

Integrity

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Ready to Rule?

HOY LEDBETTER

An uncle of mine once sent a youthful crew of pickers into his drought-plagued tomato field with these words: "Boys, get all that's there—and some that ain't there!" He was not unlike the Bible student, who finding his case weak, gleans from a passage more doctrinal fruit than it will bear. Or, to change the metaphor, after squeezing from the verse the last drop of real milk, he must add a bit of gypsum and water to increase the quantity. But only the unadulterated spiritual milk nourishes us for individual and corporate growth and function, and therefore proof-textual studies require alertness for unconscious prejudice which siphons from a scripture more than it contains. Having said that, I will now try to live by it.

Readers of this journal are aware of a growing reaction to the authoritative ministry (especially the eldership) which, as we see it, has increasingly stifled the corporative activities of the saints during the past few decades. It is proper to combat this since Jesus said that those who "make men feel the weight of authority" (Mk. 10:42) do not bear his credentials; but, on the contrary, "the highest among you must bear himself like the youngest, the chief of you like a servant" (Lk. 22:26). Any concept of the ministry which ignores this basic fact is off to a bad start. Those who are more concerned with sitting on his right hand than with washing their brothers' feet are 180 degrees out of phase with Jesus, and, like sound waves which meet this way, one cancels out the other.

But the noxious weed of dictatorship will only grow in the field that tolerates it; it finds no place in soil that is properly cultivated and laden with fruitful plants. Moreover the mere pulling up of weeds will not produce a good garden. Critics of the institutional church who do not replace the chaff of autocracy with the wheat of responsible freedom serve no useful purpose, for in the final analysis they only say that a desert is better than a briar patch. Those who are never led to the promised land may indeed find Egypt better than the wilderness.

Commitment and Rule . . .

If imperious overseers in the church are corrupting the divine order by monopolizing the ecclesiastical functions, are we willing to commit ourselves to these functions? If not, all our arguments are defaulted by lack of commitment. I am afraid that when some of us looked up *commitment* in the dictionary, we read the wrong definition: we saw it as "the act of referring to a committee" rather than "the state of being bound to a course of action." People who wish to evade responsibility need not argue about the best way of doing it. Nobody cares.

Advocates of a dominant clergy regard as Exhibit A 1 Tim. 5:17: "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching." The word *rule* is dressed in all its secular connotations—which Jesus declared invalid in the citations above

(Mk. 10:42; Lk. 22:26). But only when this word is stripped of unchristian concepts and adorned with the thoughts of Jesus does it have a place in our circle of ideas. The rule mentioned here is no more the exclusive function of elders than preaching and teaching. Let's take a closer look at it.

The Greek counterpart of *who rule* (literally "stand before") is translated *he who gives aid* in Rom. 12:8 RSV: ". . . he who contributes, in liberality; *he who gives aid*, with zeal; he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness." The RSV rendering seems preferable to that of the KJV ("he that ruleth") because the context deals with acts of love instead of positions of authority. The passage can hardly be dealing with any so-called "official" ministry.

However the word (*proistemi*) is used twice of elders and once of deacons in 1 Tim. 3, where it is translated "manage." Of the elder it is said: "He must *manage* his own household well," and "if a man does not know how to *manage* his own household . . ." And of the deacons: "Let them *manage* their children and their households well." If *manage* is the correct translation, it must not be assumed that an elder or deacon manages the church in the same way he manages his household. There are numerous differences between a household and a church. One is that there is no such gap in maturity and capability between adults in the church as exists between a father and his children.

But these verses do not really say that elders and deacons manage the church; they rather say that an elder should *take care of* the church. "If a man does not know how to manage his own household, how can he *care for* God's church?" *Care for* translates an entirely different (but virtually synonymous) word, which is used elsewhere in the New Testament only of the Good Samaritan,

who, finding the hapless victim on the Jericho road, "brought him to an inn, and *took care of him*," and later told the innkeeper to "*take care of him*" (Lk. 10:34-35).

A noun form of *proistemi* is used in reference to "our sister Phoebe, a deaconess of the church at Cenchreae . . . for she has been a *helper* of many and of myself as well" (Rom. 16:1-2). Phoebe "stood before" Paul and others like elders "stand before" the church—not to wield authority, but to manifest concerned care.

Love in Action . . .

These passages help us to bring our concept of leadership into line with Jesus' statement that the leader among his people is "one who serves" (Lk. 22:26). That service consists of providing aid to those in need, particularly the sort of aid rendered by the Good Samaritan. In modern terms, it means picking up the mugging victim, taking him to a motel and watching over him during the night, providing the medical attention and comfort needed, and leaving money with the desk clerk the next day so that he will be further cared for. It means being committed to the life of love to the extent that people—including total strangers—are more important to you than anything else at the moment. And, in the context of 1 Tim. 5:17, it means being so concerned about the spiritual welfare of others that you "work hard at teaching and preaching." Thus the leadership of the church is defined in the New Testament in terms of love in action. The authority it implies—and the *only* authority it implies—is that of taking the lead in showing earnest care for those in need, whether that need is spiritual or physical.

Studying the episcopal responsibilities of the church leads to a similar conclusion. The

Greek *episkopos* (bishop, overseer) has enjoyed considerable discussion in relation to the ministry, but the corresponding verb (which appears in two forms in the New Testament—*episkeptomai* and *episkopeo*; the two are to be regarded as one since they form one paradigm) is often ignored, and it is particularly instructive. “Look after” is usually a good English equivalent, although “to visit” is the most frequent translation. (The visit must be understood, not as a social call, but an approach to someone with the intention of giving aid.) Except for the textually uncertain 1 Pet. 5:2 (“exercising the oversight”), the verb is not directly connected with bishops in the New Testament. It is frequently used in Luke-Acts of the visitation of God and others. Otherwise it indicates the general duties of Christians.

New Testament Usage . . .

A good illustration is Mt. 25:36, where Jesus pictures himself saying in the judgment: “I was sick and you *visited* me.” The reply uses *come*: “When did we . . . come to you?” Again he says: “I was . . . sick and in prison and you did not *visit* me.” The reply this time uses *minister*: “When did we . . . not minister to you?” This variety of word usage shows their “oversight” to be coming to those in distress and ministering to them. The needs in this case were mostly physical.

Another instance is Jas. 1:27, where the positive side of pure religion is defined thus: “. . . to *visit* orphans and widows in their affliction.” Here again “to visit” means “to look after” or “oversee” with a view to relieving affliction. One naturally thinks of providing food, clothing and shelter to those without visible means of support, but emotional and spiritual requirements may also be involved.

Oversight with a different aim is enjoined in Heb. 12:15: “*See to it (episkopeo)* that no one fail to obtain the grace of God; that no ‘root of bitterness’ spring up and cause trouble, and by it the many become defiled; that no one be immoral or irreligious like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal.” Hermann Beyer comments on this passage: “It is worth noting that *episkopein* here expresses an attitude which displays the responsibility of the community for the eternal salvation of all its members, and that what later became the specific task of the one, of the leader, is thus represented as a matter for the whole congregation. The congregation as a whole is understood to have as such an essential episcopal ministry and office” (*TDNT*, II, 604).

This episcopal responsibility of the whole church entails struggling with stragglers on the journey of life and demands alertness to any tendency which might prevent one from attaining God’s purpose for him. The evil heart of unbelief must be dispelled. Sin which might cause many to be defiled must be nipped in the bud. Such oversight must focus particularly on modern Esaus—men who live for the moment, to whom immediate attainment of sensual purpose is more important than any other end in life, men who place so little value on their religious heritage that they will turn it loose for temporal material relief—the “hunting, shooting, fishing” type.

So leadership in the New Testament is spelled s-e-r-v-i-c-e. Such words as *bishop*, *leader*, or *ruler* cannot be defined according to secular usage, because Jesus gave them a new orientation. Even Christians often fail as lexicographers of the ministry because they, like James and John, think too much of rank and too little of service. Therefore we will do well to correct organizational

errors which distract the whole church from its ministerial task, and we will do even better to positively direct all our brothers toward true commitment to the service which their discipleship implies.

Requirements for Rulers . . .

Such commitment exacts a price, and we must be willing to pay it. A Christian leader must reject personal interests which conflict with his work, saying no to himself and taking up his cross. He is essentially a pioneer, who cuts through new territory, faces the unknown, runs risks, and is not afraid to begin walking on the water because he has his eyes on Jesus. He does not hesitate to set his faith up against humanistic philosophy because he knows it will stand. But before we can function as responsible leaders, we must have certain qualities.

We must learn to cry. One unforgettable memento of the Vietnam war is a picture of a young girl running naked and screaming toward the camera, her body burned by napalm and her heart filled with terror. Your reaction to that picture is a window to your heart. We must “be wretched and mourn and weep” over suffering other than our own. We must not shut our eyes to the undying death of the ghetto, the hopelessness of the prison, the groping of the lonely heart or the barren existence of those who have no one to care. We must sit where they sit and hurt where they hurt. If we want to do something, we can find a way. “I know the Lord will find a way for me”—if I think not just of a way out of my own misery, but of a way to heal the broken heart of another.

Jesus wept! Stop reading for a moment and meditate on that. He is our example. So also is the brokenhearted Hosea, who

couldn’t turn loose of his unfaithful wife, and who mirrored in his own heart the agony of heaven over people who seem determined to ruin their lives. Today our own kind are destroyed for lack of knowledge, but do we care? How long has it been since Jeremiah-like tears warmed your face? (Perhaps we would be more like him if we read him more.) That wonderful saint was a spectacular failure in staying the apostasy of his time, but he knew how to weep.

I am sure that one reason this generation ignores us is that we preach lostness and hell with dry eyes. Surely, they think, no one can be serious about such things and show so little compassion. They compliment us by rejecting our message rather than indicting our hard hearts. Unless we improve our practice, we would be much better off to stop talking about the lost.

We must be better informed. Not only do we need to know the Bible better, but we also need to know the terms in which modern man thinks and the philosophical influences under which he lives. I am tortured by the anti-intellectualism among us. If our goal is to keep moving people from one sect to another, a few proof-texts will do; but if we are to reach the majority—who do not believe the Bible—we must have more preparation. We need to shelve our simplistic tracts, archaic commentaries and obsolete sermons, and deal with modern man where he is—which is what too many of us do not know. Rather than making a career of ignorance, let’s seize the help that is readily available. There are numerous up-to-date books (I particularly like Francis Schaeffer) which we should be reading, or, better, using in training sessions.

Even the best emotions will not atone for inexcusable ignorance. Job’s friends showed

commendable zeal in sitting with that sufferer for seven days, and their tears upon seeing him manifested compassion. But when they opened their mouths, they were dry streams in the desert, physicians of no value, because they missed his problem a country mile. Our uninformed presuppositions may cause us to bleed a man who needs a transfusion.

We must keep our spirits up. I often get tired of my brothers leaving too many things up to me. I grow weary of facing defeat. I become discouraged when surrounded by indifferent hearts and indolent minds (although I usually underestimate the success of my labors and the virtue of my brethren). But the true pioneer keeps on when nobody listens . . . or helps . . . or cares. He gets discouraged—we should worry about him if he didn't—but he never gives up. Jesus was not back-slapped to the cross; he only fulfilled his mission by going on when everybody else stopped. Watch and pray; the Spirit urges you along, but the flesh is weak.

We need greater certainty. Such a statement may bother some who are sick of know-it-all attitudes, but we should not allow our reactions to the foolishness of arrogant men to set us adrift without oars. Our evangelical message provides the absolutes today's world must have. Liberal theology leaves people with nothing definite to hang on to. We need to stress the dichotomy between the kingdom of God and the world, between Christianity and alternative philosophies. We do not merely have *an* answer to human futility, we have the *only* answer. Paul was not ashamed of the gospel; we should not be. Our God is real.

We need more gratitude. We must know in our hearts that we walk the streets in an-

other man's shoes, because He died for us. Those who have no good news to tell cannot evangelize. The paramount reason for the early church's success in turning the world upside down was that it consisted of people who had felt the force of unlimited love and forgiveness. To know that love is the very essence of our love, for it is the love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts. "We love because he first loved us." Unless we know he did, we won't. Unloved, unloving.

We need positive action. This may seem a truism, since action is implied in the foregoing desiderata, but the heart of leadership is inspiring people to act. Most people only follow someone else. We therefore need that someone to step out in front and say, "Follow me." We need disciples who will stand while others are sitting and say, "I will do this." Church business meetings have a high yawn factor because they are primarily superfluous talk. Those who find a task and do it are the real leaders.

Conclusion . . .

The advertising slogan "the quality goes in before the name goes on" should describe the ministry. It would be naive to think that we will ever be free of ambitious men who want to make the work to which they are appointed *exclusive* rather than *intensive*, but a better understanding of Biblical teaching about service will help us to keep them a minor irritation rather than a major disease. However, the first question to be asked is not what others are, or are not, doing, but whether we as individuals in the body are fulfilling our responsibilities of ruling and oversight. Our criticism of corruption will be more credible when we prove by positive action that we are ready to rule. □

The Spirit and Semantics

PHIL SPEER

Nashville, Tennessee

The Bible is a systematic expression of the will of God rather than a potpourri of conflicting statements. Paradoxically, however, the Bible does not attempt to make complete, absolute statements about every subject. These characteristics of Scripture are nowhere more important than in an analysis of the Holy Spirit of God. An understanding of Holy Spirit baptism and speaking in tongues must rise above oversimplified tenets.

Holy Spirit Baptism . . .

Perhaps 90% of the difficulties in understanding the Holy Spirit could be resolved if two passages were taken into account: the conversion of Cornelius in Acts 10 and the experience of the Spirit among Samaritan Christians in Acts 8.

When Cornelius' family began speaking in tongues as a result of Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 10:44-48), Peter was amazed that the phenomenon occurred with Gentiles. The apostles had been promised Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 1:5), and they experienced it on Pentecost (2:1-4). Peter confirmed that Cornelius "received the Holy Spirit just as we have" (10:47). A problem arises at this point for it is difficult to ascertain whether he means that "we" applies to the apostles only, or to the apostles and the 120 brethren who waited on Pentecost for the baptism of the Holy Spirit (1:15-2:4). The apostles obviously took the lead in the ministry, but were the 120 baptized with the Holy Spirit

too? If only the apostles were baptized with the Spirit on Pentecost, then Holy Spirit baptism seems to have set a landmark in Christianity by heralding the first Jewish, and the first Gentile, Christians. If the 120 experienced Holy Spirit baptism with the apostles, then Holy Spirit baptism is not necessarily an exclusive, unique experience. In either case, Christian baptism was the norm for initiation into Christ and the church, and this water baptism, rather than Holy Spirit baptism, is evidently the "one baptism" for Christians later mentioned by Paul in Eph. 4:5. Holy Spirit baptism served a distinct purpose in launching the newborn church.

Jesus possessed the Spirit without measure (Jn. 3:34), but the Holy Spirit came to men in varying measures, portions, or manifestations. Holy Spirit baptism was the most complete measure given to men in the New Testament, and this measure carried with it the power to pass on a secondary measure through the laying on of hands. However, those who received the laying on of hands could not pass the same power to others. This limitation is implied in the case of Philip the evangelist and the Samaritan Christians.

Philip had received the laying on of hands from the Holy Spirit-baptized apostles (Acts 6:5-6), but he could not pass on this power to the converted Samaritans (8:12-18). The apostles made a special trip from Jerusalem to Samaria to lay hands on the Samaritans

(8:14-15). The Scriptures teach that "the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands" (8:18). The laying on of hands was a measure of the Spirit which served a distinct purpose in strengthening the infant church.

Speaking in Tongues . . .

Both incidents of Holy Spirit baptism mention speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues was also a secondary gift of the Spirit mentioned in the list of nine special gifts in 1 Cor. 12:4-11. Speaking in tongues was teaching the gospel in foreign languages in Acts 2, for Luke records that each one heard them speaking in his own language (v. 6). The purpose of tongues was to overcome the language barrier in spreading the Good News about Jesus and the church. In opposition to this view, an argument has been made for a broader interpretation to include joyful, unintelligible ecstasy as an expression of speaking in tongues. However, the consequences of either argument are relatively insignificant, since love is overwhelmingly more important than speaking in tongues (1 Cor. 13). Controversy has also revolved around when the tongue-speaking phenomenon was to cease. "When the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away" (1 Cor. 13:10) is a statement that has been interpreted in various ways. The finality of this polemic, as in any vexed Biblical question, is not nearly as important as our attitude.

Those who claim to speak in tongues usually claim Holy Spirit baptism; and the conclusion reached by their opponents is that speaking in tongues has ceased (from 1 Cor. 13:8-12) and that Holy Spirit baptism was limited to the apostles and Cornelius' family; therefore, such persons must be false and their claims unacceptable. Is such castigation and disfellowship the only alternative?

Will an adamant stance close our minds to the working of the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life?

Be Filled with the Spirit . . .

Simple observation makes it apparent that all Christians do not have the Holy Spirit in a measure like Jesus and the apostles possessed, but such restrictions do not preclude the Holy Spirit in the Christian's life in any and all measures. The Holy Spirit is given to the baptized believer at his birth into Christ (Acts 2:38; Jn. 3:5). The Spirit dwells in the Christian (Ro. 8:11). He works within us to bring forth good fruits (Gal. 5:22-23). He represents God and Christ in us (Ro. 8:9) and sanctifies us (Ro. 15:16). We are also commanded to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). Since the Scriptures teach that the Spirit is an integral part of the Christian's life, spending so much effort in disclaiming the works of the Spirit will not incline us to seek an increase of his presence.

Is the Spirit the Word?

Some contend that the Spirit is exclusively found in the Word of God, and that being filled with the Spirit means to be filled with Scripture. The Word is "the sword of the Spirit" (Eph. 6:17), but this does not make the terms synonymous. The Word, as a sword, is an instrument by which the Spirit works. The Spirit and the Word are separate entities, for they are named singly in two lists in Scripture (1 Thess. 1:5; Heb. 6:4-5). The Spirit works both through the Word which he revealed and as a living being in the Christian (note esp. Gal. 4:6).

Conclusion . . .

The foregoing reasoning may or may not harmonize with your logic, but agreement is irrelevant to the major point which I now

wish to propose. It becomes apparent that the variety of possible assumptions account for several ultimate conclusions. We are not commanded to be baptized with the Holy Spirit, but we are commanded to be filled with the Spirit. God does not become confused over semantics. If a baptized believer calls himself "baptized with the Holy Spirit" when in reality his life reflects being "filled with the Spirit," God surely recognizes the weakness and frailties of expression. If a baptized believer claims to speak in tongues when in reality he is joyfully expressing himself in uncontrollable and unintelligible speech, God surely extends his grace for the wrong use of terms. Our logical attempts

to organize and schematize are only feeble mental gymnastics at best. To obey the command of being filled with the Spirit implies a conscious cognizance of the Spirit's presence, while quenching, resisting and grieving the Spirit imply a conscious disallowance and rebellion of the Spirit's activity.

Let's praise God when the effervescent believer is uninhibited in emotion and enthusiasm, like the eunuch who went on his way rejoicing! Let's praise God when a believer feels the presence of the Spirit in joy and love! If God can be loving and tolerant, why can't we? Love holds a higher priority than the negative condemnation of all human error. □

Thorns in Our Flesh

WILLIAM MITCHELL MURPHY

Poplar Bluff, Missouri

Many preachers see themselves as the final and foremost source of Biblical knowledge. Though knowledgeable in the Scriptures, preachers should not maintain an arrogance in regard to the knowledge. Arrogance will curtail learning, make one unacceptable to God, and limit his effectiveness.

Educational opportunities are often a cause of this attitude. Many seem to believe their formal study of the Bible has placed them in a special elevated group. Like the Pharisees of old, they regard the people as "cursed not knowing the law" (Jn. 7:45-49).

Others develop this attitude through bad experiences. Anyone with any ability knows

there is an element of ignorance in the brotherhood. Unfortunately the element occasionally develops enough power to dismiss a minister or make his tenure miserable. Such incidents leave bad impressions and feelings. Consequently, the minister may generalize about the intelligence, honesty and goodness of the brotherhood. He may also esteem himself too highly at this point.

Ministering brothers, please get things back into their proper perspective. Elders, shut the mouths of those oppressive, unruly fellows who are factious and divisive. Brethren, let us work together for His glory in the assurance of his promises. □

Mind If I Ask a Question?

DEAN THOROMAN

Who would have thought one innocent question could cause so many problems? It apparently started in an adult (?) Bible study (?) class when Ned Newcomer wanted to know if it was O.K. to ask a question and the teacher—a church officer—said, “Fine! You feel perfectly free to ask anything you want to in this class!” So Ned said he’d like to know why the group never allowed women to pray in public.

Well . . . one thing led to another and some of what happened wasn’t pleasant. As a matter of fact, the inquisitive new member began to feel that his first mistake was in asking if he could ask because he assumed that the answer to that question was as honest as his desire to learn. But we’re getting ahead of ourselves. Does the sequence of events which will be described sound like anything you have known or observed?

To begin, let’s consider the teacher’s response. He was obviously stunned and expressed surprise that anyone could have gone through the group’s indoctrination proceedings without becoming aware of the simple and logical reasons behind the ban on publicly expressed prayers by women. Once having recovered from the initial shock he launched into a stalwart defense of the group position, punctuating his discourse with several scriptural references which seemingly supported the argument that the group position was really God’s position and therefore not subject to further questions or interpretation.

However, as quite often happens when neophytes forget their place, others in the class decided to express feelings which they had long suppressed. More shock treatment for the teacher! Some of the “old-timers” had wondered about the group position for many years but had said nothing because rumor had it that airing one’s doubt was one fast way of daring to be out. One brave soul even ventured to say that she thought the teacher may have misinterpreted some of the scripture references he had used.

The time schedule for the class ran out before the discussion did so the teacher asked everyone to come prepared to calmly pursue the topic at the next session. He also asked the new member to stop by to see him personally on the way out. No one else heard all the conversation between them but some agreed later that the gist of the teacher’s comments was that such controversial issues were best reserved for private study and that once the topic had been adequately explored the following week future classes should probably be confined to discussion of previously assigned material. Perhaps it is needless to say that the inquirer was more confused than he had been. Somehow it seemed to him that much more than his question was involved but he wasn’t certain just what it was.

During the week matters didn’t improve. There must have been a meeting of the church officers and the minister because Ned Newcomer received calls from each of them

and the message was almost identical—don’t worry about subjects you don’t understand and play it cool when it comes to pressing your personal belief. Also, he was encouraged to keep in mind that it is fine to have personal convictions and to investigate but no one should insist on expressing views which cause controversy. Neither should one investigate without help from the proper sources because there are so many unsound, liberal, and ultra-conservative voices around that a young member might have his faith destroyed before it had a chance to be channeled in the right direction.

Further Developments . . .

Ned also welcomed a surprise guest in his home during the week. It was the lady who had dared to question the teacher’s interpretation of scriptures on the previous Sunday. She had stopped in to express her appreciation for the genuine spirit of inquiry which she had detected in this new member and she wanted to renew her determination to think and study for herself. Her quiet encouragement was a great help at just the right time.

What a class there was the next Sunday! It was not as calm as the teacher had hoped because nearly everyone had been studying and each wanted to say something about the subject. There were some unexpected comments which added to the discomfort of all who thought it would be quite easy to defend the traditional scriptural view. One man said he had held the old view for nearly twenty years but that he had never seriously studied the matter until the last few days. His study had led him to a complete turnabout and he was sorry for causing so many problems about the matter in days gone by. Another person said the week’s study had

left the topic in an uncertain state and that further study would have to be done before he could really say what he believed. Yet another stated emphatically that she had always been convinced that the group’s position was the only right one and that her study had more firmly cemented that view. One more person opined that it wasn’t worth all the fuss because the leaders were supposed to understand better than everyone else, so why didn’t they just drop the subject, get back to the Bible, and stick with the officers?

As the class came to a close, the teacher announced that the leaders had decided that the issue was not to be argued further in class and that the discussion for the next week would be on the regular lesson. He also made it clear that more public discussion could only be interpreted as a sign of rebelliousness against the authority of the leaders. Such action would have to be dealt with severely for the good of the group and any additional questions on this topic would have to be directed exclusively to the officers or the minister.

You have probably guessed what came next. The minister devoted his entire sermon to the Biblical position regarding women in the church. For some reason his references paralleled those first used by the class teacher. His conclusions were identical, so that should have settled the matter. Right? Wrong! Someone had the nerve to suggest that *both* were in error.

Those who have never rocked boats, questioned status quo, nor defied a power structure have no idea how exciting such ventures can be. In some church circles that is the easiest way I know to be branded as a trouble-maker and in those same circles such branding is almost a permanent kiss of death. Ned Newcomer really had no knowledge of

such political shenanigans when he asked if it was all right to ask questions, but he learned some things in a hurry which might have been delayed indefinitely had he not innocently asked about what some viewed as an impertinent matter for one so new to the faith.

Ned's natural timidity kept him from insisting on better answers to several questions which had grown out of the original confrontation. However, others were more aggressive and the issues became increasingly clear. Just as Ned had suspected—there was more to the situation than merely dealing with his specific original question. For example, people were now asking about matters such as the following: What is the true "authority" of church leaders? Does any man or group of men have any control over another person's faith? Is there any topic which cannot be honestly questioned and openly explored? What views may an individual hold which he cannot openly express? Why should anyone who is secure in his

personal convictions feel threatened by the free expression of convictions which may be diametrically opposed to his? What convictions may one express but never press? Who ultimately decides what an individual may believe and practice?

How was all this resolved? It wasn't! The issues have not been settled—and there's a good chance they never will be. You see, it really is true that each one must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling and that each of us must give account of himself before God.

The church is large enough to accommodate newcomers as well as old-timers. It is capable of accomplishing much while absorbing great diversity. Why don't a lot of us start a "people movement" within the church with the goal of working around factionalism as we reach out in love toward each one we believe God loves? Do you see the possibility of sharing the *GOOD NEWS* with many more than are presently hearing and telling it? Let's turn our faith loose! □

MEMO FROM THE EDITOR

To keep our mailing list from becoming encumbered with uninterested readers, we have a policy of dropping those who move without sending us their change of address. When you move, *Integrity* will not be forwarded to you, but will be returned to us. This procedure is not without faults. Occasionally the local carrier will return a copy by mistake, thereby causing the addressee to be dropped—unless we just happen to know he has not moved. We know of no way to overcome this problem except to remind you that *if you do not receive your copy in due time, you should notify us*. Also you should check to see that your address label is correct in every detail. *If it is not, notify us*. Some are returned for the slightest deviation. Sometimes a new carrier will interpret the rules more strictly than his predecessor. If you want it, we don't want you to miss it!

FREE to Be Filled to Witness

JERRY OWEN

Grand Blanc, Michigan

Those of us who have tried to get our alcoholic loved ones to quit drinking by shutting off their supply are well aware that it just won't get the job done. Our God also recognized that the patient must have something to take the place of strong drink—something that would give relief and fill a need. His instructions through Paul were: "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).

Those who have given up legalism sometimes find the joy of their new freedom begins to subside after a time. Again, our Father recognized that our cup (emptied of legalism by Christ's death on the cross) must be refilled with a *better* ingredient—something that would provide power! And sure enough, he again prescribes the *Spirit*. Hear the words of Jesus: "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

However, the circle is still incomplete. It's as if Jesus saved the end objective as his parting remarks to impress us with their importance. His words must have echoed from the clouds, ". . . and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). Jesus' mission on earth was not complete—he had set us free and promised power to equip us for *witnessing*.

Focusing, then, on witnessing as the end objective, we see another link in the chain to

activate thirst for the Spirit by the alcoholic. If he can be counseled to see himself in a useful role of helping other alcoholics, he is more likely to desire the necessary power (through the Spirit) to help others while simultaneously having his own needs fulfilled.

But wait! This same principle applies to *us*—who are not thirsty for wine, but aren't really thirsty for more of the Spirit either. Perhaps we need to duplicate the devout prayer session of the 120 followers of Christ as recorded in Acts 1 and 2. They already had a measure of the Spirit (some had even performed miracles), but now the task of carrying the gospel to the whole world lay before them. They had been counseled by Jesus himself, and yet Jesus felt they needed some time to tarry and pray. As they communed with God concerning the great task ahead, they must have first begun to realize their personal inadequacies. And then one of them likely reminded the others of Jesus' promises to send the comforter, to provide power, to be with them to the end. Perhaps they then had a round of intense prayer to God and began to marvel at the wonder of it all. Yes, communion with God through prayer provides *total* perspective, increased motivation, faith and love. Their joy also returned—their anticipation heightened! No wonder they now felt a need and desire for the power that was to come from an overwhelming dose of the Spirit!

So come on Jews, Gentiles, bond and free, we of little faith—let's grab a dipper and head for the fountain in prayer (1 Cor. 12:13). When we've drunk enough of the Spirit to fill all the empty spots and needs in our lives, *let's go back for seconds*. Oh the *joy* as God's love and power are released during the overflow!

We are indeed free—to be filled, to witness—with power. Truly, "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us" (Ro. 5:5). □

Letters to the Editor

Too Different . . .

Of all the superfluous distinctions that need not be made, surely author Lemley's effort to transfer baptism from the category of "gospel" to "response to the gospel" must head the list. Since salvation depends upon one's making a proper response to the gospel (2 Thess. 1:8) including baptism into Christ (Rom. 3:3-6), what difference does it make whether one teaches error involving the gospel or error involving one's response to the gospel?

Surely even a casual student of the New Testament will recognize that Paul's affirmation that he himself "came not to baptize" does not mean he did not preach baptism as the means by which one obeys the gospel (Gal. 3:27).

In warning of our "obsession to be different," it appears that Mr. Lemley has fallen victim to such an obsession himself.

JOE D. SCHUBERT

Jacksonville, Florida

Oh, Freedom . . .

It is my fervent prayer that you . . . will not let anything deter you from publishing *Integrity*. It is so desperately needed in our brotherhood and it is having its effect. I praise God for the freedom that you can have in publishing it.

While I enjoy all the articles, whether or not I agree with a writer's point of view, I do especially appreciate your articles and the ones by Craig Watts. Please dedicate yourselves to more and more written articles. Bro. Watts' article on the Galatian Heresy this past year is something I have known and felt for a number of years, but no one had ever put it into such a pointed article before for me.

I wish I could tell you to use my name but I can't for now. There are many who would use it against the work that many of us are trying to do . . . I don't have that freedom yet. But I am a free man spiritually in my blessed Savior.

NAME WITHHELD

ANNOUNCING A NEW JOURNAL FOR RESTORATION READERS

What should prove to be a very interesting and informative monthly journal will make its debut this month. Each issue of *FORUM-7* will deal with one particular question suggested by readers and selected by a widely-representative Editorial Committee as being of broad general interest. In addition, several pages each month will provide a Forum Feedback where any reader can reply or question what was said in earlier forums. News

coverage of significant events will also be provided.

FORUM-7 is edited by Ray Downen, director of Mission Outreach. He will be assisted by several other notables representing various branches of the Restoration Movement. As its name and the make-up of its staff imply, *FORUM-7* will be a vehicle of expression for varying points of view.

Each issue will contain 32 pages of reading (the first one will probably be shorter) in addition to advertising copy. Subscriptions are now being accepted at the rate of \$6 per year by Mission Outreach, 1111 N. Main, Joplin, Mo. 64801. We urge you to write immediately for a free copy of the first issue.

What Is Man?

CECIL MAY, Jr.

Vicksburg, Mississippi

"Why don't you preach about humanity?"

That question is sometimes asked with good reason. Preachers may so concern themselves with minute questions regarding the essence of God or the whys and wherefores of his workings that they forget to concern themselves with man, God's creature, the object of God's love.

On the other hand, the question is sometimes asked cynically of those who do concern themselves with man but from the standpoint of God's message to man. The subject of humanity is a broad one and the faithful proclaimer of God's message will bear on some aspect of the subject every time he preaches. But if humanity is to be dealt with in any meaningful way, the crucial question to ask is, "What is man?"

Is man simply an animal, more highly evolved than any other, destined in the future to give way to some other more adaptable or more highly developed species? If so, why preach about him at all? Or be concerned about him? Why not preach about ants? Or orangutangs?

Is man simply the inevitable result of the blind accidental movements of molecules and atoms set in motion by some unknown and unknowable first cause? If so, discussion and preaching become meaningless anyway. In that case our thoughts are just the way our brain molecules chanced to move, and have no meaning or relevance anyway.

Or is man the numbered product of the technological age: Soc. Sec. 309-52-9138, Driver's Lisc. 663-205-4163, BAC 326—etc., etc.? I heard a nurse in a hospital recently say to the head nurse, "Room 18 needs an enema, and number 6 didn't get his shot." Is that all we are? Just numbers? How do you preach about numbers? What do you say to one?

Or is man, as the Bible affirms, created by God in His own image and for his glory, possessing a divinely-breathed spirit and a God-given intelligence? Is he placed here to serve the God who created him, by obeying His will and loving the other creatures He also made, as the Bible affirms? If so, then maybe the proper study of man is God, after all.