

From The Pulpit

by Rev. Donald M. Clark

WHY JUDGE YOUR NEIGHBOR'S SINS?

Text: Why Do You See the Speck That is in Your Brother's Eye, but Do Not Notice the Log That is in Your Own? Matt. 7:3.

There is a hint of gentle humor in the Master's Question. No doubt, in Jesus' day, as in ours, picking flaws in other people was a popular indoor sport. Nine times out of ten, however, our judgment of others is false for three reasons.

In the first place, we cannot judge accurately because each of us is in an island of ultimate privacy. No one can enter fully into the feelings or the experience of another.

We cannot judge others because however bad they are, we cannot know how much they have overcome to be as good as they are. It is quite possible we are making our judgments by the light of an altogether false sense of our own superior virtue.

If we go about looking for specks in the eyes of our neighbors we are sure to find what we seek.

More often than we suspect we find in our neighbors just about what we wish to find. That was the insight of a real estate dealer selling a home. The prospective buyer asked, "If we move in here will we have good neighbors? The broker replied with a question. "What kind of neighbors did you have where you lived before you came here?" "Oh," the buyer answered, "we had wonderful neighbors." "Then," came the response, "You will have wonderful neighbors here."

Human relations are a matter, not only of the quality of others, but also of something inward in us that we bring to our relationships. If we have an expectation of the good, a willingness to see virtue instead of evil, and a capacity for good will and friendship we are likely to find a response in others that makes them good neighbors. On the other hand, if we bring self-righteousness and hypercritical judgment to our human relationships we are very likely to find unpleasant neighbors around us.

The question, "Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye?" is a disturbing one when we face it honestly. Why do we? Partly, I suppose, because it is so easy and so pleasant to sit with one's friends and discuss a third party, especially if the conversation is mildly critical. It is a pleasant form of sin and you can't be sent to jail for it.

Then, too, just to talk of the faults and shortcomings of another makes us feel virtuous by contrast.

All of us, it seems, have a blind spot in our vision when we look at ourselves.

Sadly for us, we find support for self-righteousness by viewing the sins of those around us.

Again, there are times when our criticism of others is inspired by our own frustration or disappointment.

It should be noted, too, that our criticism of others is often inspired when our own interests are threatened. The Pharisees threw the critical look at Jesus, not because they had seriously examined his message or because his ways were basically wrong, but rather because he stood as a threat to their own security. The Pharisees could not perceive the logs that blurred their own sins because they were so intent on saving their own prerogatives and powers.

It is quite impossible to help either ourselves or others while we are observing our neighbors critically and at the same time refusing to see ourselves as we are. When we see ourselves beside the Master we know full well we suffer by comparison. The log in your eye and the log in mine stand out so clearly that the specks in the eyes of our neighbors seem quite unimportant. It is the awareness of our own weaknesses that makes us tolerant of the weaknesses of others. It is the knowledge that we are inadequate as we are that makes us gentle



REV. D. M. CLARK

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Rights Official Urges Conversion of Bigots

WASHINGTON, D.C.--LeRoy Collins, former Governor of Florida who now heads the new U.S. Community Relations Service, urged Methodists last week to assist in the conversion of segregationists.

Collins, who himself has said that he was once opposed to integration, told a national Methodist gathering, "You Methodists can help them come to grips with the contradictions between their ingrained belief in a system of segregation and the allegiance they owe to their professed religious and patriotic principles."

Everything Christ taught, Collins said, "contradicts racial bigotry and its manifest acts of discriminatory practice."

Part of the American idea is the belief, he said, that every man has the right to succeed on his own individual merits.

SEGREGATIONISTS who do not hate but still insist upon keeping the Negro in a state of inferiority particularly "need help and understanding," Collins continued.

"I am frank to say that in my judgment most defenders of segregation do not harbor hatred in their hearts against Negroes. Nor do most segregationists feel, in their consciences, any sense of guilt as they discriminate against Negroes," he said.

"They were brought up in a society in which they were carefully educated from childhood to believe that the Negro had a secondary place . . . and that he should be required to stay in it and accept it . . . without protest."

in our judgment of the inadequacies of others. The psalmist fashioned a word for us all as he looked into his own soul. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

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ZION METHODIST CHURCH
Rev. M. D. Bennett, 382-9900
911 N. "G" St., Las Vegas

Zion Halloween Party Set

ZION METHODIST CHURCH will hold a Halloween Party at 808 Sunny Place in Bonanza Village starting at 6 o'clock Saturday night (Oct. 31). Barbecue dinners will be served for a donation of \$2, with each donation entitling the donor to a chance at attractive prizes. Winners need not be present in order to collect their prizes.

(Donation tickets may be obtained by calling Carrie Stewart at 384-0926.)

To Install New Pastor Here

CHRIST HOLY SANCTIFIED CHURCH at 316 Madison St. will install a new pastor at a 3 p.m. service on Sunday, Nov. 8, with clergy and members of other congregations in the community cordially invited to attend.

Succeeding Lola H. Hays, who is resigning for reasons of health after eleven years as pastor, will be Elder J. C. Brown, formerly of Los Angeles. Bishop King will preside at the installation ceremonies.

MAKE YOUR VOTE COUNT