

Leadership Foundation, Inc.

March, 2004

Dear Co-Laborer,

In this issue I am taking a break from ~~Eternal Hope~~ to call attention to the moral decline that characterizes the lives of those who call themselves Christians. Because the prayer requests remain the same, I am not enclosing a new list. Leette and I are deeply appreciative of your investment in us through prayer and ask that you use the same card that you received in the January issue.

SEXUAL PURITY

INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, says: "Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! Do you not know that he who joins himself to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, 'The two shall become one flesh.' But he who is united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. Shun immorality. Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."¹

People have always known that sex is more than a physical act. A mystical union takes place, so that the Apostle likens it to the believer's union with Christ.² For the same reason pagan religions, like that which existed in Corinth, had temple prostitutes. In this passage Paul argues that sexual immorality is a uniquely reprehensible sin. When he says in verse 18, "Every other sin which a man commits is outside the body; but the immoral man sins against his own body," he calls attention to the fact that such sin adversely affects the spiritual body. Your body houses the Holy Spirit, and to take into this temple, in the sexual act, someone that is not your spouse is analogous to the Old Testament High Priest copulating with a whore in the Holy of Holies. In Paul's mind, such an act is simply unthinkable!

¹ 1 Corinthians 6:15-20, RSV

² Cf. Ephesians 5:25-33, and esp. v. 30.

MORAL DEGRADATION

I suggest that the past seventy years, in which I have lived, have witnessed the body of Christ steadily moving away from the biblical norm in its race to conform to culture. Evangelical Christianity permits in its midst those who violate every New Testament commandment. You may call to my attention congregations which are exceptions to this assertion, but you will note that they are exceptions – signs of life in an otherwise barren landscape. And you will find sexual promiscuity at the cusp of the degradation.

What we considered dirty pictures, when I was a boy, are today found in advertisements of every kind. You are accosted with pornographic and sexually suggestive ads everywhere you look. You can't watch television or read a magazine or newspaper without having offensive pictures thrust in your face. I fear that we are like the proverbial frog: when we got into the pot, the water was merely lukewarm, but we have been simmering for so long that we no longer realize how hot it has become. We have been so continuously exposed to more and more lewd material that we have lost our perspective and our shame.

Note that as parents we sought to protect our young children from objectionable movies and television programs. When our children became adults, they started trying to protect us, their parents, from the same kind of movies. I cannot understand why, if the material is so objectionable that our children seek to protect us, they feel they can view it. When the rating system was first introduced in Hollywood, films that received an "X" rating would today be rated "PG-13." All of this means that it makes it harder to remain pure, and it desensitizes us to promiscuity so that we are less likely to take a stand against it within our church communities.

The following is an article in a recent news magazine:

"Sunday night is suddenly a bit emptier," said Noel Holston in *Newsday*. For six years the HBO series *Sex and the City* was a cultural phenomenon, a show that changed the way TV depicted women. Its stars were blunt, independent Manhattanites who pursued their careers, men, and dreams without apology. But what made the show resonate for so many female viewers was the unshakable friendship of the four characters: Carrie, the sex columnist and "battle-tested romantic"; Miranda, the "prickly, career-driven attorney"; Charlotte, the prim homebody; and Samantha, the "unabashedly randy" publicist. Their supportive intimacy "was as big a breakthrough for television as the frank conversations about orgasms." The show ended this week, but don't despair; we'll always have reruns.

"Don't remind me," said Robert Bianco in *USA Today*. The show was often funny and clever. But most of the time, *Sex* was merely "tasteless." Its four impossibly glamorous leads were vapid materialists who had

closets full of \$450 shoes, ran through boyfriends like Kleenex, and discussed intimate details of their carnal exploits in grotesque detail. "If there really are any women on earth who live and talk and spend and dress and behave like this, you wouldn't want to know them." "Sex even betrayed its feminist pretensions," said Sarah Blustein in *The New Republic*. "In its early seasons, the show dared to address feminism's most vexing question: Why do 'empowered' women find love so hard to find? But all four characters end the series 'happily paired off' with wonderful, caring men. Even the show's star, Carrie, becomes a Cinderella in Manolo Blahniks, settling down with the legendary heartbreaker, Mr. Big-suddenly transformed into a Prince Charming. How 'tidy.' And how unrealistic."³

EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN

I sometimes wonder if the reason society insists that we have evolved from the animal kingdom comes from a desire to convince us that we are animals in order to justify acting like animals. So young men date pretty ladies with the same intent as a dog seeking a bitch in heat.

Hamlet, in Shakespeare's play, says, "Conscience doth make cowards of us all." It may be that our past behavior fills us with such guilt that we don't think we can corral our children for fear of being a hypocrite. Hypocrites or no, we must check our children's desire to conform to culture. One of the most important tasks facing us as parents is to prevent our children from living in regret. Please read one more quote taken from the same news magazine quoted earlier:

"The skin trade just got a little more crowded," said Eric Gibson in *The Wall Street Journal*. Harvard University last week announced the launch of *H Bomb*, a student-run magazine featuring "erotic writing and nude photography." *H Bomb* is not some fly-by-night, underground venture; it's an official campus offering, complete with a faculty advisor and the imprimatur of Harvard's Committee on College Life. No one should really be shocked. Harvard is just getting with the X-rated program. Swarthmore already sponsors an erotic magazine called *Untouchables*. Vassar has *Squirm: The Art of Campus Sex*. Over at Smith, there's a graphic Web site started by students called *Smithiegirls.com*. "Well, why not? It's not as if college curriculums discourage this sort of thing." Columbia students collect college credits as they delve into "the intellectual roots of S&M." Yale undergrads can study "queer media" while investigating the deeper meaning of the transvestite RuPaul. Such studies may not be why Mom and Dad agreed to spend \$40,000 a year on junior's education, but such is modern liberal education. Sexuality, the academy teaches, is purely about pleasure and self-expression, and morality is nothing but

³ "The Week," March 5, 2004, page 17

constraint. On campus, this movement is called "sex-positive activism." The rest of society calls it "porn."⁴

If I live to be one hundred and seventy, I will be unable to understand why parents allow their children to live in that kind of environment. Dormitories in most colleges and universities are whore houses. I don't mean that all children in dorms are whores and libertines, but that they live in that environment. A number of men have told me that their children, living in these dormitories, have been asked by their roommates to bunk elsewhere so they could have their sex partners sleep with them. I am not suggesting that the children are immoral. Quite the contrary. I simply do not understand why a father allows his children to live in such a place.

CONCLUSION

Why do I write this? Why do I even care if Evangelical Christianity drifts into a caricature of biblical Christianity? The moral degradation of society in general, and the body of Christ in particular, will not adversely influence the quality of my eternity with God – especially now that I have lived my appointed "three score and ten years."

God, speaking through His prophet Ezekiel says, "Son of man, I have appointed thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; and when thou shalt hear a word at My mouth, thou shalt give them warning from Me. When I say unto the wicked: Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require at thy hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."⁵

God knows that I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet. Still, I would be less than faithful to God if I did not warn you. Never deceive yourself that grace will immunize you from God's judgment. God's forgiveness does not, and never will, eliminate accountability.

Your brother in the faith,

Walt

⁴ "The Week," February 27, 2004, page 14

⁵ Ezekiel 3:17-19, JPS

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