilities, for these are dependant to a large degree on ability, circumstance, health and age, etc. What IS being declared is that all these unequal people have equal human worth as creatures of God, and that all should be respected accordingly, and that where this worth is being threatened or denied, those who believe in it should rush to its defence.

"Defend the poor and fatherless: do justice to the afflicted and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of the hand of the wicked." [Psalm 82:3,4]

"Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another." [Romans 12:9,10]
