

Integrity

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INTEGRITY seeks to encourage all believers in Christ to strive to be one, to be pure, and to be honest and sincere in word and in deed, among themselves and toward all men.

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FROM ALTAR TO AX

Hoy Ledbetter

MAKING PREACHING RELEVANT

Don Finto

THE NAME GAME

Paul H. Keckley, Jr.

A WOMAN'S RESPONSE TO WOMEN'S LIB

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From Altar to Ax

The 25th year of my preaching ministry has just ended. Like others of similar experience, I have seen many vicious fights among those who have pledged allegiance to the Prince of Peace. The greatest threat to our work has been the inclination of believers to go to war with each other. Often, and more often in recent years, these wars have been camouflaged as doctrinal disputes when they were really nothing more than conflicting lusts among sensual men and women. I no longer dream of eliminating such clashes, but we must never lose heart in setting forth the Lord's message about fighting among his people. Which is what I will try to do now.

James 4:1 is directed to this very subject: "Where do all the fights and quarrels among you come from? They come from your passions, which are constantly fighting within your bodies." "Passions" are really "lusts for pleasure"; the Greek word is *hēdonai*, "pleasures," the source of our "hedonist." Thus James confronts us with the recurrent reality of hedonistic tendencies among Christians, and the ensuing fights and quarrels.

We must expect the hedonist to pursue unrelentingly whatever gives him pleasure. It may be power, money, sexual satisfaction, personal recognition, or many other things. He will, of course, be slow to admit within a Christian society that he is a pleasure-seeker and will try to obscure his real goals with a smoke screen of religious devotion—perhaps

fanaticism. The hedonist who is not a punctilious worshipper is never a serious threat to ecclesiastical tranquillity.

In verse 2 James uses "desire" instead of "pleasure," and there is a close connection: pleasure is desire satisfied, desire is pleasure sought. Both imply misery; on the one hand that of one who cannot get what he wants, and on the other that suffered by someone who stands between a hedonist and his goal. The ruinous effect of lust for pleasure is well brought out in verse 2: "You want things, but you cannot have them, so you are ready to kill; you covet things, but you cannot get them, so you quarrel and fight."

Although "covet" in the latter clause is a good translation, "strive with envious greed" (i.e., for what others possess) is a sharper expression of the original, in view of the "you cannot get them" which follows it. Envy and greed, of course, are not unrelated sins. An envious man does not see another person as one made in God's image; he sees rather the *things* associated with him. He is blind to individual value because his eyes are constantly diverted to things, for which his desire may take the path of either envy or covetousness.

James' declaration has been a stumbling block to many who cannot see murder in this context; but there is no need to dilute what he says. That homicidal tendencies can survive a trip to the altar is evident from the

story of Cain and Abel. They were both worshippers, and (contrary to those who see the pattern concept of worship in Genesis 4) there is no evidence that the substance of Cain's sacrifice was less acceptable than Abel's. We need not doubt the cereal offering was consonant with God's wishes (such offerings were enjoined in the law of Moses). Cain's problem was not that he brought a bad offering, but that he brought it with a bad attitude. Abel offered by faith (Heb. 11:4), Cain did not; hence Abel's sacrifice was "more acceptable."

When the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, but not for Cain and his, Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell (i.e., he became dejected). At this point the Lord issued a warning which, if heeded, would have prevented the disaster that followed: "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is couching at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it." But how did Cain fail to "do well," and in what sense was sin "couching at the door"? Since these questions are not expressly answered in the text, we must look elsewhere for clues to God's reason for rejecting Cain.

Basis of Judgment . . .

1 John 3:12 tells us that Cain was "of the evil one" and that the reason he murdered his brother was because of Abel's superior righteousness. To this statement John attaches an exhortation: "Do not wonder, brethren, that the world hates you." The sensual saint (if I may use such contradictory terminology), no less than the pagan, will be envious of, and hostile toward, those who are his moral and spiritual superiors. This was Cain's problem, and when he suggested a trip into the field where he could swish the

life out of his brother, he was merely carrying to its ultimate conclusion a resentment that had been burning within him for some time. Of course, God had been aware of it when the two brothers worshipped together, and had warned Cain about it, but the "lust for pleasure" was too strong; he was irrecoverably "of the evil one."

A slightly different illustration of what harm this "striving with envious greed" will do is provided by Ahab, who failed to obtain Naboth's vineyard. But the "vexed and sullen" Ahab was not as wanton as Cain. Instead, he allowed his alter ego, Jezebel, to do what he himself did not have the stomach for. She arranged for Naboth's murder and encouraged Ahab to take possession of the vineyard. Sometimes all a bad man needs is a faithful wife to urge him on.

But let us not permit all this attention to murderers to obscure the relevance to us of James' declaration. Although I have for many years worked in the vicinity of "murder city" (Detroit), I have never known one of the brethren to literally kill another. How close some have come I cannot say, but I have no knowledge of actual murder. There is too much social discouragement for that. Neither do I think real murder was a problem within the church in James' time. What he would want us to learn is that many of us are potential murderers because of the "lusts for pleasure" within us.

But however that may be, fights and quarrels are exceedingly common. Yet even these are subject to social scorn, and we therefore attempt to place them within a contrived context of a worthy cause—either by inflating the nobility of our cause, or by exaggerating the vices of our opponents. Thus we attempt—perhaps unconsciously—to justify the fights and quarrels which arise from our conflicting lusts for pleasure.

A crusade against false teachers may be nothing more than a symptom of someone's lust for pleasure, since the initiator, even without realizing it, may be seeking glory as a champion of righteousness or attempting to demonstrate his superiority over those whom he attacks. (Incidentally, I have observed that heretics and heretic detectors often are much more congenial in private than they are in public.) The public debater may be much more fascinated with his moment in the light than with the triumph of truth.

Elders who insist on their right to rule may be more interested in personal power than scriptural church polity. Those who oppose programs begun by others may be simply jealous for their own ideas. People who are stern with other people's sins may inwardly rejoice in an opportunity to show how much better they are. Preachers who monopolize the pulpit may not be nearly as concerned with quality of preaching as they are with retaining their positions. And the list could go on and on.

As we have already noted in Cain's case, lust for pleasure interferes with listening to God; and Jesus confirms that pleasures choke the word (Mk. 4:19). On the other hand, pleasure not only keeps us from listening when God talks, it also keeps us from talking when he listens. James says, "You do not have what you want because you do not ask God for it." This is a common problem. Fights, quarrels, and striving with envious greed represent the attempts of men to obtain their desires without the help of God. Lustful people find it hard to pray.

Yet some hedonists do pray. James continues: "And when you ask you do not receive, because your motives are bad; you ask for things to use for your own pleasures." Prayer for such people is nothing more than

an instrument of selfishness. They may be compared to an unfaithful wife who nags her husband for money to spend on her paramour—and James does just that: "Unfaithful people [literally adulteresses]! Don't you know that to be the world's friend means to be God's enemy?" Thus he brings us to the cure for Cain, Ahab, and the rest of us potential murderers.

The Solution . . .

Too many of us are trying to live with God when we are actually in love with the world. We can overcome this adulterous situation only by faith, which was the difference between Cain and Abel. God is much more interested in the attitude behind our sacrifices than with their substance, as Psalm 40 indicates:

You do not want sacrifices and offerings;
you do not ask for animals burned whole on
the altar,
or sacrifices to take away sins.
Instead, you have given me ears to hear you,
and so I answered, "Here I am;
your instructions for me are in the book of
the Law.
How I love to do your will, my God!
I keep your teaching in my heart."

One who has this disposition will use the assemblies for a more constructive purpose than that of assaulting his brethren, to wit:

In the meeting of all your people, Lord,
I told the good news that you save.
You know that I will never stop telling it.
I have not kept the news of salvation to myself.
I have always spoken of your faithfulness
and help.
In the meeting of all your people I have not
been silent
about your constant love and loyalty.

Such love for the Lord cannot coexist with resentment, envy, and fighting with our brethren. The antidote to pleasure (in the hedonistic sense) is a living faith in God's "constant love and loyalty" which makes it impossible to keep quiet about it. —HGL

Letters

Negating Nelson

While I have no desire to become involved in a protracted discussion, some of the remarks of Sarah Nelson in her "Questioning Roberts on Order" require an answer, particularly since the editor in the same issue commended her for "the careful way she looks at the scriptures." I am unable to share his enthusiasm.

In the first place, she engaged in the game of wrenching words from their context and then taking offense at them. She accuses me of using the term *subjugation* "within the context of husband-wife relationships," and since the word "has the implication of unwilling servitude, a yoke, a slave mentality," she rejects its use in this context. As a matter of fact, however, the word occurs only once in my letter, not in the context of general husband-wife relationships, but with direct reference to Eve's punishment where her position of subjugation is clearly *imposed* on her from outside herself, by God. In this context *subjugation* says precisely what the text implies. Elsewhere in the letter, when I refer to general husband-wife relationships, I use the term *subjection* for which there is ample biblical precedence.

In the second place, the inconsistency she notes in my position—it is really not my position, but

that of the author of 1 Timothy—ignores the methods of rabbinic exegesis that the biblical writer employs and, in any case, is more apparent than real. Her statement, "The woman's subjection to her husband cannot be a direct result of the fall if it was in effect *before* the fall," is valid only if one refuses to consider *degrees* of subjection. Just as the curse of hard labor placed on Adam does not imply he was idle before the fall, so one may see the fall as making Eve's position vis-a-vis Adam more abject and difficult without assuming a prior situation of absolute equality. Eve was created for Adam, after all, not vice versa (1 Cor. 11:9).

Finally, S. Nelson's exegetical comments on 1 Tim. 2:13 are pure obfuscation. The phrase, "And Adam was first formed, then Eve" does *not* give "an *explanation* of the factors God considered when passing judgment on their sin." It explains nothing twisted in that fashion. Rather, the biblical author, heaping up arguments in good rabbinic fashion, first cites the principle widely accepted in both Jewish and classical antiquity that temporal priority carries with it a priority in value or dignity (cf. the similar logic in Mk. 10:6-9 and note the even closer parallel in thought and logic in 1 Cor. 11:8-9). He then bolsters this first argument with another drawn from the fall story. One may dispute the modern relevance of this view, but few serious commentators would question this as the correct interpretation of 1 Tim. 2:13.

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NOTICE

One way we keep our mailing list confined to interested readers is by dropping those whose copies are returned to us for address changes. Although some carriers are more liberal than others, even very slight changes, such as moving to a different apartment in the same building or changing box numbers, will result in a returned copy and consequent dropping from our list. This arrangement usually works very well. An interested reader will notify us when he moves. If he is a little late and therefore has been dropped, we will reinstate him and—if he asks for them—send him any copies he may have

missed. However, in several instances we know about, people have been dropped who did not move. When their copies were returned marked "Address Unknown" or "Moved, Left No Forwarding Address," we had no way of knowing the carrier was in the wrong. This has happened often enough that we think you should know about it. All we can suggest is that if you fail to receive *Integrity* for a month or so, you should write us. But don't be too hasty. It may take six weeks for a copy to cross this country, and foreign readers have to wait up to five months.

Making Preaching Relevant

DON FINTO

Nashville, Tennessee

There are three requisites to relevant preaching: (1) to know God and his message, (2) to know people and their needs, and (3) to let God use us freely to speak clearly and openly to the people at any cost to ourselves.

This has always been true. It has made the difference between the prophet of God and the false prophet. It was the difference between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, between Zedekiah and Micaiah (2 Chron. 18), between Ezra the priest and Tobiah or Sanballat (Neh. 6). It was relevant preaching that made Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Paul, and Stephen faithful proclaimers of the will of God. It also caused some of them to be very unpopular in their times, and even among very influential or religious people. King Asa of Judah put Hanani in stocks because what he said was relevant (2 Chron. 16:7). Jeremiah, Daniel and Paul were imprisoned. James was beheaded, and Stephen died.

Jesus was the perfect preacher with totally relevant preaching and teaching. He lost his reputation, was called a whoremonger, a wino, was thought at times by his own family to be insane; he was accused of con-

doning sin, of wanting to overthrow the governmental system under which he lived, of blaspheming God, and of much more. All of this was inaccurate. His only desire was to be relevant in sharing the message of God. If we are to be faithful in preaching, this must be our aim.

1. GOD AND HIS MESSAGE

We must know God and his message. I am speaking from the assumption of faith that we have an accurate inspired account of the message of God in Christ, recorded by his close friends Matthew, John, Peter, James and Jude, and from their close friends Mark, Luke and Paul.

I feel no need to have to explain away any of their words. I no longer feel (as I once did) that I wish God had made some points clearer. I think he is quite capable of having made points as clear as he intended to make them, and now intends for us to use patience and love in approaching those points where he was not dogmatic, or points where devout disciples disagree. I do not

care to be more dogmatic than Christ or Paul. I feel no need to write long discourses of pieced-together scriptures to try to disprove some position my brother takes with which I disagree. If he is in Christ and growing, we will both grow closer together, and I must remember that the real characteristic of Christ by which men assess our discipleship is love for each other (Jn. 13:35). I do not need to defend Christ. I simply need to build upon him and know him. There is no other foundation, and I am determined to know nothing else (1 Cor. 3:11; 2:2).

Quotations from modern authors or restoration authors, pro or con, living or dead, may accentuate a point, but should have no bearing on what I believe. Totally unimportant to making God's message clear is our position historically, where a particular paper or college administration stands, unless that happens to be what God has said clearly on the issue. All men are ignorant. All are fallible. Only Christ is truth. He is infallible. His apostles were led into all truth. Only their word is authoritative. Unless the words of a preacher are solidly based on the words of God, they are irrelevant. His opinions are irrelevant. If he is more dogmatic than the clear word of Paul or Peter or the Christ, his words are irrelevant. If he cannot let the words of these prophets speak authoritatively to a situation, his words are irrelevant.

Since God can speak, I must not fear the conclusion to which any man will come when he seeks in the word. If prayerfully and contritely sought, Christ will be found (Mt. 7:7-11).

I fear that my own preaching was relatively powerless for years because I was still trying to defend brotherhood positions rather than simply let God speak. I suspect that our preaching would be more effective if we almost never preached each other's sermons,

but spoke out of our own relationship with the Man—God, Jesus, the Living One.

I believe now that I looked too long at the Bible as something which had to be mastered and memorized (sometimes out of context) in order to win arguments and present the conclusions to which others had arrived and which I felt obligated to defend, rather than looking at the scriptures as the revelation of God to me, to tell me about how God works with his people and to reveal Jesus to me and to instill faith in me that he continues to work.

Problems with Traditions . . .

A few months ago, a student asked me if I was a liberal or a conservative. "If liberalism is one hundred and conservatism is one," he said, "how would you rate yourself?"

"How would you rate me?" I asked.

"About 85," was his reply.

Well, that's pretty liberal and pretty frightening since I have never thought of myself as a "liberal." "I think you'll be surprised at how I rate myself," I finally told the student. "If you are speaking of my regard for and desire to be completely united with God and Christ through the Word, then I want to be number one. If, however, you are talking about traditions, then I'd rate myself one hundred."

I am confident that our unwillingness to leave traditions is causing many of our problems. We have mistaken traditions for scriptures on numerous occasions, then we've tried to go to the scriptures to prove our traditions. Within the last two years a deacon suggested to me that it was wrong to dim lights or turn them out during prayer, since the only evening assembly we have reference to in the New Testament had many lights in the upper chamber.

My own grandmother told what a furor was brought in a church the first time she saw a contribution plate passed through an assembly rather than the people going by the table to "lay by in store on the first day of the week."

And how many, many things have been vetoed and criticized under Paul's admonition to "do things decently and in order"? Our traditions have become the "decent, orderly" way.

Matthew (15) tells us how Christ defied traditions, not in order to bring about disputes, but in order to say to people that they were making laws where there were no laws. I don't think Christ had anything against washing his hands (he even probably thought it was good), but when people started telling him it had to be done, then he had to disagree for their sakes and for the sake of the people whom they were affecting by making a law out of tradition. Our traditions that have become laws need to be broken, so that we can see what is God's message clearly and so that we can relay that message.

Some Illustrations . . .

If you wonder what kind of things I may be referring to, let me suggest unwritten laws in the congregations that I know. There must be a sign out front saying, "Church of Christ," otherwise you are suspect. Each church must have worship assemblies morning and evening on Sunday and at least once during the week. There must be classes for all ages on Sunday morning. There must be a paid evangelist, a song leader, an invitation song, a dismissal prayer and a main prayer (perhaps also an opening prayer). Everyone should bow his head during prayer; none must lift his hands (this is a sign of Pente-

costalism); none must look up; heads must be bowed with eyes closed. There should be little or no kneeling—especially of women; only show-offs would kneel during each prayer in a public assembly. Everyone must look at the song leader during the songs, regardless of what the song is; never look up as though addressing the thoughts to God; posture has nothing to do with your worship.

Be still during the communion; concentrate on the agony of Christ's suffering, but not at this point on the victory of his resurrection; be sad, not joyful. If you have already been to a Christian assembly on a Sunday, do not take communion with the second assembly; sit and watch others commune. Sing only songs out of the book; no one should bring a contemporary Christian message in song, or a scripture recently set to music and expect the congregation to sing it. Every worship hour must have preaching. After a closing prayer, the congregation is dismissed, and secular activities, including programs from Christian college choirs, may begin immediately; they must not be a part of the worship. The whole congregation should participate in every song, during the worship hour; there should be no admonition in song by one or more persons to the whole congregation. Prayer groups and Bible studies in homes should be discouraged; when people start studying on their own, it is dangerous.

Everyone must wear proper clothes to worship. Proper attire for the man is a business suit, with coat and tie; for the woman, a nice dress with proper length skirt (the proper length varies from generation to generation). Of course, all must wear shoes and stockings. No man improperly clothed (without coat and tie) should be allowed to participate in the public worship. Men

should also not be allowed to wear beards, and their hair length should be acceptable (this also varies from generation to generation).

Perhaps I am going too far, but I do think we must see the difference between the message of God through Christ and our tradition, and we must not try to quote scriptures to sustain our traditions. I agree with Lawrence O. Richards' statement in his book *A New Face for the Church*: "There are only two options open to the church today: one is to struggle to patch up the contemporary church, retaining all we can of traditional forms and patterns of life, resisting with all our might the forces that demand change (until the whole edifice crumbles as a new generation rejecting empty form and seeing no meaning, abandons our churches—leaving them to die as gracefully as possible). The other option is to accept the challenge of change, and to channel it—to seek to build together a church which will be a true expression of the Church, yet uniquely suited to our 21st century world." I would add, a church which really becomes the body of Christ.

2. PEOPLE AND THEIR NEEDS

Yes, to be relevant in my preaching, I must know God's message and I must know people and their needs. I must know what is going on in the world at large and in the hearts of my hearers, and I must see this through the eyes of God. I must not pre-judge. Christ saw that things are not what they look on the surface.

He met people who appeared to be very religious, very pious, very godly. They were not. He cut through their pious veneer.

He met others who looked like hopeless sinners, hopelessly entangled in sin. They were not. He saw their potential. God looks at the heart, you know (1 Sam. 16:7). We must see through his eyes.

I remember driving near the university one day, when my eyes landed on a young man who was about the freakiest-looking freak I'd ever seen, and I am accustomed to seeing strangely dressed people. My immediate reaction was one of scorn. He was dirty and almost animal-looking. I felt disgust for him until I began to see him through the eyes of Christ, and to know how he must be crying out for a realization of himself which can only come through the love of God.

We hear a word and categorize people. We see the way a person is dressed and judge him. But we must see people as they really are, with the eyes of God. To do this I must know Christ. I must have submitted my will to his and be allowing him to change me at any cost to me. I must recognize his Lordship over my life. This cannot be the case if I am dishonestly facing myself. I must have prayed the prayer of the Psalmist, "Search me, O God, and know my heart. Try me and know my thoughts and see if there be any wicked way within me and lead me in the paths everlasting" (Ps. 139:23-24). Until I have recognized my own needs, I doubt that I can recognize many of yours. The more I see of God and of myself, the more I can help you. I question the ability of a man to meet needs when he is wearing a facade. I doubt that a preacher who is not relinquishing his own family relationship to the Lord can speak God's message about family relationships.

I am thinking of one of our elders who formerly preached regularly. To the extent that he was racially prejudiced, he could not see racism. It was thrilling for me to read

the eulogy which he was asked to deliver at the death of a former black custodian of the Belmont church and to rejoice that his confession reached the whole church. Let me share a few words with you.

Our esteemed Brother Bonds spent his life, by far the greater share of it, in an environment of great social injustice, discrimination, and racial animosity.

He suffered indignities, embarrassment, and humiliation, and I would be less than honest if I failed to confess that the Belmont Avenue church, for whom Brother Bonds labored a quarter of a century, practiced racial discrimination specifically against Brother Bonds. And even though during the middle of his tenure of work at Belmont he became a baptized believer and a member of the Belmont church, he was not a full member because we knew and he knew that he must stay in his place.

I do not make this confession with any sense of pride but with a large sense of shame, personal shame, for during part of that time I was the minister of the Belmont church.

I am confident that this brother's preaching had no relevancy regarding racial bigotry until he began to recognize the sin of racism in himself. Therefore, the preacher must be a man constantly beseeching the Lord to show him his sin and remove it—at any cost to himself, for the sake of his ministry.

We must be willing to see our own materialism, to face our own sexual temptations and sins, to admit our own pride, to wrestle with our lack of love, to confess our ignorance, to ask God to reveal our jealousy of each other and destroy it. For my preaching to be relevant I must see my own needs and be asking God to take my inadequacy and to fill me with himself.

3. AMBASSADORS FOR CHRIST

I must know God and his message, I must know people and their needs, but then I must step out of the way and let Christ use me freely to speak openly and clearly as an ambassador for Christ, God making his appeal through me (2 Cor. 5:20). Let me be a transparent vessel of Christ. To do this, I must take on more and more of the nature of Christ, having his mind. I will grow in his spirit of compassion, of urgency, of love, of mercy, of kindness, speaking clearly against Satan and his work in the strength of Christ and his Spirit.

I would suggest that this must be done in language understandable to the people with whom we are speaking. Using theological jargon that a person has never heard will not meet his needs. To talk of redemption and priesthood and reconciliation does not mean anything to a person who is just coming to believe in Christ (later they are precious words to him). To demand that Old English be the language of prayers when people are not able to use Old English makes God a God of a select few. The Bible must be translated into the language of the people, even if the translations are imperfect. After all, no translation is perfect (some are better than others), but Christ can be seen and truth can be learned from any translation. We must trust God to bless the seeker, as he said he would (Mt. 7).

I remember giving a Bible to a young girl who had attempted suicide just hours previously, who had had access to Bibles before, but never to one in a modern translation. She began to read Paul's confession of weakness in Romans 7. She could not believe this was the Bible. She had never considered the Bible as being understandable, but she began

to hear someone speaking her own mind: "I don't understand myself at all, for I really want to do what is right, but I can't. I do what I don't want to—what I hate. I know perfectly well that what I am doing is wrong . . ." It moved her to trust God and accept herself again. If I had insisted that she read out of the 1611 translation, she would have missed the force of what Paul was saying: "For that which I do, I allow not; for that I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good." It says the same, but one is an archaic language for many today.

The Consequences . . .

What happens when a preacher brings relevant messages? God speaks, men are changed, but sometimes the preacher takes great risks. One of the dangers of our present located preacher tradition is that we are called upon to meet the spiritual needs of people who are putting the food on our tables. This danger must not be underestimated. We must speak clearly and boldly, yet lovingly and gently, to those in whose houses we are living. We must, admitting our own inadequacy, still not fear to call sin sin, whether in elders, rich men, influential politicians, or town gossips, and regardless of the consequences in our own lives. "Blessed are you when men shall say all

manner of evil against you falsely for my sake . . ." A preacher must be able and willing any day to begin "making tents" if he must in order to speak the message. Compromising preachers are a delight to Satan. God strike us dumb when we begin to compromise his message. Church politics is a damnable game into which Satan has lured us.

What happens when there are preachers who bring relevant messages from God? Christ is made preeminent. His Word is our guide. The church is led by the head, with elders, deacons, preachers, and teachers all following together his leadership and yearning for his direction. Thousands will see the Lord and turn to him. Others will be convicted and will go away in anger. Worship will be meaningful, but some rituals will be broken. Men will become challenged by their own worth in God and begin to present their bodies as living sacrifices to him.

God give us men who know him, not just a book, men who have seen Jesus, and continue to walk and talk with him daily, men who are recognizing their own needs and therefore can recognize the needs of others, and men who will risk everything—reputation, jobs, security—everything to follow him. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and daily take his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever would lose his life for my sake will find it" (Lk. 9:24). □

When we have really understood the actual plight of our contemporaries, when we have heard their cry of anguish, and when we have understood why they won't have anything to do with our "disembodied" Gospel, when we have shared their sufferings, both physical and spiritual, in their despair and their desolation, when we have become one with the people of our own nation and of the universal Church, as Moses and Jeremiah were one with their own people, as Jesus identified Himself with the wandering crowds, "sheep without a shepherd," then we shall be able to proclaim the Word of God—but not till then!

—Jacques Ellul, *The Presence of the Kingdom*

The Name Game

PAUL H. KECKLEY, Jr.

Columbus, Ohio

Ours is a generation of name-callers. One has only to harvest the crop of local journalism to realize this crisis. We have succeeded in making the world black and white, even though God created it in living color. Why is our language spotted with these superficial dichotomies? The answer is readily discovered but implemented with great difficulty. Man is an economizing creature—a thrifty animal. We think in terms of stereotypes because it makes the world more predictable. In so doing, we have categorized humanity into groups: rich/poor, black/white, young/old, liberal/conservative, long hairs/rednecks, with it/out of it. We have pasted name tags on occupational groups (pigs, fuzz, shrinks), races (niggers, spics, wops, chinks), and special interest groups (libbers, radicals). Obviously this writer recognizes the utility of such a game as this. It enables man to understand more with less energy. But any good thing can be overdone to the point that its goodness is overshadowed by the problems that accrue.

This monograph seeks to explain the human preoccupation in the name game from the Jesus perspective. It seeks to eliminate or greatly reduce the popular usage of stereotypical language by making known the negative effect that is produced. Accordingly, two topics will be discussed: first, what is the relationship between the name game and reality represented? and second, how should the Christian play the name game?

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NAME GAME AND REALITY?

As stated above, the human animal is an economizing creature. He attempts to organize his perceived environment and classify the incoming information into easily recalled categories which we call stereotypes. He does so because that which is new must be related to that which is old; that which is unknown must be related to that which is known. For this reason, all long hairs must be college drug addicts, all poor people must be lazy, all liberals must be bent on destruction, and all black people ignorant. He has further processed the information into neat packages of names—hippies, rednecks, and Jesus freaks.

It is true that human beings tend to behave in ways which may be similar, but it is also true that we resent being recognized as less than individual. The name game, when played overtime, lends itself to heightened resentment rather than to increased understanding. Why?

According to the general semanticists, meaning resides in the individual, not in the word. Therefore, what I mean when I use the term “liberal” may be irrelevant to the interpreter’s meaning of the term. As a result, meaningful communication has been aborted. The fact is that language used incorrectly has the power to divide people because people lack the energy to destereotype society—to call time out of the name game.

More central and more alarming than this fundamental human energy crisis is the way the name game is being played in the church. No fewer than half a dozen different descriptions of the modern day liberal have appeared in print in recent months—as if the author of each had received a miraculous gift of objectivity. On the other hand, self-proclaimed liberals have advertised their openmindedness and lifted prayers heavenward for their less endowed brethren. We have by our own volition chosen sides and begun to play the name game in the church. In doing so, we have violated God’s law of transformation so eloquently illustrated in the life of his Son.

HOW SHOULD THE CHRISTIAN RESPOND TO THE NAME GAME?

While growing up this writer was always told to ask a simple question when confronted with a questionable activity: “If He were in my place, what would Jesus do?” Applying this to the name game, one has the

gospel record for assistance in responding. Analysis of Jesus’ interaction with Judaeo-Roman society reveals his use of only one stereotype in a few forms. To Jesus mankind was either saved or lost. He knew that men resent being classed, grouped, and dismissed. He knew that stereotyping was a divisive technique even as it is today. Jesus knew that the name game produces no winners, and history has confirmed his intuition.

As the church moves forward, let it be aware of the power of the name game. Let it be cautious in designating who is and who is not a candidate for membership in local stereotype clubs. Ours is already a divided society, segmented and sliced by every sort of selfish desire. Is the church playing a different game? Only the love of God can unite all men—it is free, conditioned only by man’s total surrender. Let our gaming, therefore, be fashioned out of love, not distrust; out of recognition for the individual, not from stereotypical distortion. Call time out of the name game! □

REACTION

A WOMAN’S RESPONSE TO WOMEN’S LIB

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There have been several articles published in recent issues of *Integrity* on the woman’s place in the church. These have been well-written, thought-provoking articles that have caused me to rethink carefully my traditional conservative viewpoint on the subject. Those who have written the articles offer convincing arguments on the equality of

women and men in Christ (or the superiority of some women over some men), wrangle over definitions of certain words in the original Greek or Hebrew, and cite examples from the Bible of women who exercised leadership roles—“Deborah the Judge and Prophetess of Israel (Judges 4)”; and when I read their articles I find myself being

swayed to agree with some of their conclusions. I do not know Greek or profess to be a Bible scholar, but I believe that any intelligent person who is honestly seeking the truth can search the scriptures and learn what God's will is and what his place as a man, woman, or child is in relationship to others. And when I go back to the Bible searching for the answers to this question of the woman's place, since I am reading from the same "narrow mind" I have always read it from, I come to the same "narrow minded" conclusion: a woman is forbidden to exercise authority over or lead men in either public or private.

It may appear inconsistent for me to hold this viewpoint and submit a paper on any subject for publication to a magazine that is widely circulated among both men and women. However, I feel—and my husband agrees with me—that for too long the women who are satisfied in their role as dictated by scripture and society have kept quiet and let the more aggressive, dissatisfied women speak out on behalf of womanhood. As a result, many people get a distorted picture of our sex. Not all of us seek to be liberated from the bondage to children, housework, husband, and obscurity. Many of us are happy to be "keepers at home." And on behalf of these women, with the permission of my husband, I am submitting this paper.

Jean Salners is a "feminist." I too am a feminist; but in a completely different sense. I am a female and am proud to be so. I believe in the worth and potential of women and I believe that they are as intelligent and as capable as men. However, I am not an advocator of "Women's Lib." I do not feel I need to be liberated. I am happy in my role as a woman and do not feel I am being discriminated against. I am not "brainwashed" or "programmed," neither am I afraid to say what I think. I do not feel I have to apologize for being born female. I have a necessary function to fill as a wife, mother, citizen, and Christian, and I feel completely fulfilled in filling it. I feel I can have an effective ministry with women and children in my community, be of service to all people, and use my mind and capabilities in many ways to profit myself, my children, my husband, and my friends. And I do not feel these are menial tasks. Woman has been celebrated for centuries as the backbone of nations and the maker of men. But she has not achieved this recognition from the lecture stand, the battle front, or the pulpit. She has achieved it

through the quiet and humble atmosphere of her home where she has inspired her children and husband to greatness and has held them steady with her strength.

The Woman's Place in General

In the beginning God created a man. But he realized it was not good for man to be alone, therefore he decided to make a "helper fit for him." So God created a helper for Adam, and Adam called this helper "woman" (Gen. 2:18-23). Woman was never intended to live for her own self. The purpose of her creation was to be a helper for the man. I Corinthians 11:8-9 bears this out: "For man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but woman for man." This in no way degrades woman. In fact, it emphasizes her importance. The previous verse, verse 7, states that "woman is the glory of man." Man could not make it alone in this world, so God gave him a woman to accompany him, help him in his work, sustain him, and sometimes to push him. (Hopefully in the right direction. In Eve's case it was the wrong direction.) She has been given a task to accomplish and has a duty to God to accomplish it as best she can.

The description of the ideal woman in Proverbs 31 is not a picture of a weak, degraded person, neither does it show her to be disgruntled and complaining of her lot. Rather, it shows us a strong, courageous, and happy woman who considers the care of her household her most important task, and yet, a woman who has time and compassion to minister to those in need around her.

Mrs. Salners stated in her article "Full Personhood for Women" that Genesis 3:16 has been mistranslated—that God was really warning Eve "against giving her husband too much authority." I cannot agree with this as this verse is in the context of a curse to the woman for disobeying God. He has just told the snake that "because you have done this [beguiled the woman and caused her to sin], cursed are you . . . upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life." Then he turns to the woman and for the same reason, "because you have done this," he tells her, "I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." He was not warning Eve against giving

her husband too much authority any more than he was warning the snake not to eat too much dust. This was a law that was to be in effect for as long as the curse to Adam that he would work for his food and die at the end of his days.

The Woman's Place in the Church

Although man is the head of the woman, we know that all are responsible to God personally, whether male or female, and have free access to his love, grace, and power in our lives. "For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have been put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:26-29). However, this passage does not give us license to ignore the laws of God concerning our relationships with one another just because we are all brothers in Christ. The slave is still expected to obey his master and render to him his best labor (Eph. 6:5-8), and the woman is still expected to be in subjection to her husband, who is her head (Eph. 5:22-24). Our relationships are still the same, but our attitudes to one another should be modified to that of brother to brother. Masters are enjoined to "forbear threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him" (Eph. 6:9); and husbands are commanded to "love their wives as their own bodies" (Eph. 5:28). Christ did not come to change relationships, but to improve and intensify them.

That woman has merit in the eyes of God, and that she can be of use to fulfill his purposes, cannot be disputed. Did he not use women many times to show his power and direction in the affairs of men (Sarah, Gen. 21:1-7; Hannah, 1 Sam. 1; Elizabeth, Lk. 1); did he not prophesy through women on occasion (Deborah, Ju. 4; Anna, Lk. 2:36-38; Philip's daughters, Acts 21:9); and did he not use a woman through whom to bring the savior of the world? Women are just as responsible to God for their actions as are men (Jezebel, 2 Ki. 9:30-37) and have just as much right to go to him in prayer. The Bible contains examples of women who prayed fervently to God and whose prayers were heard and answered (Hannah, 1 Sam. 1).

What, then, should be the woman's attitude in worship? If she has a personal relationship with God, and is esteemed in his sight as surely as a man, should she not be permitted to pray in public and lead other Christians in worship? If the Bible were silent on this subject, I would be inclined to say yes. But, God has not left us in the dark on this issue, and regardless of our own opinions, we must follow his word in all things. I cannot read in either Greek or Hebrew, but when I read in English I get the distinct message from Paul that women are not permitted to lead in the worship services of the saints. "The women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church" (1 Cor. 14:34-35). "I desire then that in every place the men should pray, lifting holy hands without anger or quarrel; also that women should adorn themselves modestly and sensibly in seemly apparel, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly attire but by good deeds, as befits women who profess religion. Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent."

The Way of Love

Still, you may say, "You are just being a legalist. There is nothing wrong with women taking an active leadership part in the worship services." If so, it may be that the Master is able to make you stand in spite of our differences of opinion. It is before your own master that you stand or fall (Rom. 14:4). However, why do you risk putting a stumblingblock in the way of your sister by making this a matter of contention? Would it not be far better for you to remain silent in the assembly? Paul said, in connection with the matter of eating meat which has been offered to idols, "Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make others fall by what he eats; it is right not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that makes your brother stumble" (Rom. 14:20-21). We might say, "Do not, for the sake of 'Women's Lib,' destroy the work of God." Let us follow the admonition of Paul and "pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding" (Rom. 14:19).