

INTEGRITY is published each month and 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.

Integrity

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invalid because it enshrines arbitrarily selected scriptural elements as absolute essentials." If this negates the Restoration Concept, it would also invalidate the Lord's word and church. Brother Zenor seems to say that everyone has a right to do his own thing and is only invalidated when he says one *must* do something. 1 Corinthians shows that the church was involved in wrong action and doctrine and Paul told them *how* to correct it. If we had the same problems, wouldn't the same solution apply? If not, why not? When Judaizing Christians began teaching circumcision was essential to salvation (Acts 15:1), did that make what was essential wrong too? Was the church Paul was a member of invalid?

Eighth, our brother says the concept is "invalid because there is no generally acceptable way in which biblical information can be applied to present day situations." I deny that the Restoration Movement is "the most divided religious movement in the history of Christiani-

ty." I would like to know what the twenty-five divisions are. The Corinthian church of God was in the process of dividing into four groups. Would our brother say all four would be correct? One? Did this proposed division invalidate Paul's call for unity (1 Cor. 1:10-13)? Our brother seems to think the division would be "biblical information" that could "be applied to present day situations" but the plea for unity on Paul's part was not. By what standard does brother Zenor say the Restoration Concept is invalid and his article is valid? He is saying that no one among us knows the "generally accepted way in which biblical information can be applied to present day situations" except him! If he doesn't have it, how does he know that one of us doesn't?

Every reason raised by brother Zenor against the Restoration Concept would also invalidate the "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" found in the New Testament (Eph. 4:3). Frankly, I'll stick with the Bible.

JUNE 1979

Integrity

Editorial: Recognition for Writers

Creed and Cruelty

Hoy Ledbetter

Getting Together in English Churches

Valerie Thorpe

The Elder Brother Again

Elton D. Higgs

Search for Inner Peace

Sidney Randolph

Quotations from the "Total Woman's" Bible

Judy Romero

The Transfiguration

A. Wayne Harris

The Restoration Concept Is Valid

Ray Hawk

JUNE 1979
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RECOGNITION FOR WRITERS

Not long ago I heard a well-known novelist say that he wrote, on the average, about a page a day. If our writers produce at the same rate, this issue of *Integrity* represents about a month's work. And if they were paid a salary of \$25,000 a year, our bill for this issue would be over \$2,000.

Of course, we have no way of knowing how much time our writers spend on an article, but I suspect it is considerably more than the typical reader imagines. And I regret to say that we don't even give them postage money. But that doesn't mean they are not precious to us. If we had the funds to do so, I would insist that adequate payment be made for every article we publish. Not only would that be a great step toward encouraging quality writing within our communion, but it would also serve as a concrete recognition, long overdue, of the significance of literary efforts toward whatever success we can claim.

In the absence of that ability, I suggest it would be a great boon to our fellowship if someone would establish a fund, out of which substantial awards could be made to writers who produce essays of special merit. It often happens that economic necessity forces our literary talent, when it matures to the point where it can do so, to turn to projects which pay financially. This is not all bad, since readers can still buy their material. But it leaves our journals in a poor(!) competitive position.

Integrity is no exception to the rule that a journal's ability to fulfill its objectives depends on its writers. That is why we, lacking the ability to do more, wish to express publicly our thanks to those writers who, in a very real sense, have been *Integrity*. Without them we would be nothing. □

"Those who begin coercive elimination of dissent soon find themselves eliminating dissenters. Compulsory unification of opinion achieves only the unanimity of the graveyard."
—Justice Robert H. Jackson, Gobitis Opinion, 1943

Creed and Cruelty

HOY LEDBETTER

When English ambassador Sir William Temple went to Holland in 1672, he gave this appraisal of the unusually tolerant atmosphere there: "Religion may possibly do more good in other places, but it does less hurt here." Temple had had ample opportunity to observe the "hurt" religion could do, since for well over a century reformation leaders (to mention only them) had demonstrated a frightening capacity for cruelty, and the biggest names in Protestantism had been associated with blood baths. A few of the better-known examples will indicate why the charge has been made that "persecution is the deadly original sin of the Reformed churches."

Ulrich Zwingli, with his repressive oligarchy in Zurich, carried out a bloody persecution of the Anabaptists; and he died, sword in hand, trying to destroy the Swiss Catholics.

John Calvin made Geneva a byword for intolerance. Perhaps the best-known blight on his record, since it has been memorialized in recent years, is that at his instigation Michael Servetus, a brilliant Spaniard who had provoked Calvin by publishing his anti-Trinitarian views and who was foolish enough to try to slip through Geneva, was arrested and burned to death.

John Knox, the Scottish reformer, has

been referred to by one historian as "this great apostle of murder."

Even Martin Luther abandoned his earlier spirit of tolerance and approved the death penalty for Anabaptists, finally saying, "The public authority is bound to repress blasphemy, false doctrine and heresy, and to inflict corporal punishment on those that support such things."

How, we may ask, could the reformers, who are commonly regarded as champions of the right of private judgment, resort to such murderous actions? The best account, and one which we have much reason to ponder today, is that of historian W.E.H. Lecky: "If men *believe with an intense and realising faith* that their own view of a disputed question is true beyond all possibility of mistake, if they further believe that those who adopt other views will be doomed by the Almighty to an eternity of misery which, with the same moral disposition but with a different belief, they would have escaped, *these men will, sooner or later, persecute to the full extent of their power.*"*

When a church claims an exclusive hold on salvation, and when it is inde-

*Cited by T. Lewis, "Persecution," *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*. My debt to this excellent article, and to Henry Kamen's *The Rise of Toleration*, is considerable.

pendent of a restraining secular authority, it may be expected to take stern action against "heretics"—for reasons which are obvious to all who have any appreciation for the power of "intense and realising faith." Even people who are normally kindhearted can become extremely cruel under the influence of their religion. It has been said of Calvin, for instance, that "as a man he was not cruel, but as a theologian he was merciless; and it was as a theologian that he dealt with Servetus."

The reformers placed no premium on tolerance in general; the only tolerance they cared anything about was tolerance

The churches used to win their arguments against atheism, agnosticism, and other burning issues by burning the ismists, which is fine proof that there is a devil, but hardly evidence that there is a God.

—Ben B. Lindsey and Wainwright Evans

for what they believed to be the only true religion. When Luther said, "In a country there must be one preaching only allowed," he expressed the common sentiment. Even the Pilgrims who came to our shores in pursuit of religious freedom had no interest in establishing true religious freedom; all they wanted was to found a state in which their own brand of Christianity would be the state religion. And if they were able to live with separation of church and state, it was not because that was their first choice.

It is easy for "intense and realising faith" to overlook Jesus' distinction between "the things that are Caesar's" and "the things that are God's," with its implication that every man has a domain into which no external authority has a right to intrude. In respect to this territory, man is free to follow his own conscience. When the external authority seeks to annex this territory, persecution ensues; and when man defends this territory, the result is martyrdom. Church historians have long recognized that the same faith that makes a martyr may also

produce a persecutor. And either one may take his stand on the authority of the Bible.

One might think that ranking churchmen would readily recognize that the faithful Christian may reach a point in his life where conscience requires him to insist with the apostles, "We must obey God rather than men," and that they would be dissuaded from persecuting such by Gamaliel's warning: "You might even be found opposing God!" But "liberty of conscience" is not as broad a term to repressive authorities as it is to others. "A really good conscience," said Luther, speaking for many others, "desires nothing more than to listen to the teaching of the Scriptures." To the reformers a matter of conscience was neither more nor less than what was taught in God's word, and God's word was neither more nor less than what they understood it to be. Zwingli, be it remembered, claimed to be ruling by the word of God, and in the name of that word he imitated "the harshest examples" of repression. It made

If religion is to be anything, it is to be spontaneous; it is to be the free offering of free souls.

—Henry Ward Beecher

This Greek word Heretick is no more in true English and in truth than an obstinate or wilfull person in the Church.

—Roger Williams

no difference that the poor Anabaptists also recognized the authority of the word.

A statement which is not without relevance to this question recently appeared in one of our papers: "The word denomination means a fraction of the whole. The majority of religious people think that all denominations make up all of Christianity; therefore, each religious body is a fraction of the whole. Friend, without any sarcasm, and in the kindest way I know, let me tell you that the church of Christ is not a fraction or part of anything. It is the whole" (Wayne Robbins, *Old Paths*, May, 1979). This declaration,

which represents a prominent school of thought and is a good example of exclusionism at work, is open to question on several points.

In the first place, the author assumes (incorrectly, I believe) that "the church of Christ" is the aggregate of congregations formally identified with the Church of Christ, which must exhibit individually, with very little liberty of variance, the consensus of these congregations with respect to outlook, practice, and even their

Because I may be mistaken, I must not be dogmatical . . . I will not break the certain Laws of Charity, for a doubtful Doctrine or uncertain Truth.

—Benjamin Whichcote

To kill a man is not to defend a doctrine, but to kill a man.

—Sebastian Castellio

peculiar terminology. He does not, however, support this assumption with any kind of evidence.

Moreover, the writer ignores the facts of church life in accounting for the origin of the various denominations—including his own, which came into being because hostility to the reform movement initiated by his religious forebears made it impossible for them to maintain fellowship with the churches to which they belonged and in which they undoubtedly would have lived and died if only they could have.

He goes on to say, "Now, don't you see that any church built by anybody other than Jesus is not the church of the New Testament? Suppose Wayne Robbins were to start out and organize and build a church. Could it possibly be the one mentioned here by Christ? Of course it could not." Here he echoes the widespread assumption that denominations are "man-made" churches—with the incredible implication that someone just wanted to start his own church in competition with Jesus and succeeded in doing so! Actually, the denominations we know were invariably started by people who believed with "an intense and realising

faith" that they were more loyal to Jesus and more respectful of his word than anyone else. Whatever else we may say about the denominations, they are indisputably attempts to recover the church which Jesus built.

Furthermore, the author's fraction-whole opposition overlooks the fact that the word church is regularly used of a fraction of the whole in the New Testament, where it bears these three meanings: (1) the universal church, (2) all of the Christians in one locality, and (3) the assembled congregation. In the last two instances the word cannot but refer to a fraction of the whole. In any case, "denomination" (from a Latin word meaning "to name") no more means "fraction" than does "congregation." It simply suggests that reform movements which have become churches have of necessity been given certain designations to distinguish them from other such groups.

Finally, the thrust of the article makes it incompatible with at least two possible reasons why denominations are not found

The sum of our religion is peace and unanimity, but this can only come about when we define as little as possible and leave the judgment free on many matters; besides, there is the immense obscurity of very many questions.

—Desiderius Erasmus

in the New Testament. One is that time and circumstances had not yet allowed the church to require the sort of reform movements which eventually result in denominations. The other is that the flexibility of the early church would have ruled out much of the apartness which characterizes the Christian community today.

If I seem to have wandered from the subject, I have done so for a purpose. The foregoing assumptions constitute a rigid confession of faith in many conservative churches, and those who hold them are inclined to believe that they *alone* live by the word of God. And while Robbins

gave no indication in his article that he would do so, the fact remains that those who openly question such assumptions are often charged with not respecting the authority of the Bible. Furthermore, it is not hard to imagine a time and place where I would be subject to severe punishment for my response to his declarations.

People with "intense and realising faith" find it difficult to see toleration as anything less than evidence of weak faith. Many would readily agree with a 17th century writer, Nathaniel Ward: "He that is willing to tolerate any religion, or discrepant way of religion, besides his own,

In necessariis unitas, in non necessariis libertas, in omnibus caritas.

—Peter Meiderlin

In necessary things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity.

—Richard Baxter

either doubts of his own, or is not sincere in it." (This equation of tolerance and insincerity explains why I have been asked, "Would you change your position if you found out you were wrong?") An even stronger assertion is that of Leo XIII: "The equal toleration of all religions . . . is the same thing as atheism."

But genuine tolerance requires a great deal *more* faith than some saints can summon. In the parable of the tares, in which the householder ordered that the weeds, instead of being pulled up, should be left to grow with the wheat until harvest, the Lord laid on his people a lesson which only the hardiest have been able to take seriously. Our protectionist policies are not an exhibition of faith, but precisely the contrary. Real faith trusts God to sustain what he has planted, without the intervention of men. If we look at matters from a mere human perspective, which we tend to do, then the probabilities are against the wheat surviving amid the weeds, but God, who is a great risk-taker, has a different viewpoint.

This is not to say that weeds are not a

threat to the wheat, or that something should not be done about them, but that is not our responsibility. God, in his own time and way, will take care of the weeds. In the meantime, he wants us to stay in our place, since he knows all too well how much damage weed-pullers can do. This means that "intense and realising faith," if it is genuine, will work within the framework of God's plan for the church and the world, and will restrain us from imposing our anxieties on others. After all, God undoubtedly knew what he was doing when he insisted that, in Paul's words, "each one must arrive at his own firm conviction." Those who do not honor that clear Scriptural imperative are hardly in a position to criticize (much less to persecute) their brethren for not respecting the authority of the Bible.

Since his considerable influence on our spiritual (as well as our political) forefathers is well known, it is of interest to readers of this journal that John Locke was one of the greatest champions of toleration of all time. Locke, arguing from a

We should do well to commiserate our mutual ignorance and endeavour to remove it in all the gentle and fair ways of information; and not instantly treat others ill, as obstinate and perverse because they will not renounce their own and receive our opinions.

—John Locke

practical viewpoint, faulted intolerance on two counts: (1) persecution has never been effective, and (2) certainty in religious matters is limited.

Someone has said, "Conscience is like the palm of the hand: the more it is pressed, the more it resists." There may be times when the church is so powerful, when it so controls the intellectual outlook of its time, and when it so thoroughly meets the needs of its people, that its authority will not be questioned; but it is much more likely that some people in any time will feel that they must be allowed the spontaneous expression of their

religious convictions and will resist coercion. If that resistance fails, the heretics will merely become hypocrites, and if Jesus can be trusted at all, hypocrites are worse than heretics.

Because of the overwhelming probability that religious error is not a matter of the will, but of the understanding, advocates of tolerance have insisted that reasonable instruction is the remedy for

But if private opinions are expressed, are they not to become matters of discipline?

By no means, unless a person expresses them for the sake of compelling others to receive them, or to exclude them from their fellowship if they do not receive them. In that case he is answerable, not for his opinions, but his practices. He is a factionist . . .

—Alexander Campbell

error, rather than trying to punish people for their "sheer obstinacy" (this phrase was used of Christians by Marcus Aurelius; "pigheadedness" might be the verdict of impatient sectarians today). But, owing to the fallibility of both instructors and learners, allowance must be made for disagreement. This is why the doctrine of "fundamentals" arose in the church, although some defenders of liberty, such as Roger Williams, have even rejected the concept of fundamentals, since multiplied thousands have differed on them. The New Testament fundamental is the acknowledgment "Jesus is Lord!" Those who disown that affirmation, either theoretically or practically, may be excommunicated, but not persecuted.

History has shown that forms of suppression coextensive with the authority's power to enforce them will be inevitable when the church or state claims the right to control the whole life of its people. This fact should warn us to be extremely

wary whenever church leaders try to invade the privacy of our homes and restrict our reading material, our free association with others, or our chosen exercises of devotion.

History also demonstrates that persecution may be expected when those in authority equate criticism with disloyalty or put loyalty to an institution on the same level with loyalty to God. If a church claims to live by the will of God, it should expect to be challenged by individual understanding of what that will is, rather than contradicting its profession by acting as if it lives by its own decree.

The faith that makes men persecutors is not wrong because it is intense, but because it is based on erroneous presuppositions. If the reformers did not adopt a policy of toleration, perhaps we should at least give them credit for recognizing an important fact which seems to have been lost on some struggling churches today, namely, that a church which is built upon tolerance does not have a sufficient foundation. Tolerance, by itself, will never

Who ever knew Truth to be put to the worse, in a free and open encounter?

—John Milton

Reason and experience unite their testimony in assuring us that, in the same proportion as individuals labor to be of one opinion, they disagree.

—Alexander Campbell

maintain the kingdom of God. However we define the word "lost," no movement will flourish without an *active* belief that others are lost. "Intense and realising faith" is not something people can keep to themselves. Indifference, rather than tolerance, is the word to describe the notion that one faith is as good as another. No plan for world conquest ever arose from indifference; and if we do not have such a plan, we might well ask ourselves why. □

Don't miss a single issue of *Integrity*! Notify us *before* you move!

Getting Together in English Churches

VALERIE THORPE

Upminster, England

We met Terry and Valerie Thorpe in 1972. We were to be in London for a year—my husband was on sabbatical leave from his university—and we needed a place to worship. We had, in the preceding months at home, experienced a most frustrating time religiously; we had pleaded for openness to God's work among our congregation and had soon found ourselves out-cast. Though we sought to be loving and forgiving, we had to admit that we harbored bitterness in our hearts against "our" church which had rejected us. Truly, we were in need of spiritual refreshment.

Going all the way across Greater London to a Church of Christ was just about impossible; we had no car and the usually-reliable public transportation was most uncertain on Sunday mornings since that was their time for repairs. But God knew our need, and he graciously placed us in a house a short walk away from the local parish church. There we found God's spirit moving among his people, and we gradually experienced the spiritual healing that we needed.

The following article is written by one of those special friends which we found at St. Luke's Church. Theirs is a different kind of worship and church governance from ours, so some terms may be strange to you. We take for granted the participation of ordinary members in the life of a congregation, but most members of the Church of England have only a very formal relationship to the services of the church. Valerie Thorpe's enthusiasm for the Together Team springs from its being such a contrast to the usual apathy and lack of personal involvement in the spiritual affairs of the Anglican church. These are ordinary Christians trying to do what they can to let God's spirit work through them to revitalize His Kingdom in their nation. We can rejoice in their renewal and, perhaps, learn from it.

—LAQUITA HIGGS

What is your picture of the Church of England? Is it a highly-trained choir singing beautiful 17th century music in a vast mediaeval cathedral? A resplendent archbishop complete with mitre and crosier in

procession up the main aisle of Westminster Abbey? A handful of elderly ladies, suitably hatted, following the order for Morning Prayer in the prayer book of 1662, as it is intoned by the rector in the village church, dating back to Norman times? (The church, not the rector, although you may be excused for wondering.)

If these are your pictures, you are, of course, right. These are all part of what makes up that ponderous vehicle "The Church of England." But, happily, that is not all. Up and down the country, through the renewing power of God's Holy Spirit, Anglican churches are discovering fresh ways to worship, to deepen fellowship, and the means to reach out in love to those who do not know Christ.

The Beginnings

The Diocese of Chelmsford has been conducting an experiment in parish evangelism for just over two years now. In October, 1976, the Reverend John Reeves was appointed Diocesan Team Missioner, based in the Parish of St. Luke, Cranham. His main responsibility is to lead a team of lay people from St. Luke's in visiting, by invitation, usually at weekends, parishes throughout the diocese in order to share with them, not only the Good News of Jesus Christ, but also the strengthening of faith and the renewal in the church available through the power of the Holy Spirit.

John Reeves, a dynamic young man in his early thirties, initiated what has come to be known as the "Together Project." His appointment as missioner was the end to many months of prayer, discussion and

study of God's word, as His will was sought. There had never been a Team Missioner on the staff of Chelmsford Diocese, and such a position is still almost unheard of nationally. The leader, and the team, were a step forward in faith.

The Team's Formation

The Together Team was formed by invitation from the leader. Each prospective member was asked to consider prayerfully if God was calling him or her to this work, and everyone joined on the basis of positive guidance from the Lord. All the adult members were fully committed to the local church. All had several responsibilities—Sunday School teaching, committee chairmen, regular preaching and leading of services, for in St. Luke's there is much lay participation in every area of church life—and it was clearly understood that none of these responsibilities could be shed on joining the team. It seemed a daunting prospect. From where would come all the extra time required? All the extra energy? But God knew and eventually all those invited agreed to join, even if initially lack of faith meant some reservations.

A Start Is Made

The Together Team, already friends, began to meet weekly to prepare for Parish Weekends. During this preparation time the Lord worked greatly among us (I must declare my bias and no longer write in the third person, as I joined the team at the beginning). God had, and still has, much to teach us, showing us how to share more openly, to trust each other more, and to grow in tolerance and love. If we as a team could not achieve these things, how could we ask others to do so? There was much to do and little time in which to do it. Tempers would become frayed, feelings sometimes hurt. The ability to give and receive constructive criticism in love and the ability to act upon it was striven for. The need to keep

returning to the Lord together for forgiveness and strength was evident. This initial period of preparation, and all of those which have followed, have been our testing time, our opportunities to grow together ourselves before meeting together with others.

At last, with great trepidation, we set out for our first Parish Weekend, going to a Colchester parish 30 miles away, splitting up and staying with strangers, leading discussion groups, standing up to speak. How could we do it all? What would "they" think of us? (After all, we are English!)

But God is good. We were so blessed and encouraged on that weekend, for we found ourselves staying with other members of the Family, welcomed by brothers and sisters in Christ who were anxious to hear all we had come to share, and to give us the benefit of their experience too. Every activity, every service, felt the blessing of God's hand upon it, and we went away on Sunday night rejoicing, amazed at what the Lord had done.

Over a dozen weekends have now been completed, ranging from large to small communities, city and rural. More recently the going has been hard, with few committed Christians and little enthusiasm in some parishes. Our ministry has been one of encouragement to the "faithful few."

Each weekend is arranged by invitation. The incumbent hears of the work through publicity literature or at a clergy meeting (John Reeves often speaks at clergy meetings throughout the diocese.) When an inquiry is made, John will meet with the incumbent to discuss and pray about the possibility of a team visit. Should it seem right, the next stage is meeting with the Parochial Church Council, attended by John and three or four Together Team members, where the work is thoroughly discussed. The team will only visit if the full council, as representatives of the congregation, issues an invitation, thus presupposing their support.

Next the program for the weekend is

arranged. This would be about six months in advance, with the needs of the parish considered in the light of what the team can offer. No two weekends are ever the same; the program is always tailored to the particular church to be visited.

When the Team Arrives

A typical weekend will begin with the team arriving at the church or hall on Friday evening for a brief introductory meeting, usually preceded by coffee. During this meeting much of the time is given to informal worship, which may in itself be new to the host parish, and a brief talk by the leader which highlights the theme of the weekend, which is usually concerned with the deepening of faith and commitment. Each member of the team is introduced through interview, and the dozen members who work together as a music group will sing. Team members are then taken by their hosts to the homes in which they will stay the weekend.

This in itself has provided a source of blessing for some. The relationship which can be formed quite rapidly through staying in someone's home has often provided opportunity to share spiritual experiences.

On Saturday there will be another session of informal worship to start the day, then a number of activities may follow. There may be three or four discussion groups, led by the team, on such topics as worship, evangelism, giving, studying God's word, and so on. Sometimes a drama workshop or a musical workshop is run, giving opportunity for practical activity. In some parishes team members have paired with hosts to go out and visit door to door in the parish.

While these activities proceed for the adults, five or six team members under the able direction of a professional teacher organise a lively children's project for the day. The children of those adults taking part in the groups will meet together to sing, act, make things, play games and learn something of Jesus. Usually they

will also prepare an item of drama for the Sunday family service, demonstrating the validity of the active participation of children in public worship.

Saturday evening may be occupied by an open forum in which members are questioned on aspects of Christian thinking, or by house groups meeting in homes around the parish. More often it presents an opportunity for a social gathering, allowing members of the host parish to invite those who would not generally attend church. During the evening the team presents a program of songs and sketches aimed to both entertain and to provoke some thought.

On Sunday the usual pattern of services for that church is generally followed. Other than that, morning service is planned as an informal family service. Some churches do not yet include this normally and are somewhat surprised by the inclusion of lively songs, action choruses, visual aids, a quiz and maybe a play or a mime by the children. By this we show that worship is for every member of the family and that a family service can relate to everyone.

The day is usually concluded with a communion service, using the recently introduced modern liturgy which relates to the needs of twentieth century Christians. Many members of the team will participate here in various ways, particularly in the music.

The Aims of the Together Project

So the weekend finishes—over so soon, yet so much has been done, in God's strength. What, then, are the team's aims?

First, that of introducing the gospel of Jesus to those we meet. It is sad but true that many who have regularly attended church for many years have never actually committed their lives to the Saviour. But our aim is not one of evangelistic outreach outside the church; it is more to equip the church visited to do that itself.

We seek to deepen the commitment of

Christians to the Lord and to their local church, showing areas in which that commitment may be made. The vision of the body of Christ functioning efficiently because every member is playing his part is uppermost in our minds. Many still view the Church of England as a one-man band with the vicar (and perhaps assistant clergy) doing everything. We seek to demonstrate that every Christian has a vital role to play—from preaching and teaching to cleaning and polishing, from children's work to old people's work, from arranging flowers to arranging services. We are concerned that every Christian should discover his or her talents, the special gifts God has given for the building up of His church; and, having discovered them, to learn how to develop and use them.

It is still a shock for some congregations when a member of the laity stands up to preach at a communion service (a double shock if she be a woman); it is a shock when, instead of hearing the gospel reading, the message of that lesson is mimed or presented dramatically in the chancel or along the aisle; it is a shock to

see worship expressed in dance. We seek to teach that, far from being shocking, such examples show God's people using the gifts He gave them for the strengthening of the whole body. Until the church realises this, it will continue to creak along, inefficient and unattractive, placing upon its ordained ministers the intolerable burden of trying to be all things to all men.

We cannot claim that the Together Project has had any world-shattering effects. We do know that some have become Christians, and that others have taken on new responsibilities. One church has started a Music Group, another has Family Services now. We constantly stress that we do not advocate a parish should copy the things we do, but seek those things right for its own people and area. We do not know how long the project will continue, whether the diocese will eventually end its experiment. We simply anticipate and prepare for the next weekend away, thanking God for never ceasing to amaze us with His plans for our lives. □

THE ELDER BROTHER AGAIN

(Luke 15:25-32)

His father's goods were not withheld—
The fatted calf was his for asking,
The ring stood ready for his finger.
But even more,
His father's love was there,
But not believed.
How ready righteous brothers are
To long for less than love!
To pine for feasts and recognition,
When God Himself
Is our inheritance.

—Elton D. Higgs

Search for Inner Peace

SIDNEY RANDOLPH

Pontiac, Michigan

Those who attempt the frightening journey toward inner peace will probably differ considerably in the depth and intensity of their experiences. We are all unique individuals and live life at our own particular level of consciousness. So I can not speak for others; I can only relate my own personal search.

Carl Sandburg has said, "Life is like an onion; you peel off one layer at a time, and sometimes you weep." Searching for a "peace within" is an evolving process full of living-through phases which can neither be ignored nor skipped. It is a maturation fraught with exquisite pain and revealing self-love.

When I first became aware of this disturbing quest some years ago, the feelings of alternating despair and calm were so overwhelming that my greatest release came only after recording these volatile emotions. It was during the embryonic stage of this search that, out of desperation, I developed an extremely personal dialogue with Christ, my counselor, and God, my ultimate reality. (The Scriptures often speak of a peace that comes from God and Christ; see the references at the end of this article.) But for them to be real to me, I had to communicate with them on my level; I did not understand their level. My recordings took the form of frustration, uncertainty, pleas for understanding, love letters to Christ, and comforting acceptance.

What is my interpretation of inner peace? It is a higher order of contentedness. In many respects it has the traits we identify with the calmness of old age. Inner peace is knowing I can pursue possi-

ble solutions to troubling problems and *accepting* the fact that I may not always like the answers. It is *not* having an answer to every question that stirs my soul (I will surely die with many unsolved problems), but confidence that solutions or results aren't always necessary. The key is learning to search and to accept. Inner peace is being still and listening to a quiet voice within that urges me closer to the "prize."

Possessing inner peace is not an accidental, unfocused, one-time, great surprise package. It comes in small measures, and the installments begin only after agonizing self-identification and self-discovery. It has to start with low-level goals and accomplishments, concentrating first on building self-trust and self-esteem. I had to take a cautious accounting of my own life. Where have I been? Where am I now? Where do I intend to go? Do I have worthwhile direction for the future? Priorities had to be established.

Because of my own particular background and unique individual needs, I had to establish my own workable, realistic relationship with my God. God and I had to meet in a deep, personal way with an understanding for our future interaction together. Like a frightened child, I revealed myself in small portions to him. *It was an intense, sensitive encounter with God. It was also a confrontation with the immortality of my spirit.* We had a dialogue about how the spiritual aspects of me would spill over into other areas of my life pattern. I had to—and still must—gradually dig out all the time-established fear and preprogramming. My stomach,

head, and heart had to get together. Inner peace is not an all-the-time thing. It is elusive; and when it is absent, dissonance demands that I do what is necessary to regain it. We struck up a bargain, God and I. He would not desert me if I had the courage to search, to withstand my secrets, and to know myself so I could know and understand his world.

Inner peace, like happiness, is actually a by-product. When I am legitimized, I can embrace the world as I search for the potential that is within me as an influencing Christian. I can falter; I can make grievous mistakes in an attempt to work out my earthly existence. Inner peace filters in as I pass the infantile state of bludgeoning myself for not being a perfect, academic example of a sin-free, spotless child of God. My very experiences of failure have brought me into closer contact with other fallible human beings. Failure, when it alters my attitudes, increases my wisdom.

This search for inner peace has been an expanding process. It has given me the confidence to allow you (the "others") to

touch my life in an intimate way, to contribute to my storehouse of human experiences without letting you control my thoughts and actions. During this search I have approached God with an independent, rebellious *will*, and have felt the soothing balm of his tender wisdom dissolve, in little bits and pieces, that taut thick shell of self-protection. He understands each aspect of my frailty, each unique human need, and he knows that I cannot boldly strip myself naked in one traumatic event.

Ultimately, inner peace is the confidence to be the me that I *am* while pursuing the me that can be. That is exactly what God wants of me, for only then can I be of any significant use in his Grand Scheme. □

REFERENCES

Job 22:21	Ephesians 1:14
John 14:27	Philippians 4:7
John 16:33	Colossians 3:15
Romans 5:1	2 Thessalonians 3:16
Romans 8:6	2 Timothy 2:22
Romans 15:13	James 3:18

QUOTATIONS FROM THE "TOTAL WOMAN'S" BIBLE

Matthew 6:33

Seek ye first the Lordship of your husband and his earthly pleasure, and God will be content with second place.

Proverbs 31:30

Charm is uppermost and beauty is everything; and a woman who is sexy shall never be divorced.

Luke 10:41

Martha, Martha, you are troubled about many things—and that's as it should be. Mary should be like you.

Acts 2:17

And it shall be in the last days, God says, that I will pour forth of My Spirit upon all males; and your sons only shall prophesy . . .

—Judy Romero

The Transfiguration

A. WAYNE HARRIS

Salt Lake City, Utah

The preacher was very tired. Really worn down by the grueling pace of his ministry. Too many problems. Drained. He just had to be filled up before he could give any more.

He needed a mountain-top experience so he went up to The Christian College of His Choice to the Annual Lectureship. He was not disappointed. It was a veritable spiritual feast. It was the kind of experience he would long for in future moments of discouragement.

If only he could maintain this renewed enthusiasm when he returned home to his congregation!

The theme for the lectureship that year was "Great Preachers of Our Movement." The days were filled with classes and lectures about great men of God. Each session was a double blessing in that great men of the past were discussed by great preachers and teachers of the present day. The preacher really got caught up in it all. What a spirit! What power! What fun! What an inspiration to be a part of such a great brotherhood—such a significant movement!

The grand climax was the final evening when thousands of brethren were gathered to worship in a common heritage. There were beautiful and powerful songs. The stirring prayers were like a foretaste of heaven. A well-known and multitalented brother spoke on "The Hope for the Future of the Movement." It was a magnificent speech. He challenged men to prepare themselves to preach. To get that education. To make big plans. To be courageous. To set high goals. To expand the borders of the Kingdom. Many responded and committed themselves to work harder than ever.

After the lesson and before the closing prayer, the preacher began to fill out the evaluation sheet he had been given in his lectureship packet. He gave an excellent rating to the theme—"Great Preachers of Our Movement." He even suggested that the next lectureship follow up on the theme by considering "Great Principles of Our Movement." A trend might even be started. That could be followed with "Great Programs of Our Movement" and "Great Churches of Our Movement" or perhaps with "Great . . ."

. . . His thoughts were interrupted by a sudden awareness that some brother on stage was leading the closing prayer. . . . What was he saying? It sounded different somehow.

. . . what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord . . . for I have decided to know nothing except Jesus Christ and him crucified . . . for Christ in me is the hope of glory . . . I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me . . . Thank you Father for sending your beloved Son—the only one with whom you are really well pleased . . . Help us to listen to Him from whom the whole Body, joined and knit together, is supplied with life and power. We humbly pray in the name of Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Amen.

The preacher looked silently at his evaluation sheet. He then scratched out the words "Great Preachers" and "Great Principles" and wrote in bold letters: **PRINCE OF PEACE.**

" . . . when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only" (Matt. 17:8). □

REACTION

THE RESTORATION CONCEPT IS VALID

RAY HAWK

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In the April, 1979 issue of *Integrity*, brother C.W. Zenor had an article on "The Restoration Concept." He listed eight reasons why the Restoration Concept is invalid among churches of Christ.

First, he says, "No New Testament passage makes future generations responsible for going back to the New Testament or the Bible by way of some restitution movement. There is no scriptural authorization for the true church to be restored by some kind of sacred blueprint." Brother Zenor apparently is looking for a specific statement for authorization. He leaves the impression that since the Bible does not say "restore the New Testament church," or "the scriptures are our blueprint for restoration," that our plea is invalid. Does the New Testament make future generations responsible for going back to the New Testament to teach Jesus Christ? Is it not a blueprint for our correct knowledge of the Saviour and how he saves us? If religious people are teaching something contrary to what the Bible teaches about Jesus, would it need correcting or should we add the error to the Bible? Could we teach Jesus was a homosexual? Could we teach he worshipped Satan? If we taught these errors, would someone be wrong in trying to restore the original concept of Jesus as found in the New Testament?

Second, our brother argues, "It ignores the fact that since its inception, the church has never ceased to exist." True, it never has ceased to exist in the scripture and perhaps historically. However, if men no longer teach *what* God says men *must* do and *how* to become children of God, you do not have a valid Christian nor the church of Christ.

Third, he claims the Restoration Concept is "invalid because even if full restoration could be accomplished, it would not be desirable. It would be undesirable because it would produce an anachronism—a first-century church in a twentieth-century world." To this charge I might ask, "Is Christ an anachronism—a first-century Saviour in a twentieth-century world?"

Our brother, in actuality, is saying the message of God for the first-century has no validity for us today. This is not true.

Fourth, brother Zenor claims the Restoration Concept is "invalid because no two of the twenty-five different groups in the Church of Christ in the American Restoration Movement have agreed upon what should be restored. . . . Surely no one wants to restore any specific one of these defective religious bodies in toto." The Restoration Concept is not to restore errors made by first-century saints or churches, but to restore righteousness, mercy, and faith.

Fifth, our brother says the concept is "invalid because it places an inordinate emphasis upon external elements of the ancient church." He suggests "internal marks more accurately identify the church which manifests the authentic spirit of Christ. . . ." The Bible places an emphasis on doctrine and keeping oneself (1 Tim. 4:16). We must glorify God in the name Christian, but we must live like saints (1 Pet. 4:16; Rom. 12:1-2). Actually, we do not emphasize the external to the exclusion of the internal. But, if we did, it would not negate the importance of obedience in these matters. Could I call Jesus by the name Satan and continue to worship through him correctly inwardly, if externals are not important? Have you ever heard the denominational jargon, "There's nothing in a name"? This is brother Zenor's bottom line.

Sixth, brother Zenor comments that the concept is "invalid because it enslaves its adherents." Yes, it enslaves them, not to "a paralyzing legalism" or "a legal handbook" but to Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:16-18). Is the New Testament a law in any form? If not, why must I believe? Why repent? Why is it wrong to commit fornication? Why is it sinful for a man to have twenty wives at the same time? Why is it wrong to sleep with a different woman each night? Why is it wrong to have sex with an animal? What tells me I can't do these things?

Seventh, our brother states the concept "is