

# Integrity

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## Integrity

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# BUT WHAT ABOUT WORKS?

CRAIG M. WATTS

Some call it self-reliance, others call it pride, but the simple fact is: men generally fight being dependent. "I want to stand on my own two feet," they declare. "You have to work for what you get" and "you can't get something for nothing" or similar ideas have been thrown at most of us since an early age. And this belief has been confirmed by our own experience in life. "You have to work for what you get" almost seems to be an inescapable law of nature. We have grown so accustomed to this way of life that we rebel against those who would give us a free gift. All too often our pride has caused us to neglect the fact that we really can't stand alone. Our need is greater than our ability. But still man demands the right to "do his part."

This was the attitude the apostle Paul faced as he preached, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is a gift of God—not because of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). Man rebels against this teaching because it is so foreign to his experience and it is an insult to his pride. James S. Stewart rightly said, "Human nature has an inveterate tendency to work with ideas of merit; and the doctrine [grace] which, more than any other, flatly negates such notions will always have a salutary and indispensable message for mankind" (*A Man in Christ*, 250-251). So a salvation that is a free gift, "not because of works," continues to be suspect. And therefore any man who will preach the gospel of grace that Paul preached will likewise hear the criticisms and questions Paul heard, the chief of these being,

"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" (Rom. 6:1).

And the answer to this question is eternally the same: "God forbid!" But why not continue in sin? If we can't "pay our way" because Jesus paid it all, then why not sin to our heart's content? These are questions that legalists and libertines forever ask. The scriptures offer several answers.

The answer that is familiar to most is given in Romans 6. The apostle answers the question with another question: "How can we who died to sin still live in it?" He then follows with a discussion on the doctrine concerning our union with Christ.

Because of the familiarity of many with Romans 6 as a proof-text on baptism, the meaning of Paul's discussion is too often overlooked. It is in this discussion that the apostle offers the reason for living a Christian life—it is because of our union with Christ. *We do not become united to Christ because of our works; just the opposite is true: it is because of our union with Christ that we now no longer abide in sin. Grace comes before works.*

In baptism, Paul teaches, we reproduce the spiritual history of Christ in our own lives. We share a death, burial and resurrection like his. In this sharing we become united with him. We die to sin, we are buried and we are raised to live a glorified life with Christ. Each step we take is shared by Christ because of this vital union. *Because of this new relationship* we no longer let sin reign in our lives (Rom. 6:12). Our basic nature has been changed *because* we now share a life with Christ. "Therefore, if any

one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come!" (2 Cor. 5:17 RSV). Or as Jesus put it, we have been "born again" (Jn. 3:1-8).

In Ephesians 2 the apostle Paul sheds more light on the purpose and place of works. Paul plainly states that we are saved by grace and not by works. Salvation is of God, never man (Rev. 7:10). We have no reason to boast since salvation is a gift of God. But Paul, after his statement that we are saved apart from works, continues: "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:10 RSV).

The very purpose of our salvation, our being "created in Christ Jesus," is to glorify God by our works. Again—we are not saved by our works, but we show good works because we are saved. This is also the message given in Romans 8:28-30. Those whom God has called to him have been "predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son." It is not *because* they are conformed to the image of his Son that he has called them; rather they are conformed to the image of his Son *because they first were called by God.*

The grace of God changes men, not to indulgent, self-satisfying creatures, but to men of love, joy, peace and power. "For the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of all men, training us to renounce irreligion and worldly passions, and to live sober, upright, and godly lives in this world, awaiting our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds" (Tit. 2:11-14 RSV). Grace teaches men and leads them in paths of righteousness—*men do not walk in paths of right-*

*eousness in order to receive grace.*

In order to have a biblical view of works, one must always keep the divine initiative in the forefront of all teaching. Unlike other religions, the New Testament faith does not teach that man must work in order to win God's favor and seek to pacify his anger. The scriptures teach that God is always ready to receive us through Jesus. Man does not have to attempt to "win" God's favor, for Christ has already done that. "God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). The salvation of the Lord is not something we can achieve, rather it is something we can simply receive.

The place of works in a relationship of grace can be seen in Isaiah 6. What happened to Isaiah must in some way happen to every person that comes to the Lord. First, Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord and was awed. "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory," cried the seraphim. He could not close his eyes to the wonderful sight of the Lord. But Isaiah saw something else at the same time—he saw himself. In view of the glory of the Lord he caught sight of himself and realized his condition. "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

At this point Isaiah did not jump up to try to gain God's favor by works; he merely received what the Lord freely gave. "Your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven." He accepted the gift of God, knowing that all of man's attempts to come to God through works of law end in failure. "For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do" (Rom. 8:3).

It is at this point that the place of works can be seen. Isaiah has been saved from his

sins, but he says, "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me.'" Here one can see a changed life, a new life. It has not been changed by works of law but by grace. Now, because of grace, works follow. Obedience at this point is not forced, fear-motivated actions; obedience now is the natural, loving response to saving grace.

To place works in any other position in our relationship to the Lord would be to cause man to *depend* upon works in order to

be saved. One must realize that no matter how we try to obey God, we always fail. There can be no performance of laws that comes "close enough" to merit God's favor, nor is there a doctrine that man can find and teach that will not in some way be corrupted by him. This is *not* to say we should not seek to obey the Lord; rather it is to say that we can never be "close enough." "By grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). Now let us by our works thank the Lord for his gift. □

## VALUES AND DANGERS IN MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

JOHN McRAY

When in the course of time an institution or ideology ceases to perform the function for which it was created, it becomes irrelevant, obsolete, and finally ignored. Richard Wurmbrand, in his book *Christ on the Jewish Road* (p. 38), tells of a Greek Orthodox Church in Rumania which is so crammed with golden ikons, candlesticks, and vessels that the only way they have discovered of guarding all this wealth has been not to open the church for services. "In this way the

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words of St. Augustine have been fulfilled when he says that religion has produced riches and fortunes, but the daughters have consumed their mother."

We in the Restoration tradition have cause to ask whether the daughters have not consumed their mother! Has established religion consumed meaningful personal commitment to Jesus Christ? Has our very quest for truth as revealed in the Bible stagnated into a bibliolatry devoid of the power of the living Christ? What is the role of a minister in a tradition which, though basing its origin and purpose for existence in an ancient but inspired book, persistently ignores the pressing human concerns of a modern society and

revels in the delights of returning to the "old paths," while facing audiences almost devoid of *youth* above high school age? The old paths to which we urge others to return are often not old enough. They should be two thousand years old—not two hundred.

The church of Christ historically has regarded understanding of Scripture as the chief qualification of a minister. We teach that he who proclaims the unsearchable riches of Christ has been called of God through the Scripture to such a position, and the only qualifications needed are an honest heart, a sincere faith, and an open Bible! And with this view I would not entirely disagree, as far as it goes. Its weakness lies in its limited scope. The role of a minister has evolved in our society just as dramatically as have the church services themselves. Midweek prayer meetings are no longer prayer meetings; they are gatherings for Bible study and fellowship! Bible study is often not Bible study; it is a pooling of ignorance in Wednesday evening and Sunday morning seminars led by busy people who admittedly have no time for meaningful preparation! Worship services are often not worshipful because they have evolved into the teaching sessions that once were held in classes! And stereotyped formalism has crystallized into a monotonous liturgy which has become confused with the very Word of God itself.

The preacher is hired often to "hold a service rather than to herald a Savior." He has become the victim of a system which he himself helped create. In many congregations he is doing the work God assigned to elders in the New Testament, while elders are doing the work assigned deacons, who are doing the work of the congregation, while the members pay the bills and sit and listen and listen . . . and listen.

### Values and Dangers . . .

I see many values in preparing men to assume the role assigned an evangelist or teacher in the New Testament. And I see many dangers in preparing ministers to assume the role of pastors to a white, southern, middle-class society, encrusted with traditions which often are not only encumbering the church with an unbearable burden but even at times are contrary to the spirit of Christ himself.

There is no question that ministers need to be trained. No man is more effective than he is qualified to be. The twelve apostles and Paul himself are sufficient evidence of the importance Christ placed on proper training—not to mention Moses, Timothy, and Titus. Whether one is a tree surgeon or a heart surgeon, a pipe-fitter or an astronaut, he normally produces in relation to his preparation. Paul told Timothy to entrust his message to faithful witnesses who would be able to teach others (2 Tim. 2:2). The question is not *whether* men should be trained, but *how* they should be trained . . . trained to do what? A sister came to me recently and with considerable earnestness in her voice said, "Brother McRay, our people are crying to hear the Bible taught by someone who knows what he is talking about."

One grave danger I see in our present system of training men for our pulpits is the assumption that they will face the kind of audiences and problems faced by those pioneer preachers who started the Restoration Movement. A young man on a foreign field told me a few weeks ago, while I was visiting him and evaluating his work, that he was not prepared by his professors to deal with the problems he was now facing—a population whose vast majority did not even accept the New Testament as the Word of God. One course in Christian evidences does not meet

this need—especially when it is based on problems the minister will be assumed to face in a society that is largely believing, white, and sympathetic to Christianity to begin with.

Another young man, who went through one of our schools and is now working in a ghetto in a large city of our nation, informed me that his ministerial training was almost worthless in his present work.

### The System . . .

For several Thursday evenings I talked in my home with many of the brightest young men on our campus—presidents of the student body and various civic organizations, debaters, high officers of international clubs, as well as students who had done mission work abroad—about the values and dangers of ministerial education. Of that group of some fifteen or more, all said they wanted to serve Jesus Christ and give their lives entirely to do his will—but only one thought he wanted to be a full time preacher. The reasons they gave for avoiding the pulpit seem to be the essence of the topic which I am discussing.

In the past five years a large number of young men have come to my office—all of them with essentially the same message: “We want to serve the Lord, but we are afraid of the pulpit because we do not feel the elders will grant us the freedom to practice Christianity and preach it from the pulpit as we feel Jesus taught it.” They say the churches, as they see them, are not really facing the burning issues of the day. Elders discourage their preachers from discussing controversial issues such as race, sex, atheistic communism, abortion, capital punishment, Christian involvement in military service, speaking in tongues, meaningful assistance to the poor, and genuine concern and help for the dope

addict, the drunkard, the prostitute, and the long haired nonconformist.

In other words, one of the gravest dangers in ministerial education as it is currently practiced in the churches of Christ, in the eyes of these young men, is the system into which they will be forced to function when they finish their training. Our view of the pulpit is partially responsible for this because it resembles far too often the Roman Catholic view of the Vatican. When one occupies the pulpit he speaks with the authority of God; he becomes an official promulgator of truth, by which we mean, of course, the truth as we understand it in our particular congregation. It seems to matter little that we are radically divided among ourselves as to what constitutes the truth on scores of issues. As long as we demand that a preacher simply reiterate our established positions from the pulpit, just that long will we continue to drive away from the pulpit our brightest and most dedicated young men. They must be allowed to seek the truth for themselves, with the right to stand in the pulpit as human beings and present what they have found without fear of deprivation to themselves and their families. The progress of truth is not dependent upon dogmatic assertions by infallible pulpiteers. The truth can withstand dissenting opinions. It may, in fact, be more effectively advanced at times in the milieu of honest and sincere disagreement than in the stultifying climate of dogmatic assertions.

The pulpit in the church should not be available only to the *clergy*! A most unusual eldership once told me when I began working with them, “You are answerable to God, not us. Preach what your quest for truth produces. If we disagree we may ask for the pulpit the next service to express our viewpoint and let truth stand.” Brethren, truth

will stand—because it is truth. It needs no infallible proclaimers!!

A few months ago a number of us who have been teaching for many years met in a hotel suite in New York City with a number of young Church of Christ ministers now studying for higher degrees in well-known universities of the Northeast. Only one in the ten or fifteen gathered there wanted to teach in a Christian College, and he had never attended one. The others uniformly said they were afraid of the stultifying effect on their intellect and their quest for truth that the current atmosphere of our colleges would create. I did not share fully in this feeling, nor was I prepared on the other hand to deny it entirely. Right or wrong, this is the way an alarming number of our young ministers are viewing the system, and in it they see a danger for those who would dare to think independently of traditionally accepted positions.

Nor is this feeling limited to the young who would become ministers. Today I received a letter from one who describes himself as “an old man comparatively speaking,” the father of a young person I taught almost fifteen years ago. Commenting on a recent article of mine, he said: “If we mean anything by our non-sectarian profession, as you pointed out, we cannot recognize and submit to the crass and crude sectarianism among ourselves to which we are demanded to pay homage. I have taken a good deal of work in . . . seminary and have taught on a very slight basis there. I have also participated in our local Christian Unity Forum with representatives of Christian Churches. But I have tried to show in every possible way my fidelity to the objectives we profess and my respect for those who may not share some of my convictions. But I have been myself increasingly shut out of ‘brother-

hood’ fellowship, pulpits, and papers.”

Now if I have not been understood to this point, let me say it briefly and clearly. The greatest danger I have seen in ministerial education in the churches of Christ over the past fifteen years, and which threatens to destroy any hope for an educated ministry in the future, is the tremendous system of ours which demands the conformity of its servants—conformity or condemnation. Unless this can be changed it will be pointless to discuss methodology and curriculum in the training of ministers—because there will be no educated ministers to train.

The opinions of religious leaders about what constitutes acceptable training for ministers have differed greatly. The direct operation of the Holy Spirit has been regarded as both necessary and sufficient preparation by a segment of Christendom and is becoming widely accepted again in our own generation. To others one need only have a desire to preach and a Bible in his hand in order to be amply qualified for the pulpit. Some of the larger Protestant bodies have required a college degree in religious studies in addition to the bachelor’s degree in arts or sciences. It has been felt that this broad base in secular and religious studies was necessary to enable the minister to function religiously in a secular society. Most of the larger seminaries in our country, however, are dropping the requirement of Biblical languages from the B.D. degree, along with studies in geography of the Bible and textual studies in the Scripture itself. The reason is obviously that the Bible no longer serves as the standard of authority for the congregations where these ministers will serve. The minister is being trained as a professional pastor and counselor whose duties include almost no exposition of the Word of God as a written document.

## The Situation Among Us . . .

I am concerned that the Churches of Christ today are also moving in that direction. It is difficult to understand how a man can be qualified to deal with sixty-six different books, written over a period of fifteen hundred years in three ancient languages, without devoting himself to the study of everything that may bear directly on his understanding of those books. There are, of course, various levels of understanding, just as there are various levels of training. The value of fuller training is that one's capacity for understanding is increased. And though training is no guarantee of deeper understanding, there is a limit of understanding beyond which one cannot go without further training. For example, my files contain letters and notes of telephone calls that have come to me from preachers who want to know what the Greek says about *parthenos* (virgin), *psallo* (make melody), or *tekna* (children—of elders); or what archaeology has contributed to the problem of the location of Nehemiah's wall in Jerusalem or the location of Noah's ark, etc. Although I am happy to help those who have not had the training to do their own research, it becomes a bit disconcerting when these inquiries come in from individuals who deny the need for such preparation by those who would preach! Some of these very individuals acknowledge as authorities authors who are not members of the Church of Christ and refuse to acknowledge the existence of competent scholars in our own brotherhood. We have our own Barnes, Clarke, and Johnson—many of them teaching in the most highly respected universities in the world. Is it because they are less loyal to truth than the Methodists and Presbyterians that we have so little confidence in their work? We can

overlook error in Clarke or Johnson, but we cannot use a commentary written by one of our own brothers because we feel he is in error on some points.

The value of ministerial education, if properly done, is that it prepares a man to deal confidently and somewhat authoritatively with the difficult problems he faces without always relying on someone else's conclusions. This is not to suggest that we do not need the work of others. We do. But for the evangelist and teacher who would profess to be a specialist in dealing with Holy Scripture and in applying its solutions to the complex problems of human nature, the ability to bring history, geography, archaeology, and the original languages to bear on his study is imperative. Without it he must of necessity rely on the work of others who do have such training.

These remarks must not be construed to mean that a Christian cannot tell others what he has done to become a child of God without ministerial training. It does not mean that a dedicated child of God cannot and must not testify to the saving grace of God in his life. Peter and John were described in Acts 4:13 as *agrammatos kai idiotes*, i.e., "uneducated and untrained." In essence that means they had not been to seminary! But they were effective in their ministry because, as Luke puts it, "they had been with Jesus." We too may testify to the power of Jesus in our lives. However, since we do not receive our understanding of Jesus by inspiration or personal conversation with him, we who preach—who not only live our religion but also attempt to understand and teach the Bible—must prepare ourselves to the best of our abilities to transmit this teaching to an increasingly complex society. Before it can be taught, it must be understood. Herein lies the value of proper training.

## Preacher Training Schools . . .

The decrease in numbers of young men who are receiving ministerial education in our schools has led to the rise of what are being termed preacher training schools. Admittedly my acquaintance with these schools has been only through their own printed material and through conversations with others who are themselves involved in the programs. We must all rejoice that such efforts are being made to provide further and deeper study. In times such as ours, with materialism making such tremendous inroads into the thinking of Christian people, any effort to increase spirituality through an earnest exploration of God's inspired Word must be encouraged. The only hope for the continuing influence of Christ in the world is for Christians to stay close to the teachings of the Bible, and, in a time when our normal teaching programs in our churches as a whole are not as effective as they should be, we can only welcome these further opportunities for meaningful Bible study.

But at this point I would issue a word of caution. Such schools are not and should never be limited to preachers or elders alone. In reality they are, as I see them, not preacher training schools at all, but Christian training schools. Their purpose should be to provide the opportunity for any servant of God to deepen his understanding of the Bible and related matters. The experience should be a broadening one, a deepening one, adding to the foundation that is already there. Any Christian should leave such a training school with greater ability to communicate his faith to others. But to leave the impression that such a school gives the person who attends it an education comparable to that which is to be received in accredited academic institutions of this country is utter nonsense. To

even intimate that such a program of study is comparable to a doctoral program in accredited institutions is to be grossly ignorant of what is involved in such programs or to be wilfully deceptive. These schools can continue to serve as an important adjunct to the teaching programs of the churches where they are located and contribute meaningfully to the advancement of the kingdom of God in those vicinities. But they must never be assumed to be more than an adjunct. They do not and cannot provide a minister with the education he needs to be most effective in this highly educated society in which he will serve.

The need for educated preachers and teachers who are well-grounded in the Word of God and dedicated to the cause of continuing the restoration of New Testament Christianity has never been greater. Centuries of Catholicism followed by centuries of Protestant reaction have dulled our sensitivity to the spirit of Christianity as it was conceived by Jesus of Nazareth. Education and training are needed today as much to clear away misconceptions and hurtful traditions as to understand the simple truth after it has been thus excavated. The problem before us is not so much one of building the building as of attempting to build it without first clearing the rubble of previous buildings from the ground where the structure must stand. Never has the need been greater to separate truth from tradition, opinion from fact, and "thus saith the Lord" from "thus saith the editors." May God grant this generation a burning desire to know the truth—to know Him who is the way, the truth, and the life. May he grant us the courage to proclaim without fear our understanding of his Holy Word and the humility to love and encourage those whose understanding may not yet be that of our own. □

# WHO IS A CHILD OF GOD?

CALVIN WARPULA

NOTE: Our February issue contained an "Open Letter to Disciples, Independents, and Churches of Christ" by James Christensen, senior minister of Lindenwood Christian Church in Memphis. When Calvin Warpula, who is minister of Berclair Church of Christ in that city, read it, he immediately contacted Dr. Christensen. The result of this contact has been a series of monthly unity meetings of brethren from the Disciples, Independents, and Churches of Christ. The article which follows was a position presented at one of these meetings. We commend—and pray for—the efforts of these brethren toward restoring a lost fellowship.

The importance of this topic for discussions affecting unity and fellowship can be readily seen in the fact that in order to be a brother in Christ one must first be a son of God. Brotherhood is based on sonship. Wherever God has a son, I have a brother. Thus, whomever God receives, I must receive; whomever God rejects, I must reject.

The issue in this discussion is not whom Christians should love, pray for, and seek to save and serve. Their attitude toward all humanity is the same as their heavenly Father's (Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8; Mt. 22:39-41). The issue is not the honesty, sincerity, and good works of mercy and charity of differing religious groups. This is not to be denied at all. These are certainly desirable and indispensable ingredients for God's people, but they are not substitutes for primary and initial obedience to the faith in Christ.

The issue is not what some men or the majority of men believe, teach, and practice.

True Christianity is a God-revealed faith, not a humanly evolved one. Jesus came as the way, for without him there is no going; as the truth, for without him there is no knowing; as the life, for without him there is no living. The O.T. expresses the lostness and inadequacy of man. "It is not in man that walks to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:23). "There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12). David expressed the necessity for light and law from the Lord. "Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps. 119:105). Jesus himself declared, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jn. 8:32).

The fundamental and only issue is this: Whom does God accept and receive into full pardon and fellowship with himself? The only way this question can be answered is from the revelation of God himself in the Scriptures. The word of the Lord endures forever and is not to be changed by either addition, subtraction, or mutilation (1 Pet. 1:22-25; Rev. 22:18-19; Gal. 1:6-9).

All men who have sinned against God live under the wrath and judgment of God (Rom. 3:10-23; 6:23). Through the riches of his grace and mercy God sent Jesus to atone for man's sins (1 Jn. 4:14; 2:2). Through faith in the blood of Christ sinful man can be redeemed, justified, and acquitted in the eyes of God (Rom. 5; Eph. 2). The gospel is the

message of God's saving love through Jesus Christ and will save all who believe and obey it (Rom. 1:16-17; 2 Th. 1:7-9). The gospel is to be preached to every creature of every nation so that men of every culture, every color, and every class may call on the Lord and be saved (Rom. 10:9-13; Lk. 24:47; Acts 1:8).

Man's response of faith to the saving gospel of Jesus means that he fully believes in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Rom. 10:9-10), repents of his sins (Acts 17:30-31), and is baptized in water into fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19-20). Salvation is not meritorious, but gratuitous. Man is saved not by his achievement or attainment but by Christ's atonement.

Baptism is probably the greatest area of controversy with the general world of Christendom. It is named approximately 120 times in the New Testament and is the only command which explicitly has the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit attached to it.

Baptism, preceded by faith and repentance, stands squarely between the alien sinner and (1) the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), (2) washing away of sins (Acts 22:16), (3) putting off the body of sins and obtaining the forgiveness of sins (Col. 2:11-13), (4) putting on Christ (Gal. 3:26-27), (5) sharing in the benefits of the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom. 6:3-4), (6) experiencing the new birth and entering into the kingdom of God (Jn. 3:3-5), and (7) the receiving and indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38; 5:32; Gal. 4:6).

Baptism is never called a "work" of man in the N.T. In baptism it is not the efficacy of the candidate or the administrator that purifies before God, but the blood of Christ. Baptism is not a device of man but the ac-

tion of God that puts man with Christ, forgives his sins, initiates him into the kingdom and the one spiritual body of Christ, and enables him to participate spiritually in the historical death and resurrection of Christ.

Baptism is a response of faith to God's invitation that is totally unrelated to any merit or earning on the part of man. Baptism is based on faith, motivated by faith, and meaningful because of faith. This faith has no merits of its own. Its trust, reliance, and power are centered solely in Jesus Christ. Faith and repentance give baptism its validity. Man is saved *by* the blood of Christ, *because* of his faith and repentance, *when* he is baptized.

The N.T. knows of no one who has been saved from his sins after the resurrection of Christ without baptism. Baptism is specifically named in all the major stories of conversions in the book of Acts, although faith and repentance are not always specifically named. Every verse in the N.T. that mentions baptism and salvation always has baptism mentioned first, showing that it clearly preceded salvation.

Alan Richardson in his *Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* comments:

In the Church of the N.T., faith and baptism belong together, like soul and body in biblical thought: the one cannot exist without the other. To regard sincere faith as adequate to salvation apart from baptismal incorporation into Christ's body is sheer 'Christian Science' by the standards of N.T. theology; by ignoring the reality of the body it makes Salvation a subjective affair, a disembodied soul-salvation of individuals who have 'enjoyed' a certain 'experience'. The profession of faith without the bodily action of submission in baptism is not the obedience of the whole man; a mental act which has no outward embodiment is a mere phantom of the full-blooded, full-bodied wholeness of biblical thinking. Believing while dis-

pensing with the act of obedience, with the act of baptism, is a kind of docetism, and is thus not belief in the N.T. sense at all. The action—or, rather, the passion—of being baptized, is itself part of the act of believing, since to believe means to obey. So often we hear it said that the thing which matters is the inward attitude of mind and heart and will, and that outward conformity to a 'mere' ceremony is formalism, externalism or institutionalism. . . . The parallel to the view that baptism is a dispensable extra is the docetic view that the historical question about whether Christ really suffered and died is unimportant; all that matters was his own inner self-dedication. The actual historical baptism of the individual Christian is important precisely in the sense in which the actual historical death of Christ is important. (London: SCM Press, 1961, p. 348.)

The view presented in this paper is not only the view of the N.T. but also the unanimous voice of all early church fathers and theologians. J. N. D. Kelly provides ample evidence of this in his *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959). One might also consult Everett Ferguson's *Early Christians Speak* (Austin: Sweet, 1971, pp. 33-43), Ezra Abbot's article "Baptism," in *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*, I (Grand Rapids: Baker reprint, 1971, pp. 233-242), and Alfred Plummer's article "Baptism," in *A Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by James Hastings, I (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1905, pp. 238-244).

## Conclusion

Since no one is a child of God except those who have believed in Christ, repented of their sins, and been baptized into Jesus Christ, these are the only ones to be received into full Christian fellowship and brotherhood. If one is not a son of God he cannot be a brother in Christ.

We cannot "unite together in one body through the cross" those who are not mem-

bers of the body or participants in the effects and benefits of the cross. The church cannot maintain the "unity of the Spirit" with those who do not have the Spirit.

Every plea for unity in the N.T. was written to those already within the fellowship of Christ through baptism who had not followed up their baptism with a common brotherhood. There cannot exist a common brotherhood without a common birth. That birth takes place only in baptism. We are brothers only because we are first sons. There can exist *unity in Christ* only for those who have been *baptized into Christ*.

Paul strongly condemned those brethren who preached salvation through works and obedience to the law (Gal. 1:6-9; 5:1-4). What would he say to those who would completely obliterate or eradicate baptism with all its meanings and implications?

In order to effectively deny the position set forth in this article, one must either (1) demonstrate that the Scriptures cited have been misinterpreted and misconstrued, or (2) show that the N.T. teaches many different ways or means of obtaining the salvation that is in Christ, or (3) show that the N.T. is a confused, contradictory "hodge-podge" of loosely related controversial themes that cannot be trusted. To do either of the latter is to completely give up Biblical authority, trustworthiness, and integrity. The Biblicist can only try to deal with number one. This can only be attempted by going directly to the passages cited and dealing directly with each of them.

The Bible believer stands with D.S. Burnett, pioneer preacher, when he said, "Taking the Bible as authority means we accept all truth. Taking the Bible alone means we reject all error." "The word of the Lord endures forever." □

# ON TOLERANCE

JIM SIMS

Once upon a time (or was it true?) a church which had been fighting within itself met for the purpose of making peace. The members decided that they needed to act toward one another with greater tolerance and love. All agreed with the decision except one man—so they lynched him!

It is all too true all too often that tolerance simply becomes another form of intolerance. In other words, the tolerant one simply *can't stand* the intolerant!

More and more members of Churches of Christ are coming to realize that Scripture does not require some of the lines of fellowship which history has drawn for us and tradition has enforced. We are coming to understand that being a Christian is a matter of personal relationship to God and is not dependent upon theological perfection. But at the same time that this understanding is finding its way back into the Restoration Movement, it encounters stern opposition from leaders whose emphasis is upon standing in the "Old Paths."

My personal conviction is that there is much truth on the side of the one who would observe that the antiquity of much of the pavement of the Old Path is better approximated at 100 years than at 2,000. One

satirist has observed that what is often meant by a "sound" preacher is one who is "blessed with congenital idiocy" and who is wise enough not to make his own decisions. I agree that that is the precise thinking of many "Old Path" advocates.

Satire is a valid means of driving home a point. It is a method quite similar to many of the parables of Jesus. But satire, and any other form of criticism, can be used by a destructive, bitter writer whose basic purpose is to express hatred. Criticism is best applied by those who love and whose intentions are constructive and edifying.

The tolerant ones feel that they are the "strong" Christians of Romans 14 and that those who draw narrow lines of fellowship are playing the part of the man who would disfellowship his brother for eating meat. This stands in contrast to the "Old Paths" advocate who feels that he is the "strong" Christian of the same passage. We will accomplish very little in prolonged haggling over who is who. Those who are tolerant must face the fact that if they are indeed strong in the faith, they must welcome their intolerant brother without passing judgment on him. In other words, we tolerant Christians must practice what we preach and tolerate even the intolerant! □

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## Voice from the Past

If some one tells you that so and so speaks ill of you, do not defend yourself against what he says, but answer, "He did not know my other faults, or he would not have mentioned these alone."

—Epicetetus, *The Manual*.

# A SUGGESTION FOR WORSHIP

ALLEN HOLDEN, Jr.

Arthur Miley has observed that there are two groups in the church, two churches as he terms it, who are identifiable on the basis of vocabulary, approaches to evangelism, reading material, and forms of worship.<sup>1</sup> It is this last factor we would like to concentrate on, in an effort to put forth a solution viable to both groups.

One group in the church, Miley's A's, prefer the traditional restoration worship format, consisting of preaching for roughly 40-60% of the time, four-part singing in unison, prayers led by one individual at the front, and the Lord's supper and contribution on the Lord's Day. A short prayer and possibly a few short comments before handing out the bread, grape juice and collection basket, and partaking or giving in silence, is the usual approach. An invitation hymn usually concludes the preaching.<sup>2</sup>

The B's, on the other hand, advocate less time spent by one man speaking, and a worship format that is significantly different. Solos, antiphonal singing, chants and fast, lively, folk-type songs take the place of the traditional "gospel hymn."<sup>3</sup> Responsive

1 Arthur L. Miley, "There Are Two Churches," *Mission*, 5 (1971/1972), 103f.

2 It is interesting to see the results of *Mission's* Opinion/RSVP which asked, "Should the Invitation Hymn Be Eliminated?" 59.1% answered Yes, while only 13.6% responded No (November, 1971) Granted, most of those answering were probably in Miley's B group.

3 A very provocative study of church music, with some very pertinent ideas for our worship, is

reading or reading that alternates from one side to another is often employed.<sup>4</sup> There are cases of using the congregational Amen,<sup>5</sup> extensive reading, and group, sentence or silent prayers. The Lord's supper would be partaken of while singing, listening to a reading, praying or being admonished, and could be done simultaneously or by going down to the front to be served.<sup>6</sup> Giving is not seen as an every week necessity, nor as something which must be part of the worship hour.<sup>7</sup>

For these Christians, the traditional seating arrangement with all people facing the front may not be most advantageous from the standpoint of horizontal worship,<sup>8</sup> and

by Daniel Harding Burton: "Church Music: Then and Now," *Mission*, 4 (1970/1971), 235ff.

4 A good deal of the Old Testament literature seems to reflect this practice, most notably Psalm 136. Others lend themselves to it, such as those asking questions and giving a response immediately following, such as Psalm 24.

5 See Hoy Ledbetter, "Community in Worship," *Integrity*, 3 (1971/1972), 47-50. He discusses the Agape, the Holy Kiss, and the Amen. That the entire congregation answered in the Amen is apparent from much of the Old Testament, including Deut. 27:15-26.

6 A thrilling study of the Lord's supper was written by Warren Lewis: *The Lord's Supper* (Austin: Sweet Publishing Co., 1966), which I believe is now out of print, unfortunately. In it (pp. 61-64 and 80-84) he gives many recommendations for the manner of partaking, which are worthy of careful consideration. He deals with keeping the Agape, proper preparation, what to do during partaking, etc. He relates an incident where an old man lifted high the bread and went to the center of the building and said, "This is the body of Christ; you are the body of Christ." "He had everyone stand and face one another as they ate together. They were discerning the body of Christ" (p. 63).

7 This is apparent from Paul's statement to Corinth "that there be no gatherings when I come." It was a special collection for a special need, as were all collections, be the need benevolent or evangelistic. This view is seldom heard, partly because of the need to pay for the meeting house, which makes weekly giving advantageous.

8 Steve Rorabacher pointed out to the author that this makes us feel like we are only an audience,

they could advocate sitting in aisles and on the stage, and facing each other to stress the "community" in the church.<sup>9</sup> An even better arrangement for them would be to meet in homes, a practice common in the New Testament church, and one more conducive to informality and openness.<sup>10</sup> The warmth of the home atmosphere is partly responsible for this. Another practice these would advocate would be partaking of the communion in the context of a common meal. Many of them also favor an open-ended period of worship, that may start at a designated time and last as long as the group desires, or possibly even be open at both ends, with people arriving and leaving as their schedules permit.<sup>11</sup>

These two groups have little trouble accepting each other and affording each other full fellowship. Problems arise when one attempts to worship in a situation primarily oriented to the tastes of the other. The B's, by and large, have difficulty really getting involved, in an assembly conducted like the A's prefer, as most of our assemblies are. Frequent complaints are heard about their inability to worship, that it is stale and unoriginal, yet the A's find this format very uplifting, and leave the meeting with renewed zeal and commitment. If the format is like the B's prefer, one finds that many of the A's cannot worship, complain that it is so different and unusual that it offends them, and

and not participants, and is reminiscent of watching a play or a movie, and not of actually taking part in something.

9 The author witnessed this at a gathering of young Christians at a Lutheran building and found it appealing.

10 On house churches, see Thomas H. Olbricht, "The City Church in Biblical Theology," *Mission*, 2 (1968/1969), 118f.; and Abraham Malherbe, "The Household of God," *Mission* (November, 1969).

11 Interesting developments in congregational worship are outlined in Dudley Lynch, "The Worship Hour: A Break with the Past," *Mission*, 4 (1970/1971), 139-142.

that they find it difficult to gain anything from the format.<sup>12</sup>

There doesn't appear to be a middle ground in this problem. Granted, the B's can hope for gradual changing of the A's so that they can accept some of their innovations, but this is so gradual as to be discouraging, and in the meantime the B's find it difficult to be uplifted by the worship of the A's.

A solution which occurs to me is that arrived at by many religious groups presented with the same situation. These groups have a separate worship hour, which is labeled "modern" or "contemporary" worship, so everybody attending is forewarned and desires this type of worship setup. This presents a problem in that the church needs a common gathering of all her members—to avoid factions and provide koinonia for all the individuals with each other. It appears that this could be solved in a number of ways. The Jerusalem church met daily in homes, yet appeared to also have a general meeting periodically. Churches that have "double services" usually have a single Bible study hour, and it is conceivable that something similar could be arranged so as to unite the body for a short period of time.

This solution is so simple that it has probably been considered before, but I have not yet heard of any case where it has been used in a congregation. It is put forth with the prayer that the body will continue to be healthy and united, and that all of its members will be able to praise and glorify God in a way most uplifting to them.

12 This happened in an upstate New York congregation when the author presented a worship program similar to what the B's would like. Some actually admitted that they could not worship in that situation. That this is a problem is clear from Paul's teachings on the weaker brothers (1 Cor. 8 and Rom. 14): if they are violating their conscience and feel they are sinning, even if what they do is right in itself, they are sinning, for they go against what they believe to be God's rules. Like Paul, we should be willing to give up eating meat for their sake, or at least not force them to eat with us.