

Outlook, May 1978

IMMUNITY

By Shirley W. Madany

When it comes to health and communicable diseases we are all agreed that it is important to have immunity. Thanks to public health care, measles and chicken pox just aren't what they used to be. But this past winter the Russian flu hit our high schools exactly as predicted because the population under 25 years of age did not have immunity to that type of flu...

How much thought do we give to the building up of our own and our children's spiritual immunity to such sicknesses as wrong doctrine, apathy or false religions?

There is a classic example in history of a once- thriving Christian population which completely disappeared. This was the community which produced the church father, Augustine, and the location was North Africa. The epidemic which totally destroyed every vestige of Christianity, was not biological, rather it was spiritual. It was Islam. And Church historians diagnose that probably the Christians there were already in a weakened state, from heresies, when Islam swept across their country.

Perhaps we should look at our present-day situation then with more seriousness. We know that already our days are being referred to as "post-Christian." The Christianity that once flourished in Tunisia is now relegated to ruins and museums. We don't want that to happen to us.

These are challenging times for Christian families. How can we survive the epidemics that may come, if we are weakened by our pagan environment?

Television brings unwelcome people, situations and events into Christian homes. Thoughtful writers are making us aware of the manipulative power this magic box.

Movies have progressed (or regressed) to being art forms guided by philosophies which play a part in the break-down of the Christian life.

Permissive words and pervasive sound batters the ear when you want to shop with your teen-agers.

The other day I heard the owner of a "school for begging" in New York City, being interviewed on the radio and he blatantly sated that "after all we are living in the age of the permissible lie." His job was to train well-educated people to artfully "steal," by creating fake situations which would prompt a hand-out.

A few years ago who could have imagined discussing abortion around the family dinner table? We wonder if there is enough denunciation of the sin of fornication, adultery and selfishness, which often precedes the conception of the "unwanted child?" Strangely a Christian newspaper carried a news item

about the rights of the father in this matter of abortion; but it turned out that the "father" in question was merely an irate "boyfriend".

Can we really build up an immunity to such an array of germs?

Meanwhile, there is an epidemic approaching the Christian west which is the same as that which spread across North Africa 1300 years ago. Islam is on the march again. World conquest is a natural part of the Islamic thrust. Already it is the third religion in many European countries. In France it is the second. Mosques and cultural centers are appearing everywhere. Not everyone realizes that with Islam the church is the state and the state is the church.

Oh, you say, but who would ever be attracted to that religion? We're safe over here. Let's not worry about something so far fetched. But are you? Remember what happened to the North African churches? They probably thought they were safe too.

Perhaps in the immediate future we should do something to find out more about this religion and its 600 million adherents. Perhaps our schools could spend a little more time on that section of their studies, including the geography and history of Muslim lands. Think of the empty churches of Britain and the sudden influx of Muslim immigrants. Who could have imagined mosques in Britain?

But, most important for our immunity will be our determination to seek the Lord for strength to live consistent Christian lives. How we need to "put on the whole armor of God!" When a church loses its zeal for the truth, the signs of weakening show first in the lives of its people. What must a Muslim immigrant think of our nation's Christianity? Our lives have to exhibit an obedience to the Word of God. We will have to take a stand against all the ways in which the pagan world batters at our family door. Our actions should demonstrate a deep reverence for God and a desire for sanctification.

It is possible, with the help of God, to live healthy Christian lives in the midst of a sick society.
