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# CAN YOU ANSWER THIS?

Questions  
Youth Are Asking Today



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## READY TO WITNESS?

**A campus representative of Crusade for Christ visited our college last week and really woke me up. He turned a lot of my friends on too. I'd really like to witness for Jesus Christ the way he does; but I don't know whether I'm ready to try yet. In the discussion that followed his talk I heard several students say something about how a witness ought to be completely committed to Jesus Christ, and how we ought to "be" before we "do." I still have some reservations about my commitment. Can I witness?**

Will you let Jesus answer your question?

In Luke 22:32 Jesus said to Peter, "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren."

At first glance this sounds as though Jesus did not want Peter to witness for Him until he was converted. But now notice this: When Jesus made this statement to Peter (just before the crucifixion), He had *already* sent Peter out with the other disciples to witness for Him on the preaching-and-healing mission recorded in Matthew 10:1-8.

The only possible conclusion is that Jesus wanted Peter to witness for Him both *before* his conversion and after it.

Many of the reservations young people think they have in their minds about their commitment to Christ arise partly from being overly conscientious and partly from being selfish. Start where you stand! Begin to tell others what Jesus means to you, however lim-

ited this may be at present, and as you do so your preoccupation with yourself will tend to disappear and your faith and love and commitment will grow.

## PEACE MOVEMENT

**Why don't you come out and take a stand in favor of the peace movement? All Christians ought to back this protest with all their might. You, especially, should do so since I gather you hold to the Ten Commandments, and they say, "Thou shalt not kill."**

Until 1951 China counted millions of Christians and thousands of Christian churches, hospitals, schools, and other institutions; but since the People's Republic took over, virtually all organized Christianity in China has ceased to exist—except on independent Taiwan, where it continues to flourish. Likewise Christianity used to flourish in the entire Korean peninsula, but under the People's Republic in North Korea Christian institutions have almost disappeared, though they continue to thrive in the South.

What would happen to Protestant Christianity in South Vietnam if the North Vietnamese conquered that country is quite likely foreshadowed by this history of China and Korea. American Christians who demonstrate for a quick pull-out from South Vietnam are unwittingly demanding a bloody purge of Christian institutions.

How we long for an end to the terrible fighting in Vietnam! What can we do about it? 2 Kings 19 and

2 Chronicles 20 show how God in ancient times solved the problem of war in answer to the earnest prayers of those who sought Him with all their hearts. If the youth of America would abandon mere political animosity and anti-establishment defiance and seek God for peace with a period of literal fasting and prayer (Daniel 9; Joel 2), I believe that God would bring the war in Vietnam to an end with dramatic swiftness, and do it in a way that would also preserve freedom for Christianity there.

## EARLY CHURCH ADORNMENT

**Is there any record that the early Christians wore jewelry in spite of what it says in 1 Peter 3? Also can you tell me if the color crimson was considered pagan in those days? I heard someone say that it was, and I'm curious.**

Such evidence as I have run across in my study seems to indicate that most Christians in the second and third centuries lived rather simple lives—perhaps because they were mostly poor—and followed the injunction in 1 Peter 3:3, 4: "Your beauty should not be dependent on an elaborate coiffure, or on the wearing of jewelry or fine clothes, but on the inner personality—the unfading loveliness of a calm and gentle spirit, a thing very precious in the eyes of God." Phillips.

As for the color crimson, it was more expensive than most other dyes; and almost all dyes, as you know, were relatively expensive prior to the discovery of coal-tar



colors in the nineteenth century; consequently, not too many early Christians were in a position to wear crimson.

The following quotation from an extensive treatise on female dress by the early third-century writer Tertullian will give you some idea of what the Christian ideal then was: "Let us cast away earthly ornaments, if we desire heavenly. . . . We are waiting for the angels to carry us to heaven. Go forth to meet them arrayed in the cosmetics and adornments of the prophets and apostles. Draw your whiteness from simplicity, your rosy hues from chastity. Paint your eyes with modesty and your lips with silence. Fix in your ears the words of God and fasten on your necks the yoke of Christ. . . . Clothe yourselves with the silk of honesty, the fine linen of righteousness, and the purple of chastity. Thus painted you will have God for your lover."

## SCIENCE AND RELIGION

The pastor of my church is very conservative theologically. One of his favorite sermon themes is warning us of the "conflict between science and religion." But now I am attending a church-related college, and one of the first chapel speakers this semester said that since God is the author of both nature and the Bible, there cannot be any conflict between science and religion. Can you straighten me—or them—out?

I think the answer is that some speakers use "science" in a loose way that assumes it is equivalent to "nature"; they use "religion" in a way that makes it mean "the real truth about the true God." When such persons believe that God is both the Author of "nature" and the Source and Goal of "religion," they can see no conflict between science and religion.

But strictly speaking, "science" is not "nature"; rather it is knowledge about nature organized systematically. Similarly "religion" is not always "the real truth about the true God"; it may be any one of an endless variety of organized and disorganized sets of opinion about God and His will—or even about the devil, and so on.

It is common experience that "knowledge about nature" has very often been "organized into a system" (science) that conflicts with cherished concepts about God and His will (religion). To give only one example, there is the battle currently raging between the hypothesis that the Pill is good for society (science) and the papal prohibition forbidding the use of the Pill as being opposed to the will of God (religion).

The disagreement between those who hold to the evolutionary hypothesis of the earth's origin and those who hold to the creation story is only one evidence among many that there is indeed a great conflict between "science" and "religion."

## SITUATION ETHICS—AND RAHAB

Situation ethics! So what's wrong with it? People who write articles about it in the "Signs" are always so uptight about it, as if it were the devil himself. If they'd only come alive and look around they'd see that even the Bible endorses it. Look at Rahab the harlot in the Old Testament. She told the police who came looking for the two Israelite spies whom she had just hidden under a pile of flax stalks on her flat roof that she didn't know where they were! For this outright lie God rewarded her by saving her life when Jericho was destroyed. Lives are more important than lies! What Rahab did was ethically correct because the situation demanded it.

I think this story tells more about God than about situation ethics.

Rahab was a member of a tribe which had so committed itself to evil as to deserve from the God of love a sentence of destruction. Deuteronomy 7:1-3. Since the evil in question involved complex sexual deviation (see Leviticus 18), Rahab as a harlot was part and parcel of the low ethos of her people.

Yet Rahab, pagan prostitute though she was, dared to defy the authorities of her own culture and to express a kind of faith (rooted largely in fear) in the true God. See Joshua 2:8-13.

To my mind this story does not tell us that the lies, however well

intentioned, of a heathen harlot should be a model for Christian virtue, but rather that the God of the Old Testament—who responded at once to the struggling, emerging faith of an otherwise evil woman by ordering her to be rescued from the general destruction—was a merciful and gracious God.

He is still the same kind of God today, equally eager to save anyone, however sinful, who turns his—or her—eyes toward Him.

## JESUS OR THE TRINITY?

In my church we base our beliefs mainly on Acts 2:38 as our salvation Scripture. I cannot understand why many Christians baptize "in the name of the Father, the Son, and Holy Ghost" when this verse says to be baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Why do they do it? Please print your answer in your column.

The answer is surprisingly simple.

Acts 2 condenses the story of an entire exciting day (the Day of Pentecost)—including a great sermon by the apostle Peter—into less than one thousand words. Quite obviously everything that happened and all that Peter said that day has not been recorded. For this reason it is best to study what other Bible passages say about baptism rather than to confine ourselves to this single chapter.

Matthew 28:19 says that Jesus, the founder of the Christian religion, commissioned His followers to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

There is really no contradiction here. "Jesus Christ" is one of the names of the Son, and among Jewish people who already believed in the Father and knew about the Spirit, the name Peter needed to emphasize on the day of Pentecost was the name of Jesus. Many ministers I know combine both verses something like this: "Because you have accepted Jesus Christ as your Saviour from sin, I now baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."