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Tom Collins
Maricopa County Attorney

Christian Science Parents Charged With Negligent Homicide in Arizona

On August 9, John and Katherine King of Paradise Valley, Arizona, were indicted for negligent homicide and felony child abuse. As Christian Scientists, they had withheld medical treatment from their only daughter, Elizabeth Ashley King, 12, who died of bone cancer June 5. Five other sets of Christian Science parents also face criminal charges for deaths of children.

She was out of school and sick at home from November until mid May. Then alarmed neighbors realized they had not seen her for six months and notified Child Protection Services (CPS). The state obtained a court order to have her examined at Phoenix Children's Hospital.

Terminal prognosis

Doctors determined that she had bone cancer

that had progressed much too far to be arrested with medical treatment. The tumor on her leg was approximately 41 inches in circumference and had dissolved the bone in places. It had metastasized into her lungs.

Because of the terminal prognosis, CPS agreed with the parents' attorney that Elizabeth could be placed in Upward View, a Phoenix nursing home for Christian Scientists. David Barton, church lobbyist for Arizona, told the press the girl was unaware of what had happened at Children's Hospital but was cheerful.

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Church reactions to inquiries about pain

Laura Barton, the administrator of the home and the lobbyist's wife, told the press that her death was very "quiet and peaceful" and bristled when asked if the child was in pain. "Would you ask other hospitals that?" she said. She was a registered medical nurse before her conversion to Christian Science.

Dr. William Li, a pediatric orthopedic surgeon who examined Elizabeth, said, "She had the tumor destroying her femur, her thighbone, in many places because the tumor replaces the bone. So in my mind it's just totally difficult to believe she was not in constant pain."

But David Barton retorted, "She was not in constant pain. At Upward View, she was very comfortable. This little girl was by no means a martyr in any sense of the word."

Tom Collins, Maricopa County Attorney, whose office filed the criminal charges against the Kings, said, "Any person who calls himself a Christian wouldn't let a dog die like this."

Prosecutor accused of bigotry

Robert Hooker, the Kings' attorney, called Collins' comment "totally outrageous" and motivated by "ignorance, politics, or religious bigotry." He added, "And any indictment that is a result of any one of those things, or a combination, is inappropriate and improper.... I suspect that Mr. Collins recognizes and understands that the court isn't the forum in which he wants to try this case. And, therefore, he's attempting as best he can to prejudice this community not only against these people, but against Christian Scientists."

Collins responded that religion has nothing to do with the case. "It deals with man-made laws that impose a duty on people to care for their children who cannot care for themselves," he said. "I certainly am not ignorant. I'm not a religious bigot. I'm not motivated by politics, because I'm not running for anything."

"The law doesn't allow a child to die because people are trusting in God to prevent it, just as it doesn't allow somebody to park a baby carriage

on a railroad track and trust that God will prevent a train from going by."

Prosecutor called cruel

David Barton called the charges "unfathomable" and "cruel" and suggested that Collins might be "trying to get a little attention."

Barton cited an Arizona law in the juvenile code providing that no child who "is being furnished Christian Science treatment by a duly accredited practitioner shall, for that reason alone, be considered to be an abused, neglected, or dependent child." "The Kings felt they were certainly within their rights in doing what they did with their daughter," he said. And after the state agreed to allow Elizabeth's removal from the hospital to the church nursing home, Barton had cited the law as a reason. "The right to practice Christian Science was upheld," he said.

Responsible vs. irresponsible prayer

On May 5th, Barton had published a 16-inch column in the Arizona Daily Star criticizing the American Academy of Pediatrics' position against religious exemptions. He claimed that "responsible legislators" granted the exemptions because of the church's "good record" at healing children spiritually. He argued that other churches' type of prayers for healing are not "responsible" and should not be recognized by state law as a legal alternative to medicine, while his church's prayers should be.

CHILD's response

We were incredibly busy with the media interest in the Twitchell case during May, but did submit a letter to the editor. We closed with the following statement:

"Is it really necessary for the state of Arizona to allow such suffering even now that [Elizabeth King's] condition is considered terminal? Couldn't she at least have sedatives? Christian Science nurses cannot dispense medication since they are not state-licensed. They also will not do even the simplest, non-medical procedures to relieve suffering or discomfort. They do not use icepacks or heat, give enemas or backrubs.

Church founder Mary Baker Eddy forbids them to use "a single material application" for the relief of disease or pain. They cannot take a pulse and are not competent to report diseases to the state.

"Barton is not only the church's Arizona lobbyist, but also one of those 'duly accredited practitioners.' He ought to spend less time writing the newspapers about his church's great record on healing children and more time healing Elizabeth Ashley King of bone cancer."

Death illustrates inadequacy of court ordered care

Unfortunately, the newspaper did not publish our letter until after her death. We hope that this tragedy will at least serve to illustrate the point that court orders are inadequate protection for children. Elizabeth was out of school for six months, yet school officials never bothered to notify authorities of her illness. (The school set up a home study program for the girl in January.)

Finally, we would point out that juvenile court proceedings are ordinarily secret. Perhaps neighbors reported the case to the press as well as CPS or perhaps the press picked it up just because of its intense interest in the issue during May. Barton claimed that the King case was the first instance of Arizona state intervention in a Christian Science case since 1969. "And that must say something for how well our system works," he said.

More likely, however, Elizabeth is just the first Christian Science case in Arizona to come to press attention since 1969. The truth will be impossible to determine. CPS keeps no records on Christian Science children because the state law says that Christian Science children are not supposed to be considered abused or neglected. We have to wonder how many other Elizabeth Ashley Kings are out there.

Taken in part from the Phoenix Gazette, May 12 and August 10, and the Arizona Republic, August 11 and 17.

Medical Neglect on Religious Grounds in Arizona

The charges against John and Katherine King are a case of first impression in Arizona. They are the first criminal charges filed in state history against parents who withheld medical care because of religious belief.

Arizona has, however, had other children die because of religious beliefs against medical care. In 1979, a black group arrived from Chicago to settle in Miracle Valley, Arizona. Led by the Rev. Frances Thomas, the group set up the Christ Miracle Healing Center. Many residents of Miracle Valley were led there by the fiery evangelist A. A. Allen in the 1950s and were predisposed to believe in faith healing. But Thomas and her "saints" polarized the community with violence and intimidation. They threw rocks through windows of residents who would not sell homes to them. They had shootouts with the sheriff. They bought dynamite and built bombs.

Five children died of curable ailments

They let five children die of curable ailments. Theiral Drewwho, a 6-year-old boy, died from a strangulated hernia which could have been corrected with routine surgery. The boy gagged on his own feces. Yet when Thomas' son was mortally wounded, he was rushed to a hospital.

From beginning to end, Cochise County was unable to deal with the group. More than 70 felony counts were filed against church members for the violence, though none were filed for the medical neglect of the children. Only three convictions were obtained. The county nearly went bankrupt paying for public defenders to represent the church members. The church filed a \$75 million civil rights suit against the sheriff and other county officials that was settled out of court. The costs to the taxpayers of this rural county are estimated to be in the millions.

Beliefs versus actions

CPS attempted to take custody of Mrs. Drewwho's surviving children after she told a caseworker she would not seek medical care for them. The Arizona Supreme Court ruled in

favor of the mother in 1982 on grounds that her religious beliefs are absolutely protected. The Court also said, however, that religious practices do not have absolute protection, citing the U. S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Prince v. Massachusetts* (1944) that "the right to practice religion freely does not include the right to expose ... the child to ill health or death."

One gathers from the *Drew* ruling that the mother had a religious right to say she would deprive her children of medical care, but if she carried out this intention when her children needed medical care, then the state could act to court order medical care or to file criminal charges if injury to the children had resulted because of the medical neglect.

Rev. Frances Thomas and her Christ Miracle Healing Center members returned to Chicago in 1983.

Taken in part from the Brewery Gulch Gazette, June 2, 1983, and the Arizona Republic, August 11, 1988.

ACLU Speaks Up for Children's Health Care

On May 17, 1988, Donahue covered the issue of religiously influenced medical neglect of children. Of great significance was the position taken by Marcia Robinson Lowry, director of the American Civil Liberties Union children's rights project. Lowry is the first ACLU person to speak out on this issue at the national level.

Previously, the Ohio Civil Liberties Union has taken a strong stand against religious exemptions. CHILD members Ford Cauffiel and Naomi Twining worked diligently to obtain the Ohio statement. Later the Indiana Civil Liberties Union came out with a similar position.

The issue was addressed three times on the program. Positions taken and pertinent quotations are given below.

POSITION--The child's life cannot be endangered.

PHIL DONAHUE: What is the position of the ACLU?

LOWRY: It's nice to be in a situation in which we're not in disagreement with everybody. Children have rights too, and parents have certain rights which end when they intrude too far into a child's right to live. The child doesn't have a right and the government can't come in and say what time a kid should go to bed. Parents obviously have a right to regulate that. And a parent has a right to choose among choices of medical treatment. A parent cannot act in a way or argue in a way that is essentially criminally negligent. And so the parent's right to bring up the child in the way the parent thinks best--an important right, and one which government has no business fooling around with, end at the point at which the parent's actions endanger the lives of kids. Some religious groups have in the past believed in human sacrifice. And certainly there are many other things that certain religious groups believe in including killing people who offend the Maker.

PHIL: So the First Amendment is not absolute like just about everything else in life, and the protection to practice your own religion, free of outside intervention or interference, extends only to but not beyond the sacrificing of a human life.

LOWRY: No, it's obviously important to have some principles on which you draw the line, and it's not a clear line by any means, but it certainly is a line that has to be drawn when a human life is in danger and so it's short of imposing death on another person. It is certainly a situation, though, in which you cannot deny medical treatment when it's quite clear that a child's life is in danger.

The other problem with the state protecting the children is that people would like to believe that the state does a terrific job. But the state in fact usually does a pretty lousy job. The state can involve a government in getting medical treatment, in getting a blood transfusion, but when the state takes custody of kids it often does as bad a job taking care of those kids--worse--than the parents have done themselves.

POSITION--Serious medical conditions (that do not threaten life) and severe pain are other criteria for intervention.

DOUG SWAN: You were saying that the state should intervene in the case where the child's life is threatened. Paul Michener--clearly he's still alive, his life was not threatened, but he's permanently maimed.

PHIL: He wants to know, since his life was not threatened, would the ACLU bring its considerable influence to defending him?

LOWRY: Sure. Basically, the point is that he needed medical attention, he had a serious medical condition; nobody knows exactly what's going to happen. I think the question of whether you choose this treatment or that treatment when they're both treatments that have some credible evidence behind them is a question for a parent and not the government. But when you have somebody with a broken bone, when you have somebody who's seriously injured as he was, then obviously the government has got to intervene and force the treatment if the parent will not.

PHIL: So one of the criteria, in addition to being life threatening, could be severe pain, for example?

LOWRY: Of course.

PHIL: You cannot leave a child unattended and without medical attention even though the disease is not life-threatening if the inconvenience and the agony is so great.

LOWRY: You have to give the child the right to treatment. And there cannot be in our view a religious exemption, no matter how sincere a parent's belief and whether it's based on religion, or that the stars told me today.

PHIL: OK. How would you answer the transplantation question? If we oblige blood transfusions today, what's to prevent us from obliging heart transplants tomorrow?

LOWRY: I think that when there are real questions of judgment to be exercised, the parents have got to exercise the judgment. When

reasonable people can go different ways, then just as you can decide that--

PHIL: But members of the Christian Science church think they're reasonable people and they're going different ways. And you're attempting to legally disallow it.

RITA SWAN: And they call their prayers treatment.

LOWRY: That's right.

RITA SWAN: And they say they have a health care system.

LOWRY: I know that they do. There's a standard beyond which you've got to draw the line at reasonableness.

POSITION--The public should lobby against religious exemptions.

AUDIENCE: What way can we as the general public help people that have children that are in a crisis situation? How can we do something about it?

LOWRY: Well, one of the things that I think you really ought to think about is the fact that there are a lot of states that have these religious exemption laws. Lawyers can argue about whether there's a religious exemption law in a particular state, that's not relevant, but the fact of the matter is that many religious groups seek religious exemptions for people who have religious beliefs and that should not be permitted. And certainly the public can lobby against these religious exemption laws. People shouldn't be allowed to have their kids die no matter what they're thinking in their heads at the time the kids are dying.

SUMMARY

For the first time, the national office of the ACLU has publicly stated that religion does not give the right to cause or allow injury to children and that religious exemptions to medical care should be repealed.

Former Jehovah's Witnesses Speak Out

With us on Donahue were two former Jehovah's Witnesses, Pat and Paul Blizzard. Because of their excellent presentation of their experience, we learned a lot and also received several letters from relatives concerned about children in the Witnesses faith.

The Blizards were third-generation Witnesses. Paul was discouraged from seeking higher education and advised to work at the church's world headquarters in Brooklyn instead. There he spent three years at full-time factory work for a salary of \$14.00 a month.

Daughter's life threatened

A few weeks after the birth of their daughter, Jenny Leigh, in 1980, doctors determined that she had biliary atresia and needed an emergency transfusion. After an agonizing struggle with their beliefs, the Blizards refused permission and declared their intention to let Jenny die.

The hospital obtained a court order for the transfusion; child abuse charges were filed against the parents. They were warned not to remove Jenny from the hospital.

Breaking from church pressures

Witness elders called upon the Blizards in the hospital and tried to persuade them to get Jenny out. Paul explained that Jenny would die within minutes if he removed her from life-support equipment and he would then be charged with murder. An elder replied, "That's the chance you have to take."

Paul responded, "If this is the God I serve, I am through with him." As the elders left, one remarked that he hoped Jenny got hepatitis from the transfusion.

Meaning of being disfellowshipped

The Blizards became Baptists. They were promptly disfellowshipped by the Jehovah's Witnesses. They cannot have any contact with their family or former friends in the faith.

According to Watchtower law, they are to be regarded as dead.

Jenny died in March, 1987. At her funeral, the first four pews were reserved for family members. While the other rows were packed with their new friends, only Jenny's parents and her three siblings sat in the first four rows.

An unforgettable moment on Donahue occurred when a caller began explaining Witness theology and defending their position against transfusions. Paul asked her for the Scriptural basis of the position. The caller would not say a word. After four tries, Paul told Donahue that she was not allowed to speak to him because he was disfellowshipped and asked Donahue to repeat the question to her. She then said in a distraught tone, "Well, let me tell you something; I've been disfellowshipped too." Even after excommunication, she was still trying to be a good soldier for the church.

The Blizards can be reached at Box 233, Lanesville IN 47136.

Resources on Jehovah's Witnesses

One organization that publicizes problems caused by Jehovah's Witness beliefs and discusses their aberrancy from mainstream Christianity is Personal Freedom Outreach. It has offices in four regions of the country. The midwest office is at Box 26062, St. Louis MO 63136, phone 314-388-2648. It publishes a newsletter.

Other organizations with similar goals are Watchman Fellowship with a midwest office at Box 13251, Arlington TX 76013, phone 817-277-0023, and Comments from the Friends, P. O. Box 840, Stoughton MA 02072.

Film on Witnesses Available

The film Witnesses of Jehovah is an informative presentation of life within this religion. It is a unique, two-tiered society. Witnesses believe that only 144,000 of their most pious members will go to heaven, but other Witnesses, called "the other sheep," can, through loyal service to their church, earn the right to rule an earthly paradise after

Christ has destroyed the wickedness of this world in the battle of Armageddon. Once a year Witnesses celebrate communion at which bread and wine is passed, but only the 9,000 still living worldwide of the 144,000 elect are allowed to partake of the bread and the cup. The symbolism of the ritual enforces subordination and exclusion rather than community.

Another startling theological point is that Witnesses baptize in the "name of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit-directed organization." A parallel is the Christian Science church, which holds that Christian Science is the third person of the Trinity.

Effects on children

The film describes the hardships faced by Witness children. They are not supposed to play with children outside of their church. They cannot salute the flag, say the pledge of allegiance, or sing the national anthem. They cannot celebrate birthdays, Christmas, or other holidays, which are condemned for pagan origins. They cannot participate in sports. They are discouraged from going to college. They must spend countless hours working as salespeople for their faith.

Costs of opposing governments

In the 1960s the African nation of Malawi required all citizens to purchase and carry a 25 cent party identification card. Because of their refusal to give any allegiance to secular government, Watchtower Society headquarters directed Malawi members not to buy the card. In consequence, widespread persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses occurred. Thousands were tortured and killed. Witness women were raped. Homes and crops were burned. Many fled the country as refugees.

In Mexico, however, Watchtower headquarters took a very different position. Every young Mexican man is required to fulfill one year of military service. Then he gets a certificate to that effect on a card. Jehovah's Witnesses customarily and regularly bribe officials to obtain the card and have letters from Watchtower Society officials permitting them to do this.

The film can be purchased or rented from Personal Freedom Outreach.

Another resource is Witness Inc., P. O. Box 597, Clayton CA 94517. Most of their publications deal with theological issues, but they also sell a two volume set on the treatment of Witness children: Cruel and Unusual Punishment, The Kids Go to Work, v. 1 and Saleskids, The Kids Go to Work, v. 2 by Duane Magnani.

Volunteer counsellor

Finally, we of CHILD, Inc., would like to introduce our own resource person, Tamar Gilson, P. O. Box 363, Sunburst MT, 59482, phone 406-937-3262. Tamar wishes to volunteer her services as an informal counsellor for people who have recently left the Jehovah's Witnesses or who are concerned about relatives in this church. Tamar is an ex-Jehovah's Witness and has been interviewed on television. Her counselling is offered from a secular standpoint; it is not intended to direct people to a new religion.

Christian Science Parents Charged with Manslaughter in Boston

On April 22, 1988, David and Ginger Twitchell, both 32, were indicted for manslaughter in the death of their son Robyn. The indictment capped a two-year investigation of the death by the Suffolk County District Attorney's office in Boston, Massachusetts.

As Christian Scientists, the Twitchells did not seek medical care when 26-month-old Robyn became ill from a bowel obstruction and peritonitis. According to police reports, Robyn became feverish and lethargic on April 3, 1986. He vomited a number of times and had diarrhea over the next five days. The Twitchells retained a Christian Science practitioner and nurse to care for him. On April 8, Robyn had convulsions and lost consciousness. After finding no vital signs, David called a funeral director, who told him to dial 911. Robyn's body was taken by ambulance to a hospital where cardio-pulmonary resuscitation was given until a physician pronounced him dead.

Top church official involved

Nathan Talbot, manager of the Christian Science church's Committees on Publication, was consulted two days before Robyn's death. Presumably, this was done in obedience to church directives requiring Christian Science practitioners to notify their state Committees on Publication when "a child's condition is not improved." Internal church documents state that the purpose of the consultation is to obtain the Committee's judgment on the legal right to withhold medical treatment in a particular state. The Committee is also supposed to use his public relations skills to thwart community criticism. [Perhaps we need to point out here that church founder Mary Baker Eddy directed that each state Committee consist of only one person.] Whatever Talbot advised, it is a fact that the parents continued with Christian Science after the consultation.

Inquest and grand jury proceedings

Suffolk County District Attorney Newman Flanagan ordered a judicial inquest. Judge Lawrence Shubow conducted the inquest in December, 1986, and returned his findings and opinion on the case in December, 1987. The inquest findings have been impounded.

The district attorney's office presented the case to a county grand jury in April, 1988. The office laid out evidence and possible charges that could be filed against the Twitchells, the practitioner, the nurse, and Nathan Talbot. The grand jury chose to indict only the parents.

Church investigates attorney

John Kiernan, who had resigned as head of the district attorney's homicide division to enter private practice, was retained to represent the state's case against the Twitchells. Church representatives hired a private investigator to gather information about Kiernan.

Newman Flanagan, who ultimately made the decision to proceed with a criminal case, is described by observers as a person with both courage and prudence. In 1974, he successfully prosecuted Kenneth Edelin, a Boston physician,

for performing an abortion illegally. In 1983-84 he served on the U. S. Attorney General's Task Force on Family Violence.

Twitchell's background

David and Ginger Twitchell met at Principia College in Elmhurst, Illinois, the world's only college for Christian Scientists. Ginger grew up in Maine. Her mother, a devout Christian Scientist, died in childbirth with her sixth child. Her father then married a woman from outside the faith. Ginger and her siblings went to live with their grandparents.

David grew up on Long Island in a Christian Science home. He won a New York state scholarship in biology, but chose to major in political science at Principia. He worked as an administrator in a Christian Science nursing home in Los Angeles and currently holds a similar position at the church's nursing home in Boston.

The couple married eight years ago. Their first child was named Jeremy. A year ago they had a third child, Brian.

Two views of diagnosis and treatment

The Twitchells are represented by Steve Lyons and Rikki Kliemen, who have filed motions to dismiss the charges on grounds that a state religious exemption law protected them. Kliemen has also argued that medical care might not have saved Robyn. She says the bowel obstruction was caused by a congenital defect called Meckel's diverticulum that the parents did not know about. Also, one medical expert has rationalized the parents' behavior on grounds that, after prolonged suffering, the nerve endings around the bowel would eventually deaden and the pain would diminish.

A doctor who belongs to CHILD has said that bowel obstructions cause extreme pain because sensory receptors in the bowel respond to distention. A swollen belly, nausea, and vomiting (even vomiting of fecal material) are other probable symptoms. The peritonitis that ultimately killed Robyn brought painful high fevers that should have been taken seriously by

the parents. She also said that bowel obstructions are easily diagnosed and treated by physicians. Often they are detected just by feeling the abdomen or listening with a stethoscope.

Taken in part from The Washington Post, February 22 and the Baltimore Evening Sun, April 27, 1988.

Massachusetts Law and the Twitchells

The Massachusetts penal code religious exemption has, naturally, become the focus of intense interest since the indictment of the Twitchells. It reads as follows: "A child shall not be deemed to be neglected or lack proper physical care for the sole reason that he is being provided remedial treatment by spiritual means alone in accordance with the tenets and practice of a recognized church or religious denomination by a duly accredited practitioner thereof."

In 1967 Christian Scientist Dorothy Sheridan was convicted of manslaughter for allowing her daughter to die of untreated pneumonia in Harwich Port, Massachusetts. Throughout the trial the state and the defense had wrangled over the meaning of a state law requiring parents to provide "proper physical care." The defense argued unsuccessfully that such care could include Christian Science treatment. Four years later the church got its religious exemption into law. Leo Damore's book, The "Crime" of Dorothy Sheridan, describes the maneuvering of the bill through the state legislature.

Meaning of exemption law given

In the booklet Legal Rights and Obligations of Christian Scientists in Massachusetts, Nathan Talbot, who was a lawyer and is the manager of the Christian Science church's lobbying network, quotes the exemption and then states: "This is a criminal statute and it expressly precludes imposition of criminal liability as a negligent parent for failure to provide medical care because of religious beliefs."

In our spring, 1986, newsletter, we criticized

Talbot's interpretation and said, "Is this true? Has the Attorney General of Massachusetts said so?" To our surprise, however, we have recently learned that the Attorney General did indeed say exactly that. In 1975, the Office for Children asked his office for an opinion on the statute. On May 27, 1975, Attorney General Francis Bellotti replied; the church booklet is giving his opinion verbatim, though without citing the source.

Shortcomings of legal advice booklet

The church's advice to its parents in Massachusetts in Legal Rights and Obligations is, however, misleading. As in other states, it says the following:

"If a child is being given Christian Science treatment for an illness, inquiries made by school or other public officials as to care of the child should be answered with assurance that such child is being given good care and is having treatment for the illness. Otherwise, such officials may incorrectly conclude that the child is a neglected child. In talking with such officials, a parent should stay clear of statements such as 'belief of illness' or 'claim of sickness' which may result in the officials thinking that the illness is being ignored or treated as a fanciful aberration of some kind. Officials must feel the assurance that Christian Scientists love their children and give them effective treatment and responsible nursing care when the nature of the illness indicates the wisdom of having such nursing care.

"If the parent, however, does not promptly dispel the concern of the public authority, he should consider contacting the office of the Committee on Publication." (p. 18)

Parents exposed to criminal liability

In addition, the church had good reason to know that they did not have a religious exemption to a manslaughter charge. As in California, they got their religious exemption into a section of the criminal code defining a misdemeanor charge for nonsupport of children. Ten years ago Leo Damore's book had quoted a district attorney who pointed out that their religious exemption

did not shield them from manslaughter charges and threatened to prosecute if another child died in his county from Christian Science beliefs against medical care. But the church, with its enormous legal staff, continued to advise its parents that they had an absolute shield against "criminal liability as a negligent parent" and never told them they might be liable for manslaughter.

Finally, we would point out that an attorney-general's opinion is not a court ruling. If the church had wanted a definitive court ruling on this issue, they would have supported Dorothy Sheridan's appeal of her manslaughter conviction and then all the Christian Scientists in the state would have known whether or not Christian Science was legal health care for children with life-threatening illnesses long before Robyn Twitchell developed a bowel obstruction.

New church booklet on state laws

On May 25, 1988, the Christian Science church cancelled its 51-page booklet Legal Rights and Obligations of Christian Scientists in Massachusetts and replaced it with an 8-page document entitled "Freedom of Religion."

The changes are remarkable. No longer does Talbot tell the parents to deceive public officials about the care of a child. Nor does he presume to interpret religious exemption laws. Subtitles such as "Some Thoughts about the Accommodation of Religious Practice" show a new tentativeness.

In our view, the new document, though an improvement, still falls short of meeting the church's moral obligations to its members. It does not advise the parents of Massachusetts' laws requiring medical care.

Comments on "Situations involving children"

A section in the new document entitled "Situations involving children" says the following:

"Society holds strong concerns for the welfare and health of children. Christian Scientists are equally concerned. To protect children, the law requires the reporting of suspected cases of child

abuse and neglect and penalizes parents or guardians for not properly providing for a child. As Christian Scientists, we're sensitive to society's requirements, and are grateful for some accommodation in Massachusetts law for the treatment of children through spiritual means. If you have any questions about the state's definition of abuse or neglect, the Committee on Publication is one avenue through which your church can be of help. The Committee on Publication for Massachusetts and his staff are available to consult on public policy relating to children."

Talbot still dangles the possibility that Christian Science treatment may be a legal substitute for the medical care of children. He should have quoted the state's definition of child abuse, neglect, and manslaughter. Instead, he hedges his bets and tells the parents to consult him about the laws. Talbot is careful to remove anything in writing that could incriminate him, but still encourages the parents to rely on his advice in an oral consultation. The parents would be a lot better off to consult an objective attorney.

Boston Press on the Twitchells

The Boston Herald quickly distinguished itself as the Boston newspaper most concerned for the rights of the child with its editorial, "Children and religion," on May 5. Acknowledging the parents' sincerity, The Herald insisted that all parents have an obligation to protect their children: "To be charged with the manslaughter of a child you loved is a terrible fate.... But Robyn's fate was even worse, and we can only hope that bringing this case before the bar of justice will help ensure that such a tragedy never happens again."

Middlesex News opposes the Herald

By contrast, The Middlesex News in Framingham quickly staked out a position in support of Christian Science with an astonishing barrage of bigotry praising Christian Scientists while attacking "born again frauds" and the Catholic/medical establishment in Tom Moroney's May 5th column. Pretending to address the jury as the Twitchell's attorney,

Moroney said among other things:

These "are Christian Scientists, not witches or goblins or foggy-headed visionaries [or] ... born again frauds. And this particular case is not to be confused with Jimmy Swaggart laying his hands on someone's arthritic knees and then screaming, 'Alleluia!' into the cameras. Christian Scientists are thoughtful and publicity-shy people. They are educators, journalists, lawyers, and bankers. They are your neighbors. They have chosen a different way, and they deserve the full protection of the law for that choice.

"But the prosecutor doesn't want you to hear this. He is counting on your ignorance....

"Just for the record, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health says about 700 children die each year after being treated by conventional medicine. The Twitchells' son was the first in Massachusetts in this decade to die during a Christian Science healing....

"Suppose the Twitchells had chosen surgery, and their boy had died anyway. Would the surgeons who performed the surgery be on trial today for manslaughter? Of course not.

"We'd all chalk it up to rotten luck.

"But the prosecutor won't do that. He thinks he has a winner. A little boy is dead in a community where conventional medicine has built a strong and impenetrable defense against new ideas, where any religion but Catholicism is suspect and where thoughtful creativity in taking care of one's body counts for zilch."

Monitor reprint

Needless to say, the column was immediately reprinted in The Christian Science Monitor beside a lead editorial on "The right to prayerful treatment," which concluded that "effective healing prayer is a tremendous help in raising children--not a crime."

Globe's old position

In 1967, The Boston Globe published an editorial supporting the Christian Science church when

Dorothy Sheridan was prosecuted for letting her daughter die. The Globe has not yet written an editorial on the Twitchell case, but did print a lengthy column by Timothy MacDonald, first reader of the Mother Church, on June 5. MacDonald insisted that church members have seen so many "significant physical healings" of children that their prayers should be a legal substitute for medicine and in fact have been for many decades.

Boston Scholars on the Twitchell Case

The following is a selection of comments on the Twitchell case by Boston-area academicians and clergy.

No "automatic exemption"

Lawrence Tribe, Harvard professor of law: "It would be appropriate for [the Twitchells] to argue to a jury that as part of their religious faith they believed God would provide for their child. But to go beyond that to give them an automatic exemption ... would involve government endorsement to that religion in a way that discriminates."

No "right to withhold... care"

Wendy Mariner, associate professor at Boston University School of Medicine and Public Health: "Parental exercise of religion has never included the right to withhold life-saving care [from a child]." She also said that the religious exemption law is arguably unconstitutional as official government recognition of religion.

"to deter others"

George Annas, also of Boston University School of Medicine: "Does it make sense to go after the parents? That's a policy question. The parents have already lost their kid. Obviously, you don't do it to punish them, you do it to deter others." He cited Prince v. Massachusetts as evidence that parents cannot use religion as grounds for allowing injury to children.

"All parents have an obligation"

Leonard Glantz, of the same School: "All parents have an obligation to provide their children with care that has been shown to work, and I think that should be applied to Christian Scientists as well as anybody else."

"imperative to care...paramount"

Kenneth Simons, professor at Boston University School of Law: "The moral imperative to care for the welfare of your children should be paramount and take precedence over unorthodox religious views." However, he has also been widely quoted by the Christian Science church as saying: "I think ... this is [likely] an illegal prosecution, and beyond that I also believe it's an unwise prosecution because Christian Scientists looking at that law would quite reasonably believe that they are protected."

"interfere[s] with their practice..; nothing is gained"

Arthur Dyck, professor at Harvard Divinity School: "It's an extreme intrusion to penalize people for their good faith and their love for their child. You really do interfere with their practice when you go after them for murder. It's pretty harsh and actually borders on denial of their religious practice." Dyck further complained that the case could open the door for more government interference in religion, that prosecution could not bring the child back to life, and that nothing is gained by prosecuting parents who did what they believed was right for their child.

"parents' action inexcusable"

Rabbi Donald Splansky, Temple Beth Am of Framingham: "I'm deeply troubled by the expression of religion which results in bodily injury to innocent people. Such results, it seems to me, are not a legitimate expression of religion and do not deserve the protection of the First Amendment on the Constitution, which could not have envisioned such an abuse. In this case, the bodily injury even led to death; so I find the parents' action inexcusable and both morally and legally culpable."

"state needs to step out"

Pastor Robert Baril, First Assembly of God of Framingham: "I don't believe [the parents] should be prosecuted myself. I believe the parents loved their child, and I don't feel they were malicious in any way. They felt this was the best way to go. I think the state needs to step out of these matters.... Next will [the state] be coming after the Pentecostals and other groups?"

"should [not] let that happen"

State Senator Argeo Cellucci, R-Hudson: "I think what [the parents] did was wrong. I am ambivalent about whether they should be prosecuted, [but] clearly the child suffered, and I don't think that the state government should let that happen."

Taken in part from the Middlesex News, May 6 and 8, and the Boston Herald, June 1.

First Christian Science Case Since 1967 Heads for Trial

The state of Florida's case against Christine and William Hermanson is scheduled to come to trial December 5 in Sarasota County District Court. They are accused of child abuse and third-degree murder for allowing their only daughter, Amy, 7, to die of untreated diabetes on September 30, 1986.

The Hermanson case is the first Christian Science case to be tried since Dorothy Sheridan was convicted of manslaughter in Harwich Port, Massachusetts, in 1967. Sheridan had allowed her 5-year-old daughter Lisa to die of pneumonia after three weeks of Christian Science treatment, but no medical care.

Alaska case was tied to legislation

In 1969 the state of Alaska charged Christian Scientist Emerson Sortore with manslaughter for letting his daughter Kimberly die of meningitis. (The mother Patricia was not charged, probably because she was a church-accredited practitioner.) But the case was not tried because the church arranged a plea bargain with the

prosecutor. The father agreed to plead no contest to the charges on condition that the conviction would be overturned if and when the Alaska legislature passed a religious exemption law. Within two years, the legislature had indeed obliged the church, Sortore's conviction was overturned, and all records of the case were ordered expunged. Today Patricia Sortore is a church teacher, lecturer, and practitioner, while Emerson is a practitioner.

Judge heard pre-trial arguments

On April 15, arguments in the Hermanson case were held before Judge Stephen Dakin. The state asked for Florida's religious exemption law to be ruled unconstitutional on grounds that it established religion and discriminated against certain children. The defense argued that "just as the Amish were threatened by compulsory [school] attendance laws, the very existence of the Christian Science church would be threatened by the removal" of the law. The defense asked for the charges to be dismissed on grounds that the Hermansons' actions were specifically protected by the law and that religious practice is not criminal.

Judge Dakin rejected both requests. He refused to rule the law unconstitutional, and he refused to dismiss the charges, stating:

"By a unanimous vote of the Florida Senate and House of Representatives, the legislature in 1975 elected to provide a defense against child abuse charges to parents who decline medical treatment for their children on religious grounds. This legislative act has never been repealed or modified. The defense is currently found in Section 415.503, Florida Statutes....: 'a parent or other person responsible for the child's welfare legitimately practicing his religious beliefs, who by reason thereof does not provide specified medical treatment for a child, may not be considered abusive or neglectful for that reason alone.'

Trial ordered for Hermansons

"The State has offered no legally sufficient reason to the Court which would prevent Defendants from using this defense provided to them by the

Florida legislature. The Court finds, therefore, that Defendants may defend themselves against the charges of Felony Child Abuse and third degree murder by using the provisions of Section 415.503, Florida Statutes, with any other defense they may have.

"This Court cannot, however, find that the charges of Felony Child Abuse can be dismissed as a matter of law based on the available defense and the stipulated facts. The Court finds that the issues of whether Defendants were willful or culpably negligent and, if so, whether that conduct caused Amy's death, are fact issues which must be presented to a jury. If the State can prove a prima facie case, then Defendants may present evidence that their actions fell within the defenses provided for them by the law."

In essence, the jury will have to decide whether the religious exemption law allows a Christian Science child to die without insulin for diabetes.

Other Florida laws on religion

Unique among states, Florida allows courts to order either Christian Science treatment or medical treatment for any child in the state whose health "requires it." Such a law bolsters the church's claim to have a legal substitute for medical care.

Florida law does, however, clearly state that Christian Science practitioners are mandated reporters of child abuse and neglect and that there is no religious exception to the reporting requirement. But the Hermansons' practitioner could not be charged because he lived in Indianapolis and gave his prayer treatments in absentia. Florida's reporting law applies only to Florida residents, we are told.

Historical Florida case

Florida has had one other case in this century of criminal charges for medical neglect when religion was involved: Bradley v. State (1920). The case involved Bertha Bradley, an epileptic child of Suwannee County, who fell into a fire and was badly burned. Rejecting the pleas of friends and relatives, her father insisted that

Jesus would be her only doctor. After thirty-four days of suffering, she was taken into custody by the Florida Hospital for the Insane and provided with medical treatment until her death.

Expert witnesses testified that her life could have been saved by prompt medical attention. The father was convicted of culpable negligence, but the Florida Supreme Court reversed the conviction in a split decision, stating:

"Must a parent call a physician every time his child is sick, or risk being adjudged guilty of manslaughter if the child should die...? Can the law fix what class of ailments a child must be suffering from before the failure to call a physician becomes culpable negligence, so that if death ensues in one case it is manslaughter and in another class it is not...? Until the practice of medicine becomes an exact science so that it can be established beyond the peradventure of a doubt that death would not have ensued if a physician had been in attendance, [we] think the answer to all these questions must be an unqualified, 'No.'"

Decision not based on religion

The court added that "the question of the father's religious belief is in no wise involved." Thus, the reversal of the conviction was based on the court's attitude toward medical science and not on First Amendment rights.

It is peculiar, though, to find a court as late as 1920 questioning whether medical care was a parental duty. To our knowledge, it was the last court in the country to do so.

We wonder if the Hermansons will argue at trial that medicine still has not become "an exact science" and therefore that the Bradley v. State ruling should apply. Fortunately, medicine has become pretty close to an exact science on diabetes.

CHRISTIAN CENTURY Sparks Debate on Christian Science

The July 15 Christian Century carried an article by Stephen Gottschalk entitled "Spiritual healing

on trial: a Christian Scientist reports," which defended the church's "right" to withhold medical care from children.

I submitted a 3,000-word response. The magazine asked me to cut it to 1,500 words and will publish it at the end of September along with a reply by Gottschalk.

Christian Century also carried an article by Gottschalk entitled "Christian Science today: resuming the dialogue" December 17, 1986.

Another Faith Assembly Death in Indiana

On March 26, 9-month-old Juliana Keys of Columbia City, Indiana, died of an untreated abdominal infection caused by a twisted bowel. Members of Faith Assembly, Steve and Linda Keys, her parents, did not get medical care for her.

Whitley County Prosecutor John Whiteleather is still investigating her death.

By our count, Juliana is the 100th unnecessary death caused by Faith Assembly teachings against medical care. The majority of the deaths are children or mothers in childbirth. The first death was also a baby girl: Carla Northrup who died of pneumonia in 1973.

Court Upholds Convictions in Faith Death

A couple who refused to seek medical treatment for their child because of religious beliefs were properly tried and their convictions should stand, the Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals ruled May 31.

Kevin and Jamie Funkhauser of Purcell, Oklahoma, withheld medical treatment from their 3-month-old son Benjamin because of their affiliation with the Church of the First Born. The baby died July 15, 1983, after a two-week struggle against pneumonia. The parents called in church elders to pray for him.

In December, 1982, First Born members Dean and Patsy Lockhart of Enid, Oklahoma, were acquitted of first-degree manslaughter because of the state religious exemption law. They had allowed their 9-year-old son Jason to die of a ruptured appendix without medical care because of their religious beliefs. Responding to public outrage, the Oklahoma legislature modified the religious exemption by adding a statement that "medical care shall be provided where permanent physical damage could result to a child."

The statutory change did not take effect until November 1, 1983. Therefore, the Funkhausers' prosecutor filed charges of second-degree manslaughter and argued that the religious exemption did not apply to them. The parents were convicted in May, 1984, and have since moved to Indiana.

The Oklahoma Court of Criminal Appeals is the highest state court for criminal matters.

Taken in part from The Daily Oklahoman, June 1, 1988.

California Church Fights Preschool Licensing

On April 19 the North Valley Baptist Church of Redding, California, opened its case against the state for licensing preschools in U. S. District Court, Sacramento. The church claims that licensing infringes on its constitutional right to the free exercise of religion.

The Department of Social Services' licensing covers ordinary safety and health requirements, prohibits corporal punishment, and imposes certain qualifications on preschool teachers. They include fingerprint checks to make certain the school doesn't hire pedophiles, child abusers, etc. They also require all preschool teachers to have 12 university credits in early childhood education.

Right to hit children requested

Predictably, the church's main complaint was about being deprived of the "right" to use corporal punishment on children. The state bans

corporal punishment in all schools and requires all teachers, social workers and physicians to report signs of physical or sexual abuse.

During the trial it was disclosed that the former assistant pastor in charge of the church's camp ministry is now serving a 24-year prison term for child molestation and that the church failed to report the molestation for two months after they learned of it.

Refused safety inspection

The pastor, Reverend Royal Blue, testified that he did not object to state requirements as to basic health and safety standards. However, the Attorney General's office introduced evidence showing that on January 12, 1981, church officers refused to allow the Redding Fire Department to inspect the church's facilities.

North Valley's preschool has operated without a license since 1981, but it remains unclear whether the facility has had a fire inspection since then.

Most church preschools licensed

Fred Miller, Department of Social Services' licensing chief, testified that there are about 20 or 30 unlicensed child care centers in the state and about 8,000 licensed church-run preschools. Hundreds of thousands of children will be at risk if the state loses its authority to license church-run preschools and day cares, he said.

Judge Raul Ramirez is expected to issue a published opinion on the case in September.

Taken from the Sacramento Bee, April 29, 1988 and the Fresno Bee, May 13.

Abuse Found at Fundamentalist Residential Home

Residents of the Bethel Home for Children in Lucedale, Mississippi, are subjected "to physical abuse, medical neglect, and detention amounting to imprisonment," a judge ruled June 10 as he gave the state temporary custody of the youngsters.

The state Department of Public Welfare and Highway Patrol troopers moved in with busses to assume emergency custody. Many of the children fled the complex. Children who were taken into custody reported that Bethel officials told them to run when the busses arrived. Welfare Commissioner Dr. Thomas Brittain said on June 12 that as many as 80 children might be at large and that his efforts to find them were greatly hindered by the home's refusal to provide a list of children at the home. Brittain also complained that home operators incited the children to violent resistance when the state attempted to take them into custody.

Blindness from medical neglect

Former residents of the home for troubled children have complained of severe beatings, incarceration in their rooms for long periods, hair pulling, medical neglect, and forced labor.

Testimony by a physician showed that during one child's 19-month stay at Bethel he did not receive treatment for an eye condition that would eventually render him blind nor did he get needed dental care. Former resident Raymond Friery, 18, has filed a damage suit against the home charging assault, neglect, false imprisonment, and slavery. He suffered a seizure during the court hearings.

Rev. Herman Fountain, the independent fundamentalist in charge of the home, called the boy a liar. "He's just like all the boys we take out there.... This is all part of the conspiracy called humanism designed to bring me down."

School staff praised by some

One girl testified that staffers called her a "whore and slut," part of what she called a process of "breaking our pride." Yet the girl's mother told the court that Bethel was run by "caring, loving people," who had helped her deal with both her daughter and her son "when they had just run amok."

Another mother brought her daughter Valerie from Florida to testify in defense of the home. She said, "These kids are out of control like Valerie was when she was into drugs and alcohol.

I chose Bethel because it's my personal belief that only the word of God can change lives, and Valerie is o.k. now. She survived. If the state regulated this home, it would water it down."

Some children testified that they were not abused at the home and would rather stay there than return to their parents. Chris Plummer, 17, labelled himself a former criminal and drug addict and said he would be dead if it weren't for Bethel.

Charged with obstructing justice

Fountain was charged with obstruction of justice and contempt of court. He claimed the authority of the Lord for his punishment of the children and said of the state officials, "These people are the liberals who want to control us. But we don't want any of their humanistic learning. We believe in the separation of church and state, and that's why I won't cooperate with them."

Confrontation on state controls

Mississippi requires no licensing of church-run child care facilities. Many top-quality facilities, such as the Mississippi Baptist Children's Village, submit voluntarily to licensing. But efforts in the last three legislative sessions to require licensing have been blocked by independent ministers such as Rev. Fountain.

Two years ago the state closed Bethesda Home for Girls in Hattiesburg for abuse of the residents. According to investigators, the home was being run like a concentration camp with dead-bolt locks confining the girls to their rooms for long periods.

Rev. Jerry Falwell told a crowd at the church sponsoring the home that he wanted to make the closure "the biggest single religious liberty issue ever." He accused the state of "Gestapo tactics" and of establishing religion. "I want to bring to public shame everyone involved in this Hattiesburg Watergate, so some other welfare department doesn't try the same thing," he said.

Taken in part from the Jackson Daily News, October 14, 1986 and The Clarion-Ledger, June 9, 11, and 13, 1988.

New South Carolina Group Deprives Children of Medical Care

On July 6 an 11-pound baby boy was born dead at a South Carolina commune that eschews medical care. According to the coroner, the baby died during delivery from a lack of oxygen because of the prolonged delivery. The county pathologist said the baby would have most likely lived if the mother had had prenatal care and medical attendance at delivery. His mother, Linda McCourt, had her first baby by Caesarean section before her conversion to the Faith Cathedral Fellowship near Walterboro.

Linda's mother, Gloria Ahern, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has been telling the press and public officials about the dangers of the group for several months. She and other parents say their children, most in their twenties, have been brainwashed by a radio evangelist, Brother R. G. Stair, into believing that the end of the world is at hand and are selling their possessions to move to his South Carolina farm. The McCourts sold their home for \$9,000 less than the realtor considered appropriate. "They kept pushing up the settlement date," the new buyer said. "They said they were doing it all for God." They have put the proceeds of their house sale in a joint bank account with Stair's name on it.

Group rejects physicians

On April 24, Stair told the Atlanta Constitution that his group believes in three major prophecies: that the economy will suffer a major setback in May, that President Reagan will not finish his term, and that Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev secretly have plotted to destroy much of the world in a nuclear war this year. Stair also said the group rejects television, physicians, and other trappings of modern life. (Stair's broadcasts are carried by many radio stations, but he considers television sinful.)

Stair said he lives peacefully on his farm with other families in an old motel and a few trailers. He said they are clearing fields to grow vegetables and are free to leave whenever they choose. They consider the farm a refuge from sin.

No investigation

Alarmed relatives charge that Stair has turned their children into robots and have complained to law enforcement authorities. An FBI agent said, however, "There are no federal violations. We can't investigate a guy because he's sucking people in." Also, charges will not be filed in the stillborn's death. An investigation by the county district attorney and sheriff "could find no criminal wrongdoing."

Stair was unavailable for comment about the baby who was born dead. He was on the road evangelizing, a commune member told the press.

Taken from the Atlanta Constitution, April 24, 1988, and the Philadelphia Daily News, July 9.

Sect Leader and Wife Charged with Sex Crimes

The leader of a Colorado sect known as the Spiral of Friends and his wife have been charged with multiple counts of sexual assault and exploitation of children. James and Colleen Randazzo appeared in videotapes that showed them in a variety of sexual and drug activities with minors, sheriff's investigators have testified. Also charged is Geraldine Gordon who allegedly filmed the material.

Boy and parents don't object

Randazzo leads the Spiral of Friends, a religion with study groups in a number of Colorado cities. They study the writings of Uspenski, a "master of the fourth way." Its membership includes many professional people.

A 16-year-old boy testified in March that he had sex with Colleen Randazzo, 37, five times under James Randazzo's direction and that one of these encounters was videotaped. The boy said he had been close to the Randazzos since he was 7 and that he viewed them as "second parents." The boy smiled at them as he left the stand.

The Randazzos claim they made the videotape as a teaching device for the boy, but the prosecutor stated that would still be a crime under Colorado

law. The boy's natural parents support the Randazzos.

Taken in part from The Denver Post, March 29, 1988.

Catholic Church Develops Plan to deal with Sexual Abuse

The Roman Catholic Church of Canada has developed a plan to respond to complaints about priests who sexually abuse children.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops has issued a protocol calling for every diocesan bishop to appoint a special team to investigate complaints of sexual assault. The team will consist of a physician, an expert in canon law, and a lawyer trained in civil and criminal law.

Accused priest to be barred from parish

An accused priest is to be given an immediate leave of absence from his duties and is barred from the parish—even from living in the area—until the outcome of the diocesan inquiry.

If the church verifies the abuse, the offender could face a church tribunal and be ejected from the priesthood.

"want to give the best protection"

The conference president said, "We want to give the best protection and care to children. We don't want any member of our church involved in sexual abuse." He also said the clergy is obligated under provincial laws to report child abuse.

A diocese in Lafayette, Louisiana, was recently ordered to pay about \$14 million in damages to families of young males molested by a priest. As a result, insurance companies have cancelled civil liability coverage for most U. S. dioceses.

Taken from the Edmonton Journal, March 26, 1988.

Legal Help against Quacks

The National Council Against Health Fraud, an affiliate of CHILD, has recently appointed Mike Botts as an attorney to provide legal redress for victims of quackery. Formerly with the Iowa Attorney General's office, Mike can be reached at P. O. Box 33008, Kansas City MO 64114. His phone number is 816-444-8615. Mike has already filed several civil suits against fraudulent health practitioners.

Study Published on Faith Healer Fraud and Religious Exemptions

Andrew Skolnick, an editor for the American Medical Association, has published an article entitled "Faith Healers" in Social Issues and Health Care Review (Spring 1988), pp. 46-52. Skolnick discusses the fraudulent claims of the televangelists, particularly W. V. Grant, who "employs a vaudeville mentalism act to fake miracles," and Peter Popoff, who used a radio receiver in his ear to get information about audience members gathered by his wife Elizabeth.

Skolnick discusses the "healing" Grant performed on him at a Chicago crusade. He also relates an incident observed by James Randi, the well-known magician and investigator of psychic claims.

Callous rejection of believers

Parents of a boy with cerebral palsy travelled hundreds of miles to attend a Grant healing crusade. Several times the parents were prevented by the ushers from wheeling their son to the front. Once Grant berated the ushers for not keeping the family at the back. At the parents' last effort to reach him, Grant turned to them with a big smile and said, "I'll see you later outside in the lobby because this requires something special." He never came to the lobby.

Randi had interviewed the family before the crusade and intended to talk with them afterwards, but decided against it when he saw the tears streaming down their faces.

Discusses CHILD's work

Skolnick traces the history of Christianity's interest in magic and supernatural healings. He discusses recent research on the mind-body connection. He also discusses the religious exemptions to child abuse and neglect laws and CHILD's work against them.

Article on Measles Outbreaks at Christian Science Institutions

Medical epidemiologist, Dr. Thomas Novotny, has published an article on "Measles outbreaks in religious groups exempt from immunization laws" in Public Health Reports, January-February 1988.

The article recounts how public health officials managed the measles outbreaks at two Christian Science institutions in 1985, Principia College in Elsah, Illinois, and Adventure Unlimited Camps near Buena Vista, Colorado. The former involved 136 cases of vaccine-preventable measles and three deaths in a community of about 900. Percentage-wise, it was the worst outbreak in history on a college campus. The deaths were the only measles-related deaths in the country for the years 1982-85. The camp epidemic resulted in 51 cases of measles.

The article points out that before the measles vaccine was licensed in 1963, the United States had about half a million cases of measles and 400 to 500 measles-associated deaths every year.

Bibliography Available

We have completed a six-page list of references available on Christian Science. Injuries to children and legal issues are emphasized, but the list also includes critical biographies of Mary Baker Eddy and some theological studies.

CHILD members may obtain this bibliography by sending a self-addressed envelope stamped with 45 cents postage. Others may obtain it at a cost of \$2.00 plus a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Ohio Pediatrician's Account of Getting Court Order Over Religious Objections

This month, Medical Economics published "I Fought the Parents in Court to Save Their Baby's Life" by Robert J. Lerer, MD, in its September 5th issue. The child's father is a minister in a small fundamentalist church. He carried no medical insurance and had brought his older children in only for acute illnesses.

Faced with an infant who needed surgery, the father stated, "Doctor, we believe in spiritual healing. I'm a Christian minister, and I have healed many people through prayer. I will heal our daughter through faith and prayer." The doctor tells how he battled through the welfare department and courts to force treatment.

This is Love?

Among hundreds of letters we have received from television viewers was one from Christian Science practitioner, Leona Thatcher of Beaumont, Texas. The letter is excerpted to give our viewers a feel for a Christian Scientist's thought processes. Punctuation and spelling have been changed for clarity. A copy of the complete text is available upon request.

"This letter is not written in judgment of you; it is written from a deep sense of compassion.

I wrote you after your first appearance on the Phil Donahue show and I was surprised to see Mrs. Swan was still so vindictive....

I had exactly the opposite experience with the medical profession. My son was 4 and the physicians, 2 of them came to me and said, 'We can do no more for your son; if you think Christian Science can save him, you are free to try it.' When my husband, a non-Scientist, gave consent, the physician released him. After he was released he began to improve and the Dr. came to me and said, 'By the grace of God your son will live, but he will never walk again because his entire left side is paralyzed.' The complete healing through total reliance on Christian Science took two years.

There were many trials, many heartaches, but where I am told Mrs. Swan just cried and panicked, I turned wholeheartedly to God and Mary Baker Eddy's teaching about God.

I was even told he would have no mind because he was unconscious 3 weeks. He has just completed 37 years with Sun Oil Co....

I am a practitioner and if I could find any fault I would say if I had been the practitioner I would have discerned the mental state of Mrs. Swan and remembered Mrs. Eddy said 'where demonstration is humanly possible.' In this case, Mrs. Swan had become mesmerized when she had an operation. She evidently did not know if you let the medical atmosphere into your thought without protecting your thought it completely takes over. Just watching her eyes on the Donahue show made me aware of the hypnotic state she is in. She is really suffering from her own unhealed guilt and blaming it on Christian Science.

Jesus shows us beyond a doubt you cannot serve two masters. This is why ordinary religious teaching falls short.

We are now engaged in a religious warfare. Medical science, as it is wrongly called since it's really guesswork, is the God of matter. Christian Science is the God of Christianity.

There is no meeting ground. One is in a spiritual realm of consciousness, the other in a manmade matter world.

The first chapter of Genesis tells you who you are; the second chapter is the false concept of God and man. You are in the second chapter and what you are doing to harm Christian Science is the reverse of what will be done. You are helping make the world wake up and take notice of Christian Science and that's what is needed.

I am interested in your reasoning. If you succeed in outlawing prayer for children's healing, will you bring charges against Dr's who lose children under medical practice.

Of course, my opinion is that anyone who would

participate in these 3 network shows in any manner already is so mentally ill that it will take much mental rehabilitation.

You certainly have never had the least understanding of Christian Science. Mrs. Eddy says to fall away from truth in times of persecution shows you never understood truth....

My heart goes out to the two of you because you will have many lessons to learn, even though I don't think you are being driven any longer by grief. I think it is vindictiveness and publicity seeking.

Anyone who would have ever had the slightest understanding of Christian Science would look around and see what is happening to the world and remember Mary Baker Eddy predicted this very thing. She said, "Earth will become dreary and desolate.... The breaking up of material beliefs may seem to be famine and pestilence, want and woe, sin, sickness, and death, which assume new phases until their nothingness appears.... As this consummation draws nearer, he who has shaped his course in accordance with divine Science will endure to the end."

It's so sad that you have chosen to shape your course on shifting sand.

Thank you for what you are doing. This is bringing Christian Scientists together like nothing else could.

Mrs. Leona Thatcher

I do love you both as the reality of who you are-the perfect ideas of a perfect Father-Mother God.

Swans Reelected

Rita and Doug Swan were reelected to a two year term on the board of CHILD. Many thanks for your notes of appreciation and encouragement.