

Decline in Morality Fosters Stealing

MORALITY is a matter of economics. The decline in moral responsibility is a significant contributing factor in rising prices.

Failure to recognize rights of others has, in the past, caused pangs of conscience, loss of prestige, loss of employment, or assessment of fines and imprisonment. Any or all of these helped to deter potential thieves, but their influence has lessened.

Failure of civilization to teach the younger generation the importance and desirability of being honest, coupled with failure of our legal system to mete appropriate punishment for violation of laws, has resulted in widespread stealing.

A large part of the losses are suffered directly by citizens, requiring cash outlays to replace stolen items.

Even greater losses are sustained by business firms. Hundreds of millions of dollars worth of merchandise is stolen each year by employees, shoplifters, burglars, transit workers or others. Fraud

and cheats add to the total.

Industries and businesses unable to cope with the theft problem add a percentage to cover cost of stolen merchandise to prices of what they can keep and sell. The public pays.

Federal laws often preclude adequate screening of job applicants for traits of dishonesty by legally hiding their records of arrests and convictions.

Primary responsibility for the breakdown in morality must be attributed to parents, but churches, schools and our lenient law enforcement system must share the blame.

"Thou shalt not steal" is the eighth of "The Ten Commandments" handed down by the ancient Hebrew leader, Moses. Stealing means taking anything that belongs to someone else.

This commandment, like others in the Decalogue, is simple, direct and really needs no explanation. It just needs to be adopted as a standard, observed and taught.

That it isn't being taught ade-

quately is obvious in this day when conscienceless people seem to be almost everywhere, pilfering anything that isn't locked, barred or guarded.

Local builders have lost millions of dollars in materials stolen from construction sites. This makes houses cost more.

Oil companies and farmers have lost expensive machinery to thieves who also grab trucks, road graders, pumps, tractors, livestock, harvested crops, or whatever they can move and sell.

Attendants at garages, filling stations or car washes sometimes pilfer chrome fittings, radios and personal belongings from cars entrusted to their care.

When business owners post signs declaring they are not responsible for thefts, customers should beware. If owners do not trust their employees, perhaps others should not.

We are paying high prices for dishonesty in the cost of merchandise, and we are losing freedom as national morality declines.

BAPTIST MESSENGER

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JACK L. GRITZ
Editor

April 6, 1978

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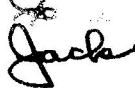
Dear Ferdie:

Just want to express appreciation for your column in the Daily Oklahoman, March 23, 1978, entitled "Decline in Morality Fosters Stealing." We have been granted permission to reprint this.

Thanks also for what you have done for us in the past. I hope you keep on writing material that is "worthy" of publication in the Baptist Messenger.

Kindest regards.

Sincerely,



Jack L. Gritz
Editor

JLG:bm



Decline in Morality Fosters Stealing

By Ferdie J. Deering

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The author is a well-known Baptist layman, is a member of board of directors of the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma, is the former editor of THE FARMER STOCKMAN and is the author of two significant books. Now living in semi-retirement, he prepares three special columns weekly for the editorial page of the DAILY OKLAHOMAN and carries on many other writing assignments and speaking engagements. He and his wife live in Oklahoma City and are members of Nichols Hills Baptist Church there.

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