

Children's Healthcare Is a Legal Duty, Inc.

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Spring 1985 Newsletter

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COMING UP

Our summer issue will carry articles on the outcome of efforts in four state legislatures this year to improve legal protection for children in faith-healing sects.

We also hope to have an article about religious exemptions from immunizations. If anyone has information about cases of vaccine-preventable diseases, we would be grateful to hear about it.

CHILD's Progress

The IRS has advised us that CHILD, Inc. has been granted indefinite status as a tax-exempt charity. Donations will continue to be tax deductible.

Since January 1, CHILD, Inc. has gotten its first members in Colorado, South Carolina, New Jersey, Kansas, Wisconsin, Oklahoma, and Mississippi. We are especially pleased with the variety of professions and experiences among the members.

ANOTHER DEATH OF CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHILD IN CALIFORNIA

On December 9, 1984, 8-month-old Natalie Rippberger died of the most treatable form of "acute purulent meningitis." Her parents, Mark Rippberger, 31, and his 34-year-old wife, Susan, of Healdsburg, California, denied her medical treatment because of their membership in the Christian Science church.

Little Natalie thus became the third Christian Science child to die of meningitis in California last year, following the deaths last March of 4-year-old Shauntay Walker in Sacramento, and 16-month-old Seth Glaser in Santa Monica. This disease has a 95% cure rate with prompt medical care.

The Rippbergers have told the police they were aware that their daughter was quite ill for about two weeks. They first retained a Christian Science practitioner in Newport Beach, more than 450 miles away, to give absent treatment for their baby. Eventually, the practitioner referred them to a healer closer to them, but still many miles away. At this writing, I do not know whether he ever visited the baby.

The Rippbergers did have a Christian Science nurse visit. The nurse has told the police she saw the baby having convulsions four days before her death. Of course this did not shake the nurse's confidence in absent treatment nor did she report this reportable disease to any public health authorities.

On March 14, 1985, the Sonoma County District Attorney charged the parents with involuntary manslaughter.

Last March Laurie Walker became the first Christian Scientist in California history to be charged for the death of a child. Now three sets of California parents have been so charged. Are we supposed to believe that Christian Science always healed California children of meningitis before 1984, or that hemophilus influenza bacteria never invaded the meninges of California children before 1984? More likely these deaths indicate hundreds more through the years that press and prosecutors have paid no attention to. I have death certificates in my files for other California Christian Science children who have died of meningitis, pneumonia, diphtheria, etc., but until 1984, nobody cared enough to defend in court these children's right to live.

MEASLES IN A VIRGIN POPULATION

Contemporary America seldom sees a highly contagious disease spread through a virgin community with no immunizations against it. Principia College in Elmhurst, Illinois, where all students and employees are Christian Scientists, provided such a spectacle this year. It shattered the pretention that Christian Science is good prevention or treatment for measles. As of March 22, there had been 136 cases of measles and three deaths in a community of about 900. Percentage-wise, it was by far the worst outbreak of measles on a college campus.

People born before 1957 have most likely acquired some immunity to measles through exposure. Before vaccines were developed, the United States had 500,000 cases of measles a year and people were generally exposed to the disease in early childhood. The typical case meant several days of temperatures above 100 degrees and an unpleasant experience for the child. But measles can also cause blindness, encephalitis, pneumonia, and death.

In the 1960's a vaccine using a killed virus became available. In the 1970's the much more effective vaccine using a live virus was developed. The government set a target date of October, 1982, for eliminating measles and began a national vaccination program in 1977. By 1982 97% of children starting school had proof of measles immunization. In 1983, the United States had only 1436 cases of measles.

As the young children have been vaccinated, the outbreaks of measles have moved steadily up the age ladder through populations that entered school before vaccination was required. Unfortunately, measles complications are more serious and more likely when the disease is contracted in adulthood.

"Rash Illness" Reported

Principia first reported a "rash illness" to the Jersey County Department of Public Health on January 18, 1985. From the vague, uninformed description given over the telephone, the Department had no reason to suspect measles. The illness could have been roseola, Duke's disease, etc. Christian Science theology is opposed to evaluating disease "materially," so of course the church-trained "nurses" at the college did not take the students' temperatures with a fever thermometer nor feel their enlarged lymph nodes. Although eyes are for some reason less material than thermometers and hands, and it is "all right" to report what you see to your practitioner and Public Health (provided you maintain your belief in the unreality of disease), the nurses also did not observe the Koplik spots that would have alerted Public Health to a measles outbreak.

Not until February 13th did the Jersey County and Illinois Departments of Public Health realize that many cases of rubeola measles (also called two-week or hard measles) were rapidly spreading through a community with no protection against it.

The reason they knew was that a St. Louis medical doctor diagnosed a case of rubeola measles that was contracted while a Principia College student was recuperating at her home in St. Louis.

Measles Confirmed by Autopsy

Public Health asked Principia College for blood samples from the ill students, but the College refused because Christian Science opposes laboratory tests. Public Health, therefore, had no laboratory confirmation that the outbreak was measles until March 4 when pathology was completed on one body. The College simply continued to report more and more "rash illnesses." But after February 13th, with the medical diagnosis in St. Louis, Public Health considered it a rubeola epidemic and a serious, large-scale health threat.

Principia's first fatality was 23-year-old Charlotte Bertleson of Tucson, Arizona. After contracting measles, Bertleson was placed in Cox Cottage, the college's "special care" facility, where church nurses made the students comfortable, but gave no medication. Bertleson lapsed into a coma (reportedly for two days) before her mother decided to obtain medical care. She died February 5th.

The attending physician listed cause of death as "cardiopulmonary failure, secondary to respiratory distress syndrome, secondary to multiple organ failure, probable antecedent viral pneumonia." Because a physician had attended her, an autopsy was not done, and indeed, the Jersey County Coroner and funeral home director did not even know she was a student at Principia College before he cremated the body.

A Parent's View of Medical Care

Her mother said Charlotte converted to Christian Science in 1976. She had received the immunizations available during her early childhood.

Mrs. Bertleson said she feared being held liable if she did not seek medical treatment. She charged that her constitutional rights were violated, that the United States has "almost irrational" prejudice against Christian Science, and that the American "system doesn't allow us to work it out."

She said she had warned the doctors that her daughter had not taken any medication since her conversion, but they nevertheless administered antibiotics. "I don't know whether she went into shock from having medication because her system was not used to it. It appeared that Charlotte had had two major heart attacks," she said.

Mrs. Bertleson did, however, praise the hospital nurses and doctors for being sweet, kind, and loving.

Rejecting All Medical Care -- 2nd Dies

On February 22, 19-year-old Scott Shedrick died at Cox Cottage without having had any medical attention. College President John Boyman said the boy and his father "decided to try to seek healing through prayer," parroting the church's argument that it bears no responsibility for what it teaches and makes money from.

"Good progress was made, but he suddenly took a turn for the worse," said Boyman. Dean David Pfeifer was equally befuddled: "We thought he was beyond the measles, and he was improving. But, unfortunately, he passed on."

Mr. Shedrick called his son's death a "personal tragedy," but did not regret their rejection of medicine. "Everything possible was done for him. I am very comfortable with that," he said.

Shedrick's daughter contracted measles shortly after visiting her brother and later developed pneumonia in both lungs. Her husband, apparently a non-Christian Scientist, expressed relief when she opted for hospitalization.

Objective Analysis Missing

These deaths and scores of cases made headlines everywhere. At last, even The Christian Science Monitor had to say something, if only to correct others' journalism. On February 29th in their News Briefly section, they reported on measles outbreaks elsewhere and then added a sentence insisting that health officials had not linked two students' deaths at Principia College to measles, but tests were pending in one case. And that was all that a newspaper so touted for its objectivity and accuracy had to say about the outbreak. It didn't even report how many measles cases Principia had, though it devoted its whole lead paragraph to the 53 cases at Boston University (among a student body of 20,000).

Unfortunately for the church, laboratory tests confirmed on March 4th that Shedrick died of pneumonia complicated by the vaccine-preventable disease, measles.

Later that day, the church shifted gears and claimed the cause of death was irrelevant to them. "Whether there is a connection with the measles or not, these tragic events are troublesome," President Boyman said. "We are learning, as many medical people recognize, that the contagion of fear is as much a factor as anything else."

"Fear" as Cause of Contagion

Thus, despite the massive demonstration at his college of scientific facts about the origins and transmission of measles, Boyman insisted that measles was mentally caused and that "many medical people" agreed with his church. Where are the "medical people" who think that measles is caused by fear and not by a virus?

Misinformation Corrected in Death Notice

On February 27th, the Alton Telegraph quoted Dean David Pfeiffer as saying that none of the 75 children at the college who attend a Christian Science school in St. Louis had contracted measles and that they were being isolated from the college students.

On March 1st, however, one of those 75 children, 16-year-old Jennifer Evans, died in her parents' apartment on the campus without any medical attention. After the loquacious Mrs. Bertleson had complained that fear of prosecution forced her to hospitalize her 23-year-old daughter, was it possible that criminal charges would be filed for this highly-publicized death of a minor? Neither the college nor her parents would comment on her death.

Lab tests confirmed that her death was also caused by measles and the pneumonia that followed it.

CDC on Deaths to Measles

Dr. Walter Ornstein of the Center for Disease Control said of the Principia deaths, "That's the kind of mortality statistics we see [in the undeveloped world]." He pointed out that those were the first deaths due to measles in Illinois since 1978 and that only three fatal cases had been reported in the entire United States during the past three years. Measles normally causes fewer than 3 deaths per 1,000 cases.

Management of the Epidemic

Public Health and Principia undertook a great many measures to contain the epidemic. The students were confined to campus. Intercollegiate athletic events were cancelled. People from the Principia community were not allowed to enter the state of Missouri. Scores of children, from three years old to twelfth grade, are bussed daily to Christian Science schools more than 50 miles away in St. Louis. They could not attend their school during the quarantine.

The college students were forbidden to go home for their spring break, which began March 10th, unless they had proof of vaccination or of having had rubeola measles. Public Health ran several immunization clinics on campus. A total of 536 people in the Principia College community accepted measles immunizations. Ninety doses of measles vaccine were administered to minors.

Students stricken with measles were confined to the "special care facility" and received care from 17 Christian Science "nurses." The press was not allowed to visit there.

Public Health Doctor Admitted

On March 4, the Illinois Department of Public Health asked the college to allow a physician to examine students with measles to be sure "they [had] no serious respiratory problems or measles-related distress." Even the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, which has been indifferent to deaths of Christian Science children in the past, requested that minors with measles at the college be examined by a physician.

On March 8th, Dr. Steven Wassilak from the Center for Disease Control was allowed to visit the students in the special care facility and to examine the minors stricken with measles. He did not observe any life-threatening symptoms.

Notification of Anonymous Carriers

Children boarding at the affiliated Principia junior high and high schools in St. Louis County were allowed to go home for spring break without immunizations. The Missouri Department of Public Health had a list of the zip codes to which these children were travelling and advised Public Health Departments in the pertinent states. But they did not have the names of the children. Not everyone was satisfied with being told, "An unvaccinated child who may have been exposed to measles is coming to your town and we can't give you his name" (my paraphrase).

The head of the Immunization Division of the Maryland Health Department asked the state Christian Science lobbyist to supply the children's names for Maryland, and he did so. (Perhaps because their religious exemptions from immunizations were currently being reauthorized by the Maryland legislature.) But when the head of Delaware's Immunization Division asked for the name of the child coming to Delaware, the Christian Science church lobbyist there refused to provide it. Instead, she assured him that they would report to Public Health if the child actually came down with measles.

Christian Science Record on Measles

Prevention

How effective is Christian Science at preventing and treating measles? Some newspapers said the College had 712 students enrolled, while others said 650. There are also about 175 faculty and staff and 100 children. There could be 987 people, although the press usually called it a community of 900.

Consider these numbers: 536 people were vaccinated during the outbreak, 136 people got the measles, and 75 college students provided proof of prior vaccination (probably because one of their parents was not a church member). Also, some students had had measles in childhood and a large majority of the 175 staffers were old enough to have acquired immunity to measles through exposure in the prevaccination years.

It sounds as if just about everybody who could get the measles at Principia College got them. Because the disease is highly contagious for days before the rash appears, isolating students after the rash became visible did little to prevent the spread of measles around the campus.

Cure

Principia and Mother Church administrators repeatedly told the press that their practitioners had healed many measles cases "effectively." But since measles normally runs its course without permanent injury, objective readers are not likely to be persuaded of their fee-for-service effectiveness.

Failure to Learn

For all their commendable cooperation with Public Health, the Christian Science mindset remained impervious to information, in my opinion.

Many quoted by the press were determined to rationalize their acceptance of immunizations, while maintaining their religious belief that immunizations do not prevent disease.

Rationalizations

"We do not believe that medicine or medical practices are necessary for healing," said Dean Pfeifer. "However, the state has said if you want to travel, you must be vaccinated."

What debaucherie! Little babies suffer and die of medically treatable diseases because of Christian Science absolutism, (see article in this issue on death of Natalie Rippberger) while the affluent Principia College students violated their religious beliefs so they could loll on Florida beaches.

Also, according to Public Health, the Christian Scientists claimed that the jet injector guns used for the immunizations did not violate their religion as much as a needle would. That was certainly news to me.

A third rationalization they used for getting immunizations was that they wanted to be charitable to the non-Christian Science world. Typical was Ken Bemis, a junior from Evergreen, Colorado, who told the press he had gotten immunized only because of "society's fear of an outbreak." He cited his friend's quick recovery from measles as evidence that "Christian Science works."

Sophistry of College Youths

I should point out that some susceptible students did refuse immunizations and stayed on campus during spring break. Needless to say, though, I wasn't impressed with the logic of their arguments either. One girl told the press, "For me, I'm relying on what I've proven to myself to be the best form of protection, and I've tried both [medicine and Christian Science]." This is the familiar argument that members reject medicine because of rational evidence that their religion is a perfect science and heals all disease. But what has she tried both medicine and Christian Science on? How broad is her experience? How competent is she to interpret the healings she has seen?

She also said it was important to realize that Christian Scientists were not "ignoring the situation." Of course, they weren't. They were paying scores of church practitioners between \$7. and \$25. a day to recite arguments proving scientifically that measles is unreal.

Many said the experience helped them grow in their faith. "It was good for us," said Beth Tribble, a senior from Hayward, California. The "quarantine not only worked for the college, but also for the community. It made you realize you can't be selfish.... I'm not resenting it," she said.

Miss Tribble had had measles during childhood, so she ran no risks herself. Three students died unnecessarily, but her assignment was to be unselfish and cheerful and focus on good as the only reality.

Sophistry of Officialdom

The administration "bothered" me more than the students. The day after the second death, the President's secretary, Patty Ferber, was quoted by the press as saying that the students could always use their time during the quarantine to study. "Some of them might. It certainly couldn't hurt them." Highly disciplined religious communities can always send their members off on a long list of moral obligations, and these can become a smoke-screen to deflect questions.

And Robert Johnson, the church's salaried lobbyist for Illinois, came from Chicago to live on campus for two weeks. Why was he there? Most likely to direct the college's response to press inquiries and to deal with the press himself. Yet he told the St. Louis Post Dispatch that he had come as a practitioner and "his job" was to help those who wanted "healing through prayer." Poppycock! Christian Scientists believe in absent treatment. They call practitioners all over the country to treat every disease known to man. Why would they need to have a practitioner come from Chicago and stay on campus for two weeks?

Obfuscation

The Mother Church's head of Public Relations and the College Dean were busy "trying to stress to the media that the college has no legal, financial or other connection with the Christian Science Church." Why would that be such an important point in the midst of an epidemic? Could it be that the Mother Church does not want to be seen calling the shots?

Lack of Soul Searching

President Boyman released a prepared statement about the deaths in which he asked, "What can we say about these passings, which are so far outside the norm of Christian Science experience and are so wholly unprecedented in our institution's close to 90-year history? They have been as heart wrenching for us as for anyone else."

I do not doubt the sincerity and depth of their grief, but I never saw, in any of the press accounts, evidence of soul searching.

Reporting Disease

The church consistently asserts that members obey laws on reporting suspected communicable diseases. Although it tells its practitioners and nurses not to report diseases to Public Health (because it doesn't want state regulation of them), it tells parents to obey reporting laws.

The usual image of Christian Scientists as conservative, affluent, educated, law-abiding people conceals the actual radicalism of their beliefs from the general public and even from themselves.

The Principia epidemic exposed the shortcomings of the church's conception of reporting to Public Health. The members reported only the rash that they could see and were forbidden by their religion to get any better information about it. They did not report the pneumonia that they could not see.

Lifelong Christian Scientists have probably never even heard of many of the diseases on the list legally required to be reported. And they certainly do not know their symptoms.

Freedom of Choice at Principia

Church and college officials frequently emphasized that students were free to get medical treatment. "It's a matter between them and their conscience," said the Dean. "If someone chooses medicine, we will still love and support them."

Students who made such a choice would have been quite conspicuous, however. They would have had to get permission to break the quarantine and go to a town ten miles away. They were not allowed to have medical treatment on the campus.

Documentation of Bans on Healthcare

During Dorothy Sheridan's trial for manslaughter in 1967, the church attempted to introduce in court some data about Christian Science schools, which Leo Damore describes on pp. 333-4 of The "Crime" of Dorothy Sheridan. He says both parents were required to sign a statement, in applying for admission, that they would rely on Christian Science treatment for their child's physical needs. Parents were immediately notified if their child had a serious illness or injury. Absence from class beyond a forty-eight hour period required treatment by a practitioner. If parents wanted their child to have medical treatment, the school asked the student to be withdrawn.

Interoffice memoranda from the dean of girls to the headmaster at the Principia school dealt with such infractions of regulations as the discovery of "No-doz" pills, "One-a-Day" multiple vitamins, aspirin concealed in tea bags, and several tins of "Midol" tablets, contraband seized by school officials. Their owners were severely reprimanded.

Books Banned As Well

My husband taught at Principia College for seven years ending in 1972. When we were there, the library had a policy against owning any books that criticized Christian Science or Mary Baker Eddy. Professor Joan Andrews taught a course on Christian Science history in which she "dealt with" attacks on Christian Science, but the students were not supposed to read those attacks for themselves.

Nestled on high limestone bluffs of the Mississippi, Principia is a campus of lavish wealth and beauty. It has orchards, birch groves, and wooded ravines. It has two pipe organs and other opulence everywhere. It is a showcase for Christian Science; its students have gotten important positions at the Christian Science Monitor, the "Mother Church" and even the White House. What a tragedy that talented young people and highly educated professors, including the Swans for many years, accept such limitations on their reading and thinking.

UPDATE ON WALKER AND GLASER CASES

Sacramento Municipal Court Judge Rudolph Loncke ordered Laurie Walker to stand trial on involuntary manslaughter and felony child endangerment charges in September, 1984. She then appealed to the California Superior Court, which refused to hear the case. She then appealed to the California Supreme Court, which directed that a hearing on the religious privilege issues be held and that it be held in the District Court of Appeals. The District Court's Chief Justice Puglia is reputed to be a great legal scholar and a most compassionate human being, so we are hoping for a ruling on behalf of a child's right to live. The attorney general will prepare the briefs for it.

Preliminary hearings in the Glaser case were held during January and February. Judge Laurence D. Rubin ordered Eliot and Lise Glaser to stand trial on involuntary manslaughter and felony child endangerment charges. After the hearing, Deputy District Attorney David Wells filed an additional charge of second-degree murder against them. "Christian Science people cannot set up their own standard of care" for their children, Wells said.

The judge, however, dismissed all charges against their prominent Christian Science practitioner, Virginia Scott. I believe the main reasons the grand jury indicted her last June was that she had custody of their baby when he died and attempted to give him artificial respiration. The Glasers brought him to her home at 1:30 p.m. on March 28, 1984. She told them to take a walk. When they returned, their baby was dead. They reportedly called another practitioner in Los Angeles who was reputed to have the power to raise the dead. After several more hours, they gave up and called a mortuary owned by a Christian Scientist.

Judge Rubin said his dismissal of charges did not mean that he condoned the practitioner's conduct. Scott claims she has cured a child in Fresno after medical science failed, but the Judge told her she ought to mention her failure to save Seth Glaser when she discussed her powers of prayer healing in the future.

I doubt Scott will follow the judge's advice. Her husband attended the court hearings in a wheelchair, and she's been treating him for a hernia for 15 years.

I wish the criminal charges had been directed to Scott's advice and representations to the parents from the beginning. Instead, they turned only upon when she had actual physical custody of the baby, by which time, the judge pointed out, medical science could not have saved his life.

In the Canadian cases of *Rex v. Beer* and *Rex v. Elder*, Christian Science practitioners have been indicted for contributing to the deaths of their minor patients. Practitioner William Elder was indicted for manslaughter on 5 counts: 1) for having actively and unlawfully aided, abetted, counseled, or procured a father to omit his duty to supply his daughter, Doreen, with the necessities of life; 2) the same, substituting "necessaries" for "necessaries of life"; 3) for being under a legal duty to have and to use reasonable knowledge, skill and care in administering surgical and medical treatment, but omitting to do so; 4) for having held himself out as possessing competent skill to deal with Doreen's life and health but treating her with criminal inattention and gross neglect; and 5) for unlawfully killing and slaying Doreen.

The jury returned a verdict of guilty on the first, second and fourth counts, and of not guilty on the third and fifth. On appeal, the practitioner was acquitted on a point of evidence, but the criminal liability of a practitioner who contributes to the preventable death of a child was nevertheless established.

The Supreme Court of Canada has held that everyone is guilty of an offence who counsels another to commit it, whether the person so counselled actually commits the offence or not.

As Winnipeg attorney, Roy St. George Stubbs, writes in the Canadian Bar Review: "If a pastor persuades one of his followers to rely on prayer, to deny medical aid to his child, and the child dies, and it can be established in evidence that the child would have survived under proper medical care, the pastor may be convicted of manslaughter--not as an accessory before the fact..., but as a principal."

For this discussion of Canadian law, I am indebted to our honorary member, Clifford Cawley, and his excellent book, The Right to Live: The Position of the Law when Religious Dogma Opposes Medicine, pp. 211-17.

The United States will have to wait for a test of the responsibility of faith healers for deaths of children. Criminal charges have been dropped against Scott, and the charges filed against Faith Assembly founder Hobart Freeman for the death of Pamela Menne have been quashed by Freeman's death. As Cawley says on page 198, American faith healers from "the lone operator like Susie Jessel to the corporate colossus of the Christian Science Church ... are free to practice their profitable trade on children as well as on adults, and whether they live or die."

I was surprised to learn last summer that the Mother Church is not paying the legal expenses of Laurie Walker, the Glasers, or Virginia Scott. Their southern California lobbyist states in his July 1984 newsletter:

"Through its various activities, The Mother Church is offering every appropriate support to the defendants.... However, by a precedent established since Mrs. Eddy's time, The Mother Church does not become financially or directly involved for a number of reasons. In addition to the Church itself not being on trial, any direct participation by the Church would be seen to indicate that the Church is controlling the defendants and the lawyers involved--just one more example to those critical of Christian Science that the Church seeks to control everything individual Christian Scientists and families are engaged in. Of course this is absolutely false. Nevertheless, this office working under the direction of the Manager, Committees on Publication, has given and will continue to give all the support that can be given to the defendants within the province of its Manual-designated assignment." (pp. 2-3)

How devious the language is! Yes, this precedent was "established since Mrs. Eddy's time": it was established in 1984. When Dorothy Sheridan was charged with manslaughter in 1967, the Mother Church paid all of her legal expenses directly and said so in open court. (See Leo Damore, The "Crime" of Dorothy Sheridan, p. 285.)

Now the Church says it must not be seen as "controlling" the defendants. Yet I noticed Laurie Walker's attorney on one occasion compromised his duty to his client and sought to protect the Church instead. At her preliminary hearing in September, the coroner's investigator, Richard Miles, testified that Laurie Walker had told him her religion did not allow her to take her daughter's temperature. After his partner had finished cross-examination, defense attorney Tom Volk (whom I believe to be a Christian Scientist) jumped up and requested permission for one further question:

"Now, 'Did not allow,' is that your wording or is that hers?"

A. That's my wording.

Q. Thank you.

What does that have to do with proving the innocence of Laurie Walker? In my view, Volk is trying to cut her off from her church and to wash the church's hands of responsibility for the mindset that caused her daughter's death and that looks so fanatical to the general public.

PAMELA HAMILTON DIES

Fourteen-year-old Pamela Hamilton died at her home in Chattanooga, Tennessee, on March 28th.

Pamela got national media attention in 1983 when her father refused to allow medical treatment for her Ewing's sarcoma.

Pamela's father is a minister with the Church of God of the Union Assembly. Like Christian Science, his religion allows physicians to set broken bones. So after several weeks of leg pains, Pamela's folks took her to a chiropractor on July 2nd, 1983, who diagnosed her problem as a broken leg. They took her to a medical center to have the bone set and learned that she actually had bone cancer.

When her parents rejected medical treatment, Tennessee Department of Human Services petitioned for custody of her. On September 1, a judge ordered the parents arrested for noncompliance with court-ordered treatment. The Hamiltons fled to Knoxville.

On September 8th the state Court of Appeals ordered Pamela flown immediately by state-owned jet to St. Jude's Hospital in Memphis for tests. Her father refused to sign admittance papers. On September 13th, the Court of Appeals ordered bone marrow tests to proceed and pain-killing drugs to be given. Hamilton's attorneys fought the order, and the tests were run without pain killers.

On September 17th she was declared a neglected child and temporarily made a ward of the state. Her father appealed to two more courts, which both ruled against him. She was forcibly taken by ambulance to a hospital for chemotherapy, radiation, medication to bring down her fever, etc.

At that time the tumor on her leg had grown to the size of a football and had nearly destroyed the large bone in her thigh. Doctors gave her a 20% chance of cure.

She was returned to her family as soon as possible. On April 5, 1984, her cancer was declared inactive, but this January it was seen again and declared incurable.

At her funeral, the minister, Jesse Pratt, blamed the state. "She would have still been living if it hadn't been for the judicial system of our land," he said. "She suffered humiliation and persecution along with the medicine they gave her, even knowing it wasn't going to do any good."

The case raised questions about the justice of imposing medical treatment when its chances for success are low and also when the child is old enough to articulate his personal opposition to the treatment. Pamela was widely admired for her courage and faith. Her sad plea to the court, "I'm ready to die when God gets ready for me" was very moving. Nevertheless, CHILd, Inc. holds that children should not be allowed to make a decision to die. They should have health care of proven efficacy until they reach the age of legal majority and then can decide for themselves what their religious beliefs are.

On the percentage issue, we don't have a firm position. I do feel the state should take the chances of success into account, along with possible dangers or pain from the proposed medical treatment. The tragedy of Pamela Hamilton is that her chances of cure would have been 75% with prompt medical treatment, but slipped to 20% during the court battles.

The Church of God of the Union Assembly is also associated with two deaths of children from a 100% unnecessary cause--appendicitis. Tommy Hester and his sister in Summerville, Georgia, both died after getting no medical treatment for ruptured appendices.

PUBLIC HEALTH POLICIES AND ATTITUDES

Although large-scale outbreaks of contagious diseases are difficult and costly to deal with, Departments of Public Health frequently support religious exemptions from immunizations.

For example, Illinois Department of Public Health has. And beyond that, its attitude toward Christian Science practices seems strangely myopic to me. After Principia allowed the first and only doctor to observe students in its "special care facility" and to examine minors stricken with measles on March 8, Thomas Kirkpatrick, Director of Public Health, issued a press release praising the college for its cooperation. "This episode illustrates that, with a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect, the needs of both public health and Christian Science can be met," he concluded.

The needs of public health were met in the sense that the disease did not spread to the rural community beyond the campus. And the college was cooperative to the extent that their religious beliefs allowed them to be. But it was fortuitous that the disease was discovered in St. Louis, 26 days after Principia first reported "a rash illness." And Public Health did not have laboratory confirmation that the disease among the students was measles until after the pathology was done on the second fatality. In many ways, Christian Science beliefs compromised and complicated the work of those under Kirkpatrick.

Furthermore, I would like for Public Health to have a broader sense of its needs. We can and need to eradicate measles in this country, not just contain it, and three unnecessary deaths of young people are not something to overlook.

[A few weeks after Kirkpatrick's cheery letter to Principia, he was fired by Governor Jim Thompson for vacationing in Mexico during the salmonella outbreak and allowing his aides to send the governor memos claiming that he was conducting daily meetings about the crisis.]

Referring to the 15 minors who contracted measles at the College, Dr. Byron Francis, Chief of the Division of Disease Control for Illinois Public Health, wrote: "The decision to seek medical treatment for the minors is a matter of individual choice by each family."

I am dismayed that an official in such a high position thinks that Christian Science minors have no legal rights to medical treatment. In every state in the country, a court order can be obtained for medical treatment of children despite their parents' religious objections. And Illinois' religious immunity law is written more protectively than most. Illinois Annotated Statutes, ch. 23, s2054, states: "A child whose parent, guardian or custodian in good faith selects and depends upon spiritual means through prayer alone for the treatment or cure of disease or remedial care may be considered neglected or abused, but not for the sole reason that his parent, guardian or custodian accepts and practices such beliefs." To me, that's a clear statement of Constitutional common sense--a parent can't be charged with child neglect just because the parent habitually practices and believes in Christian Science, but a parent can be charged with child neglect if his child's life or wellbeing is endangered by the parent's Christian Science practices.

Yet Illinois Public Health wrote me that freedom of religion was absolute and the children had no legal status. I wonder how carefully they reviewed Illinois child protection statutes before they came to that assumption. I wonder too if Public Health's homage to religious freedom might have had a self-serving motive. In essence, Public Health was limiting its mission to preventing the spread of measles beyond the College gates and was pointing out that the deaths and complications inside should be chalked up to religious freedom.

I was far more distressed with the comments I heard from Illinois Public Health a few years ago about the death of a 9-year-old Christian Science child, Debra Kupsch, to diphtheria. The health official patted himself on the back for his ability to be polite to Robert Johnson, the Christian Science church's public relations and lobbying director for Illinois. He said he shakes Mr. Johnson's hand at public gatherings and praised the church for their help in locating other unimmunized children and adults who had been exposed to Debra Kupsch. "They're so eager to avoid bad publicity they'll do anything to cooperate with you," he said.

I felt he dramatized the tunnel vision of the bureaucrat. His job was to locate people exposed to diphtheria, the church helped him to do his job, and he had no other opinion about the situation. The diphtheria vaccine has been available since 1927. A 9-year-old girl's life had been snuffed out needlessly. But I didn't see Public Health express regret or concern for this tragedy nor alter its support for religious exemptions from immunizations.

Currently, the state of Washington is moving a new immunization law through the legislature. It includes exemptions for religious and philosophical objections. Our Board member Shirley Landa has written scores of letters protesting these exemptions, but the Washington Department of Public Health supports them. It's pretty impossible to persuade legislators to disagree with the Christian Science church when the church has Public Health on its side.

In 1982 Maryland's religious exemption law was declared unconstitutional in the case of Davis v. State because it granted exemptions only to members of "established" churches. The Christian Science church quickly drafted new legislation. The Maryland Department of Public Health supported the church's bill. Many employees were quite upset with their Department's stance, and some individually communicated to legislators their opposition to the bill. At that point, the bill's sponsor, Delegate Judith Toth, took the extraordinary step of (according to a county employee) contacting Department Head Joanne Finley and pointing out that Public Health's united support would be advantageous for its future dealings with the legislature.

The Baltimore Sun declined to provide any news coverage of the religious exemption issue. I wrote the Sun a five-paragraph letter about it; only the two paragraphs that did not mention the Christian Science church were printed. Could that be because church member Robert Lockwood was an advisor for the Sun?

BUILDING A CHILD'S SECURITY AND SELF-ESTEEM: HOW FAITH CAN HELP

Some time ago I asked both a Jewish rabbi and a Protestant minister to write essays on their religions' attitudes toward parenting. I specifically asked that certain Old Testament verses used by fundamentalist splinter groups to justify beating children be commented upon.

Our winter newsletter featured an enlightening discussion by Rabbi James Rudin, National Director of the Interreligious Affairs Department of the American Jewish Committee.

For this issue we are grateful to have Dr. Sheldon Rahn's paper. Dr. Rahn holds a master's degree in divinity from Union Theological Seminary and a doctorate in social work from the University of Toronto. He has served the National Council of Churches as Director of the Department of Social Services. He retired last June after many years as Dean and chairman of the Department of Social Services at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario.

THE CHURCH AND CHILDREN: A PROTESTANT VIEW by Dr. Sheldon Rahn

One of the greatest gifts of Judaism to the evolution of civilization was the prohibition against child sacrifice. We can refer to this as the Isaac event. Abraham was preparing to kill Isaac on a stone altar when he changed his mind: "...the angel of the Lord called upon him out of heaven and said..., 'Lay not thine hand upon the lad.'" (Genesis 22:11,12)

Closely related to the above is the fact that Judaism in the 20th century B.C. (Abraham) and the 14th century B.C. (Moses) was also breaking new ground in replacing polygamy with a monogamous family ethic, and the promiscuous, polytheistic cult of baalism with monotheism.

Normal child development in our own day benefits enormously from the security and love which a faithful set of parents, that is, a monogamous couple, provides. Preschool children can also flourish in single parent families where other good adults such as friends, neighbors and grandparents are sufficiently available. But there is no way to blink the fact that adultery with its accompanying jealousy and violence brings private hell to small and growing children and can jeopardize healthy child development. Regressive behavior, even primitive behavioral archetypes such as group cultism and gang rape, can result.

The situation in Sodom in Abraham's time should be a sober reminder of the depth of regression and pathology of which human communities are capable, when Mosaic ethics are eroded.

In the presence of a reasonably secure marriage, preschool children in the oedipal stage turn comfortably from "rebellion" to "identification" with the parent of the same sex, and from normal sibling rivalry to friendship and love. These children learn well in school, make friends easily, and eventually may marry and duplicate with their

own children the quality of affection and attention they first learned from their own parents and relatives.

In Jewish and Christian family life, the values of marital fidelity, justice, and love are culturally affirmed and transmitted.

Cultic groups represent a pathological regression to primitive sadistic and scapegoating behaviors from the pre-abraham epochs of primordial cultural history. There is no comfort in Judaic or Christian scriptures for such behavior.

Indeed, the whole weight of Judaism and Christianity in history has been to defeat the regressive, promiscuous, violent, sadistic, and frantic options of satanism and the scapegoating of children. And they have largely succeeded, except in eliminating the institution of war, and even that may be yielding in this century.

The following texts speak for themselves:

Exodus 20:12 (Moses) Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Exodus 20:14 (Moses) Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Proverbs 15:17 Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.

Mark 10:13-16 (Jesus) And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeased and said unto them, let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God.

Romans 13:10 (Paul) Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law.

Colossians 3:18-21 (Paul) Wives, be subject to your husband, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

Timothy I, 3:2-5 (Paul) A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of money; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; one that manages well his own house, having his children submissive and respectful in every way; for if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he care for God's church?

These words are from 2000 to 3300 words old! They may sound a bit plain-spoken to some ears today, but the underlying architecture for marriage, healthy child development, and a just and compassionate society was first fashioned in these terms. They represented a cultural breakthrough in their day. There is an integrity to them and a wholesome cheerfulness that is welcome in every generation.

CHANDLER WINS JOURNALISM PRIZE

Los Angeles Times reporter Russell Chandler has won the nation's two most prestigious journalism awards for religion reporting during the past year.

The Religion Newswriters Association named Chandler winner of the first annual, \$2,000. John Templeman Award as reporter of the year for enterprise reporting on religion. He also won the James O. Supple Memorial Award with a \$400. prize, for "excellence in covering religion for the secular press."

The Religion Newswriters Association includes more than 200 specialists in religion reporting for newspapers, news magazines, and wire services.

Chandler authored "Collision Course Healing by Faith: State vs. Religion," a front-page article in the Sunday, July 22nd Times and "Christian Scientists Lawsuits, Dissension Rack Church," a front-page article in the September 3rd issue.

The latter is particularly excellent, and reprints of it are still available at 40 cents apiece from the National Council Against Health Fraud, P. O. Box 1276, Loma Linda CA 92354.

Usually the church has some "facts" to correct its critics with. For example, after Mitchell Lynch's "Church in Crisis" was published in the February 26, 1979 Wall Street Journal, the church went on a syndicated radio broadcast to complain that Lynch had miscounted the number of floors in one of their buildings and had spoken of Mrs. Eddy's "step son," even though she didn't have one. (She actually had a foster son.)

But Chandler had done his homework so carefully that the church had only a two-sentence response in the Times saying that the vast majority of Christian Scientists were happy with their church.

For their own members, the church did a bit more however. In the November 26, 1984 Christian Science Sentinel, the lead editorial, "Factual discovery, honest response," complained of a recent "spate of newspaper stories about Christian Science that settle for 'familiar stereotypes' and 'vivid headlines' instead of facts. It also said that Mrs. Eddy's writings on Christian Science had been driven by discovery of facts, for 'she was not a philosophical or speculative person.'"

Perhaps Chandler's prizes will encourage more journalists to write about the faith-healing churches. Reporters must often feel that they get only brickbats when they write about Christian Science.

CHILD, INC. NEEDS MORE GLAMOROUS MEMBERS

The February issue of Glamour magazine invited readers to answer a questionnaire about sects that deny children medical care and cause other harm. The April issue published the results of the poll.

Usually I can depend on CHILD, Inc. members to alert me to news concerning our organization. But there was nary a peep from our members. We must not have any Glamour readers among us. I learned of it from a local reporter who saw the poll on the AP wire services.

The results showed broad public support for positions espoused by CHILD, Inc. Here are some of the questions and responses:

1. Should states bring charges against parents who endanger their child's life or health by adhering to religious teachings?

86% said yes,
9% said no, and
5% didn't know.

2. When should the government be able to overrule religious interests?

62% said when church beliefs come in direct conflict with the law or the concept of basic human rights,
57% said when death or serious health consequences are imminent for a church member or the child of a church member,
43% said when the child of a church member suffers physical abuse,
27% said when a church member suffers severe emotional trauma,
6% said never.

3. In general, which policy do you think should take precedence?

83% said the law,
17% said freedom of religious exercise.

BRIEFLY NOTED

The April 17th USA Today opinion page is on "Freedom of Religion" because of the Nally case that has just opened in Los Angeles Superior Court.

The March 31st San Francisco Examiner has an excellent front-page article, "A hard look/Christian Science under fire over the death of children" by religion writer Don Lattin.

My New England Journal of Medicine article, "Faith Healing, Christian Science, and the Medical Care of Children" (December 29, 1983) was reprinted in the September/December issue of Update, a journal published in Denmark.

The U. S. Department of Health and Human Services received 116,000 comments about the Baby Doe regulations they proposed in December, 1984, and just issued the final regulations last week. Any day now we can expect them to issue proposed regulations for other problems of child abuse and neglect. These will appear in the Federal Register, a publication available in any library that is a government depository. Their publication opens a 60-day period for written comments.