

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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disfellowshipped me because of my position. I am not their conscience, and have no desire to dictate to them. If they disfellowshipped me, I shall continue to love them and if we both make it to heaven I hope they feel differently about the matter then!"

We commend his irenic statement regarding those who oppose him. And we note the statistical uncertainty involved. Such a mockery is made of fellowship by some that often one may not know the exact number who have "disfellowshipped" him. That a man with such impeccable conservative credentials should be cast out of the fellowship because he cannot believe in an inhumane God demonstrates how terribly indifferent some of us are to our *ministry of reconciliation*.

Bales further says, "It is my judgment that some brethren who disagree with me, but who

believe that fellowship should be maintained in spite of our differences, ought to speak out and say so. . . . I think it may discourage some individuals from trying to split the church over these matters."

His judgment is correct. And, since we meet his qualifications for doing so, we are happy to speak out. But some, we suspect, will be less than open in this matter because sectarianism, no less than conscience, "doth make cowards of us all." There is a danger that if we tolerate differences regarding such important ethical questions as war and divorce, we may begin to make allowances in organizational and liturgical disputes. And if we do that, our sects will sink into the church at large, and we will have no reason to go on. People who walk by the party spirit regard trying to split the church as a virtue, and we need not expect those who are under this delusion to be reasonable or to do right.

OCTOBER 1979

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A Scientist Speaks of His Work and His Religion

Laquita Higgs

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FROM SCIENCE TO SECTARIANISM

THIS ISSUE, which deals at length with technology and Christian values, reminds me of my childhood view of the tower of Babel as man's attempt to put himself on the same physical level with God. Although that understanding is not quite sustained by the record, there is legitimate concern today that technological capability may enable man to invade as never before the Creator's territory. Even if some well-meaning experimenter does not get in over his head and bring on unintended disaster, we must consider the possibility that some "mad scientist" may use accumulated knowledge for evil purposes.

In view of the staggering proliferation of knowledge, with its considerable implications for mankind, the Christian must know how to take a positive and responsible stand. He cannot retreat from confronting the world with the reign of God. But the questions are not easy, and some of us hardly know where to begin answering them. Despite its virtues, we know that this issue of *Integrity* will not take us far enough, but it should at least start us in the right direction. Hence our thanks to Elton and Laquita Higgs, and to Christopher Chetsanga, for their help.

ANOTHER SPECIAL issue, scheduled for next month, will focus on the family. It is being put together by Joe Jones, an expert in the field and our esteemed board chairman.

LATE ARRIVAL of recent issues of *Integrity* has led some readers to wonder if we are running out of resources to continue publication. Actually, the problem lies in some of our volunteer workers finding time to get their jobs done. We are printing on schedule, but the paper shortage is a real problem. We could not buy enough to print a whole issue this month (we received less than half of our order), but we have scrounged enough odds and ends to get by. What about next month? May the Lord provide!

ALTHOUGH WE RISK adding to his grief by taking his side, we feel an obligation to speak out on behalf of James D. Bales. The veteran teacher at Harding College has been under heavy fire from some who like to lord it over the faith of others because of his position on divorce and remarriage. In a recent article in *Firm Foundation* (9/11/79) he says, "At least four people have

(continued on back cover)

Riches of His Glory

PART TWO

J. DWIGHT THOMAS

Elizabethtown, Kentucky

How can the disciples of Jesus in the latter part of the 20th century have an impact upon a world that is essentially atheistic and which bows down to golden calves of science, power, and hedonistic pleasure? How can we who are finite and subjected to the weaknesses and frailties of the flesh escape the corruption and dreadful despair therein, and wage war against "the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world, and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms"? By what means can we "partake of the divine nature" and become "more than conquerors" gaining the victory that is in Jesus? What is our hope? And whence cometh our power? Is it a matter of human effort? Or is it too a matter of "grace through faith"?

At the present we are divided, weak, and disoriented. Many of our efforts have been ineffectual. Our brothers in Christ have become our arch-enemies, while Satan is working havoc throughout the world. For while boasting of their restoration of the New Testament Church, men, devoid of the Spirit, have taken up the Spirit's "sword" and have not only used it in such a way as to mutilate the body of Christ but have also turned it upon the Spirit himself, and thereby have produced stillborn children of God. This is no doubt the work of Satan, for he is ever present to pervert that which is holy.

It was possibly for some of these very reasons that just before he was taken and crucified, Jesus spoke to his disciples about the Spirit of truth and prayed for

unity among them. And it is precisely at this crucial point that we have failed to be what God would have us to be. "If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand." Likewise, a people plodding along by their own power cannot accomplish the will of God. A better understanding of God's Spirit will be a step in the right direction. Let us look again at the words of Jesus in John 14 and following.

Jesus' Language . . .

A crisis was at hand. Jesus knew the time had come for him to be glorified by the Father. This meant that he was to lay down his life to be crucified as a criminal, would rise from the dead on the third day and would ascend to the right hand of God, overcoming death and the grave, thereby setting the captives free and giving to Satan his ultimate defeat. It appears evident, however, that the disciples did not fully comprehend these events until after they had happened. They had come to believe Jesus to be the Messiah, their liberator, the one whose kingdom would supplant that of Caesar. They were to reign with him and there would be peace. They believed this would happen within their lifetime. Consequently, the death of their leader would mean utter defeat. They had left all to follow Jesus of Nazareth. They had laid everything on the line. Golgotha would mean bitter disappointment, frustration, and despair.

Jesus knew what was at stake. He

knew the Father had put all things under his power. He knew whence he came and where he was going. Jesus was confident that the Father's will would be accomplished. But what would happen to his disciples? How could they withstand the spiritual forces of evil? Jesus had been their source of strength, their guide, their master. While he was with them he had "protected them and kept them safe by that name" which the Father had given him. What would happen in his absence? Was the very purpose of God to be thwarted by the glorification of his Son? If not, what provision was made to enable the disciples to effectively disseminate the Good News in Jesus Christ, so that all nations would be blessed as God had promised Abraham?

It is in such a context that Jesus speaks of the Spirit. He said, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you." But the question is how Jesus was to come to them—through a merely moral influence as that of a great teacher, through God's Spirit, or would he give them a book of sacred writings? Jesus promised that he and the Father would give them "another Counselor," the Spirit of truth. The Holy Spirit was to begin dwelling *in* them on Pentecost, after Jesus was glorified, making it possible for both the Father and the Son to abide in them "forever."

Three Words . . .

There are three words used in John 14:16-17 that tell us much about the nature of the Spirit. Jesus described him as a "Counselor." This word in the original language is *paraklētos*. John is the only New Testament writer who uses it. It is a word rich in meaning and has been translated in a variety of ways: "Comforter," "Counselor," "Advocate," and "Helper." This is the same word applied to Jesus as our "Advocate" in 1 John 2:1. It refers to one called alongside to help. The ancients used the word in a variety of ways. *Paraklētos* was applied to one who served

as a lawyer, to one who helped another solve a problem, to one who helped strengthen and encourage another, and even to one who helped another carry a heavy burden for a great distance. These expressions are beautiful analogies of the way the Spirit would aid the disciples of Jesus in the latter days. Blessed are we when we realize that this is *our promise*. And just as the word *paraklētos* denotes a variety of helpers in the original language, the Spirit also helps us in a variety of ways, enabling us to be what God would have us to be. No wonder Paul could say: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

The next word of special significance is "another." This word is of special import because it tells the kind of *paraklētos* the disciples are to receive. Jesus had two words at his disposal, *heteros* and *allos*. The word *heteros* would have meant *another* helper of a *different kind*; *allos* means *another* of the *same kind*. Jesus used the word *allos*. He was saying the Father will send you *another paraklētos* of the *same kind*, i.e., another helper like myself. It is so important for us to understand that the Spirit God has sent us is not an "it"—a thing to be bought, sold, lost, stolen, or memorized, such as the collected writings which compose the New Testament. The Spirit of God is a divine person just as Jesus is a divine person.

This teaching is further substantiated by the fact that Jesus refers to the Spirit by the personal pronouns "he" and "him" (note the emphatic masculine pronoun *ekeinos* in Jn. 14:26; 15:26; 16:7-8, 13-14). If he were promising a gift of the New Testament or merely the influence thereof as some believe, he probably would have used *heteros*, meaning another helper of a different kind, e.g., a book. And he would not have referred to the Spirit as "he" or "him." The language of this passage, therefore, suggests that in Christ's absence the disciples will be indwelt by the very *person* of the Holy

Spirit who will be their source of strength and guidance as was the Lord during his earthly ministry.

What About Us Today?

Granted this was true for the disciples of the first century; but what about us today? Does God dwell in us today through his Spirit? Is this promise for us also?

Jesus' use of the word "forever" will help us to understand the answer to these questions. Jesus said the Spirit of truth would abide in his disciples "forever." This word in the original language is *aiōnios*, and it means "through the age." Since the Spirit was given at the beginning of the Christian Age, and since that age will not end until the Lord comes, there is no reason to doubt that God's Spirit is active in the lives of his people today. Jesus taught the gift of the Spirit is age-lasting. His abiding presence did not end with the first century. The words of both Peter and John confirm that Christ's disciples throughout the last days are to receive the Spirit as did the disciples of the first century.

By making reference to the prophet Joel in his message on Pentecost, Peter was affirming that God's Spirit will be given to "all people" in "the last days." Notice that "all people," as explained by Joel, does not mean only the apostles at Pentecost and the household of Cornelius, as we have commonly taught. But rather Joel enumerates "your sons and daughters," "your young men," "your old men"—"even my servants both men and women." Peter, speaking again of the "promised Holy Spirit" to those who were "cut to the heart," said: "The promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call." John's record of Jesus' words at the feast of booths indicates the basis upon which the Spirit is received:

On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If a man is thirsty, let him

come to me and drink. *Whoever believes in me*, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him." *By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.* Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

And so it seems that the condition for anyone receiving the "promised Holy Spirit" is faith in Jesus Christ, regardless of the particular century in which one lives.

But what about the written New Testament; is it not at variance with this teaching on the Holy Spirit? Absolutely not! As we have attempted to demonstrate by scripture, it affirms this teaching. The New Testament is our surest basis for understanding the Holy Spirit. The new covenant scriptures are not at variance with the Holy Spirit, and neither can the Spirit lead one contrary to the written word. Either instance is likely to be the work of Satan.

But has not the New Testament supplanted the work of the Holy Spirit? Regrettably, we must agree. This has happened for many disciples of Jesus today. The roots of this tragedy may be traced as far back as the Protestant Reformation. But this is not the will of God, nor is it a teaching of the Bible. We have no scripture that clearly suggests that the Holy Spirit will be supplanted by the writings of the New Testament. To the contrary, the primary promise to the person in Christ Jesus is remission of sins *and* the indwelling Spirit, *not the written word*. The Spirit saw fit to arm God's people with the written word, but it cannot take the place of the Spirit of God. Paper and ink cannot replace a life-giving Spirit.

Feature of the New Covenant . . .

Let us, therefore, give thanks unto God for both his written word and his indwelling Spirit. But let us understand that just as the Mosaic Law could not

negate the promise given to Abraham some 430 years before, neither can the covenant scriptures, which were not completely collected until many years after Jesus' words in the upper room, supplant his promise of the indwelling Spirit. Moreover, in light of the prophecies concerning the new covenant, found in Jeremiah and Ezekiel and expounded by Paul in the New Testament, it appears that these two promises are one-in-the-same, or at least related. Paul relates the two in Galatians 3:14: "He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit."

Scripture teaches us that the indwelling Spirit is one of the cardinal features of the new covenant. The old covenant was written upon stone and enforced from without. When God speaks of the new covenant, he speaks of putting his Spirit in the hearts of his people. The

Spirit is the agent by which his law is written upon hearts of flesh. Hence, God's people today are relating to God through a new covenant of the Spirit and are being transformed by the Spirit from within, not coerced from without by a written code.

Contrasting the two covenants in 2 Corinthians 3, Paul states: "He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life." And again, writing to the Romans, Paul states: "But now by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in a new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code" (Rom. 7:6). One of our major theological problems has been that we have denied the Spirit access to our lives and have opted for a written code which kills, rather than the new covenant of the Spirit which brings us *life*. □

Past, Present and Future: A Christian Perspective

ELTON D. HIGGS

Dearborn, Michigan

It is almost an article of unexamined faith in the culture of modern, technological man that time works inexorably in humanity's favor, bringing advances which will eventually provide the means not only for man's absolute control over his present environment, but also for the extension of his habitation to places beyond the earth. Furthermore, experts in the natural and behavioral sciences often speak impatiently of the time when man will finally have thrown aside the primitive habits of mind which still hinder his

development and will accept wholeheartedly the systematic application of reason to human problems so that a perfect society can be created. In spite of the recent reaction of a great many young people against the urban-industrial culture of which the United States is the model, and in spite of widespread cynicism in our society about the economy and about institutions of government, most people, if questioned, would probably say that mankind is continuing to evolve toward higher levels of achievement. In a word,

the idea of human progress, though perhaps a bit tattered lately, is still very widely accepted.

Why is there this predisposition to believe that the future holds scientific relief from the ills of mankind, and how should Christians regard it? What light does Christian faith throw on the passage of time as manifested in human history, and in what way does it need to challenge the assumption that "modern" is automatically "better"? I wish to comment on these questions both as a Christian and as a college teacher who is interested in a complementary relationship between the sciences and the humanities.

Reason and Emotion . . .

Although religion is generally scorned or viewed with suspicion in academic circles, except as a subject of the social or behavioral sciences, religious faith can provide the means to mediate the tensions between the emotional values and the rational values which often clash in academic studies. Though these two kinds of values are not strictly polarized according to disciplines, people in the sciences (and in the fields of technology which apply them) seem to be more often tempted to rely solely on reason than do those in the humanities; those in the humanities, in their turn (except for philosophers), have a tendency to downplay the systematic application of reason to human experience. Because people in the humanities deal with human characteristics which have been manifested throughout recorded time, they are professionally more concerned with the past than are those in the sciences, where objective knowledge is continually being rendered obsolete by new discoveries. The Christian has no cause to fear either reason or emotion, and he embraces equally a respect for the past and a hope for the future. He can appreciate both the subjective beauty of the arts and the more objective patterns of physical reality illuminated by the sciences. He can believe

in the ultimate perfectibility of the universe (though it will be radical, not evolutionary) without ignoring the fact that humans continue to commit the same basic evils century after century, regardless of their degree of technological sophistication.

Time and Sinfulness . . .

In contrast to the popular modern concept of "progress," the Christian view of the passage of time relates it more to the illustration of man's vices than to the accumulation of his virtues, for an awareness of the passage of time is a direct result of man's sinfulness. Death, the penalty of sin, accentuates time, for it sets limits to what we can accomplish as individuals. The fact that God acts within this context of human time does not show that He, too, is bound by it, but rather that He chooses to involve Himself with our fallen state. His speaking to us in terms of time is a concession to our inability to understand fully the nature of His timelessness. History, then, is not an account of man's inevitable evolution toward a higher state of being, but a record of the repeated rises and falls of man's grappling with the evil in himself and the world around, and of his responses to the manifestations of God within that world and within himself. Scientific and technological advances cannot within themselves overcome the spiritual problems of man, for he is more than a bundle of neurons.

A key part of the Christian's view of human events is the assumption that the individual is as important as society as a whole. Corporate "progress" cannot overshadow the continuing and recurring saga of each individual's dealings with himself and with God. No matter how sophisticated a society may become, nor, indeed, how degraded it may be, the most basic struggle is that within each person. God has, it is true, dealt with nations and groups of people, and He has rewarded and punished them corporately; but the

successes of one generation or several have never been any guarantee of superior behavior in later generations. Christians believe, in the face of modern humanistic philosophy, that the progress of society has not and will not provide deliverance from mankind's greatest ills: individual fear and the resulting self-centeredness. Indeed, society tends rather to amplify these qualities than to subdue them; wars are personal quarrels writ large.

Modern Theories . . .

It is not surprising, therefore, that all modern theories of progress emphasize the general state of man and talk mostly about what can be said of groups of humans; individual behavior has a way of defying accurate analysis and prediction, because people make choices that spring from their particular personalities. There is a certain facility about the Marxist theory of history because it analyzes and predicts on the basis of large economic processes and the social evolution of masses of people. To accomplish the desired end, the individual is secondary—and must be sacrificed if necessary—to progress toward the perfection of society. B.F. Skinner, the well-known psychologist who wrote a utopian novel called *Walden Two*, speaks of “behavioral engineering,” which an enlightened few should impose on society to deliver it from the unscientific chaos that comes from honoring the myth of individual freedom. The Nazis in Germany in the 1930's and 1940's systematically murdered millions of individuals who did not fit their idea of a “master race,” which they argued had evolved in Germany. The idea of progress in the world is by its very nature a corporate one, and the more intensely it is held, the less the importance of the individual in its framework. The perfect society must be a well-ordered one, in which it is assumed that though people will be happy because their needs have been met, they will not be so irrational as

to be unpredictable. The struggles of the individual psyche will have been stilled, for psychosis will have been proved to be environmentally induced, rather than being endemic to the human situation.

The sciences have been generally more hospitable to theories of progress than the humanities, because they deal of necessity in objectively verifiable facts. For over 200 years scientists have been continually accelerating the pace at which this kind of knowledge is gained, and a natural concomitant to the compounding of human knowledge is a temptation to believe that there will come a point at which all of the ills we now know will be overcome by the application of appropriate knowledge. The humanities have for the most part been less optimistic about an eventual state of human perfection, because they have concentrated on the more subjective and individualized experiences of the arts and on the perpetual struggles of individuals to overcome what was worst in themselves and to develop what was noble. Consequently, their chief pitfall has been to glorify a kind of narcissism that can be either heroic or pathetic. In both cases, it is assumed that if a deity exists, he (or they) prevent rather than promulgate a rational order of things. A godless humanism may thus be arrived at either rationally or emotionally, by ignoring the individual or by being obsessed by him, through an extremity of either the sciences or the humanities.

How, then, does a Christian avoid the twin pitfalls of glossing over the element of pervasive evil in the world by holding a humanistic optimism, on the one hand, or succumbing to a self-centered pessimism on the other? How can the Christian arrive at an intellectually defensible accommodation with the past, present, and future without expecting too much or hoping for too little? I think the key lies in the doctrine of repentance. God's call to initial and repeated repentance assumes that, though human actions are universally flawed in this fallen world, nothing in

the past is irredeemable; and though our repentance and God's forgiveness exempt us from future mistakes, nothing we do in the future can take away the privilege (or the necessity) of repentance, unless it be our own hardness of heart. The Christian will not reject any means to better the physical state of man, but he will be cautious not to accept any supposed “progress” as evidence that the past can be forgotten, or that present and future humans may assume that they are more enlightened than those of the past.

A Balance . . .

Although some Christians have been guilty of focusing too much on individual experience or relying too much on a concept of group salvation, God calls for a balance between the two. He expects us to work for the good of others and the health of society, but to recognize that whatever we accomplish still leaves individuals, both present and future, to “work out their own salvation” with God. Those who do so “with fear and trembling,” knowing that God is a partner in that work, will find that even a repented past becomes a part of the fabric of a redeemed present. And what of the future? God gives us His promise of a world perfected, but by radical means, not by evolution. We may entertain hypotheses of how physical life has developed on this earth, but if God made us to relate to Him as spiritual beings, the remedy for the sickness that we suffer does not lie either in our own hands or in the inevitable improvement of the species through natural selection. God will eventually make all things new, but until then we live in the hope that He gives us. There is no pride of achievement in that hope, for it reaches out from a realization that both as a society and as individuals we fall back from even our greatest accomplishments; but neither is there desperation or naivete in our hope, for we base it on a faith that is reinforced by God's power renewing us

every day. We look forward to being a part of God's unending “present,” when all the past, and we ourselves, have been redeemed, not merely left behind.

Knowledge is a kind of power, whether it helps us understand and control the world around us or helps us to comprehend what it is to be human. Consequently, either type of knowledge can become an end within itself and intrude between us and God, especially when it convinces us that we are perfectible through the gaining of knowledge; for then we can assume that it is only a matter of time before we solve all mysteries and make God obsolete. For many, that time has already come, and it promises the greater glory of man in the future. But Christians recognize that the power of knowledge is limited, and that its effects are not inevitably progressive. More important yet is the Christian conviction that knowledge acquired purely by human means is modified and put into context by the revealed knowledge of the Bible, particularly by the fact that the consummation of all things is presented there as a new creation by God, rather than as the peak of an evolutionary spiral:

“. . . the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire! But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells” (2 Pet. 3:12-13, RSV).

God is willing for us to expand our capabilities within this world, but with every increase in power, our moral shortcomings are put into sharper focus. It should be sobering to realize that the greatest artistic, scientific, and technological achievements of mankind have been possible only by a concentration of resources which leaves a majority of the world's people on the cultural and educational periphery. In a fallen world, problems have a way of keeping up with (or keeping ahead of) the advances of knowledge which should make it possible to solve them. Whether we look at humanity

objectively or subjectively, by the canons of reason or with the sensitivities of emotion and intuition, we cannot afford as Christians to imprison reality in a romanticized past, an absurd and existentialist present, or a humanistically perfected future. Whatever stage of culture an individual or a nation may be in, God starts where each person is, generation after generation, and cultivates the spark of the divine in all who will permit it. Whatever accommodation we manage with this

world, though it be seen as progress by many, it is nothing beside the work of new creation which God invites us to embrace now, in the midst of an imperfect and often corrupt world, so that we may participate in the "new heavens and new earth" which will mark the end of time. We are like passengers on a ship at sea: we should attempt to develop the richest life possible while on board, but we should not mistake whatever accomplishments we enjoy for the end of the journey. □

A Scientist Speaks of His Work and His Religion

An Interview by LAQUITA HIGGS

"Sometimes you feel so little and so insignificant in terms of the wisdom that you have because you realize that you are looking at something more profound than you can fathom. . . . Just trying to understand how a cell works makes you realize how little is the level of your wisdom, and how great the hands that created it."

—Dr. Christopher Chetsanga

Recent reports of test-tube babies and earlier discoveries in genetics make the ordinary person wonder if science has not gone too far and is tampering too much with God's creation. Indeed, the potential for the control of human life is frightening, since it raises memories of Hitler's desire to produce a "pure" race. Our government, foreseeing possible dangers to society, has issued strict guidelines regulating certain bacterial and genetic research. If even our government is concerned, then certainly the Christian, with his regard for right values, should be aware of the role which science is playing in our society.

However, it is most difficult for the non-scientist, concerned though he might

be, to know, first of all, just what scientists are up to, and, secondly, how their work fits into our religious beliefs. Science has moved forward in the last two centuries with great confidence, gaining increasing respect and even veneration from non-scientists. Yet, as it has become apparent that science cannot solve all our problems, we wonder if the experts are trying to take over our lives. Should we oppose the so-called "progress" made by scientists? Are science and Christianity compatible, or is science fostering ungodly beliefs?

To help us look at some of these questions, *Integrity* decided to ask a scientist for his answers and opinions. We interviewed Christopher Chetsanga, a native

Rhodesian who teaches biology and biochemistry at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, where he has been doing some significant research in the application of biochemistry to human cell structure. Much of his work has been on changes in body cells, especially how these effects lead to aging and cancer, and while on sabbatical leave in Sweden last fall, Dr. Chetsanga identified a hitherto undiscovered enzyme, one which corrects the damage done to the DNA in body cells by radiation.

A Christian for many years, Dr. Chetsanga was converted when 14 by Church of Christ missionaries at Nhowe Mission in Rhodesia, where he received part of his education. Coming to this country to attend Pepperdine University, he later did graduate work at the University of Toronto and post-doctoral research at Harvard University. He and his wife, Carolyn, whom he met while in Toronto, are active members of the Strathmore Church of Christ in Detroit.

. . . a certain commonality

Science and religion, according to Dr. Chetsanga, "share a certain commonality," since both are seeking truth. Being in the life sciences, he is very aware of life itself, and it is in discussing the nature of life that he finds his science and religion intermeshing. "In the final analysis, when we say something is living, we don't really know what that means," asserts Dr. Chetsanga, and, though he deals in the physical and tangible, he is firmly convinced that there is a spiritual attribute to all life.

Most people, Dr. Chetsanga believes, do not think very deeply about the nature of life, and he decries the attempt at defining life by saying that it is simply the state of being "not dead." Life is much more than that. Working with human cells, with subcellular components so tiny that the strongest microscope cannot see them, Dr. Chetsanga is awed by the vast information stored in each cell,

Christianity is not, in the long run, concerned either with individuals or communities. Neither the individual nor the community as popular thought understands them can inherit eternal life: neither the natural self, nor the collective mass, but a new creature.

—C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*

information "we are wanting so badly to get. The cell is such a tiny unit of life, and we are all aware of the millions of dollars spent trying to understand it—and still we don't fully understand how it functions. When you think about it during solitary moments of experimental design, when you are trying to develop a strategy whereby you can unravel some of these secrets of life, it dawns on you that there must be an Almighty who created all this."

Though his work has led Dr. Chetsanga to a new appreciation of God, many scientists never consider and even want to avoid discussing the ultimate source of life. Or, when they do, it is most often in terms of evolutionary theory.

Dealing with the evolutionary theory has been "very challenging" for Dr. Chetsanga. He stresses that it is only a theory, contending that there is no case "for seriously holding that life just happened to be, without a creative force behind it." He notes, however, that since the creation, some forms of life have developed very different characteristics; for example, hybrid corn has developed from crossbreeding, but that is different from saying that there was no creational force from the beginning, as most evolutionists would have it.

We asked Dr. Chetsanga about "test-tube babies," a procedure which to some appears to usurp the Creator's intention in procreation. Dr. Chetsanga thinks that if the method becomes well developed, those for whom this would be the only way to have a baby are not likely to be influenced by those wanting to retain

only conventional methods. In this area, he feels himself inadequate to judge what others might decide to do; in certain situations it might be a good thing, but he would not himself want to make that judgment for others.

About genetic engineering, which involves the possible restructuring of genes to produce new life forms, he notes that the question of values always comes up, and there the scientists are divided. Some are not confident that fellow scientists will seek that knowledge which would benefit society; others fear the possible abuse of their findings by unscrupulous leaders of governments. Principles discovered in genetics can also be used in biological warfare, and such warfare has, in fact, even more serious potential than nuclear weapons for wiping out the human race as we know it.

... isolating genes

Government guidelines, though now being revised, allow only genetic research with bacterial cells, not with the genes in human cells, and Dr. Chetsanga believes that it is wise first to ascertain the results of present genetic engineering with bacterial cells before going on to work with human cells. "If we find indeed that there is harm coming from the restructuring of bacterial cells, I would perhaps be interested in allowing certain types of experiments with human cells from the standpoint of looking for cures for certain genetic diseases. For example, among the experiments that are being considered by scientists at the present time are those for isolating the insulin gene. The hope would be to put insulin-producing genes into diabetics so that their bodies could themselves produce insulin. If that comes about, and it would be an off-shoot from genetic engineering, then certainly mankind would benefit. Another set of experiments with exciting possibilities is to isolate the bacterial genes for converting nitrogen to nitrates. Bacteria at the roots

of some plants convert atmospheric nitrogen to nitrates which plants in turn use to produce proteins for growth. Scientists hope to get the nitrogen-fixing genes from bacteria and inject them into plants so that plants can by themselves convert nitrogen to nitrates. This will greatly improve food production for human needs."

When asked how Christians and the church should view the work in genetic engineering, Dr. Chetsanga suggested that Christians be careful not to impede the acquisition of new knowledge. He notes that man has always feared the unknown and that we haven't outgrown that fear, though we think ourselves quite civilized. Organized religion has been known to make itself look foolish in history, as witnessed by the case of Galileo, who was condemned by the church as a heretic for saying that the earth moved around the sun. "We should be careful not to fall into similar traps. Some of the experiments today seem extreme in approach, but a hundred years from now people will probably look back, knowing all the benefits derived from our research, and will laugh at our fears." Certainly the use of birth control devices fits into this regime of things; it was very controversial when scientists first devised the procedures. Today many people are amazed to understand that it caused great commotion in society during the early days. Sometimes there are advantages in being cautious, but if it becomes obsessive then it is certainly harmful to one's attitude. On the other hand, Dr. Chetsanga notes that it is possible to become obsessed with trying to alter life from the form in which God created it, and in that case man is tampering too much with God's will for mankind.

Society, including Christians, has a role to question what scientists are doing; after all, scientific laboratories are getting funds from the government. "My lab gets support from public funds, and I would welcome interest and questions from the public about what I am doing, whether it

The most important single spiritual task before the religious world today is the discovery of a use of the present-day intellectual conquests of thought for the enrichment and expansion of our Christian faith. To pit Christian faith against the onward march of science is to drive a wedge into the very center of the structure of truth. . . . It would make rivals of two currents of culture both of which are needed for a complete and vital whole of life. For better or for worse, science has come to stay. . . .

We cannot limit the desire to know. We cannot issue "bulls" against the fearless pursuit of facts or of truth. Our Christian task is a different one. It must consist in a fresh and living interpretation of our faith in the light of and by means of all discovered and verified truth, through science or history. . . .

Above everything else we must insist on a Christianity that stands first, last, and all the time for the truth. In this respect, too, we must lose our fears. We have tried by far-fetched schemes and methods to safeguard "our" truth, to hedge it about, and to keep it insulated within its safe defenses. We have thought of "Christian" truth as something above and beyond "truth in general," as though there were levels and strata in the domain of truth. We must come to see that we gain nothing by insisting on private standards of truth, and by setting apart our peculiar truths as though they belonged in a sphere where the normal tests of truth could be avoided or evaded. There is only one set of scales for truth, and our Christian claims to truth must be tested on those scales and must stand or fall by the way in which those claims conform to the eternal nature of things.

One needs hardly to say that if the secular-minded man of today is to be convinced of the higher spiritual values of Christianity, we who profess it as our faith must take its lofty ethical standards very seriously. The weakest spot in our Christian armor is our failure to live the life about which we talk and preach. Everybody admits without question or debate that the Galilean way of life is the most beautiful ideal that has yet been proposed. But Christianity cannot win the world by a reference to the glory of a past epoch. It stands or falls, not by what it was in primitive vision, but by what it is in actual fact. We who profess it and who hope to propagate it are its supreme evidence. It is not the miracles of two thousand years ago that prove it now to the scientifically-minded age; it is the present miracle of spiritual grace and power triumphant in a human life that has all the effect of a laboratory experiment.

—Rufus Jones, from an address given in 1928

has any validity, and whether it is of any use to mankind. The scientists would benefit from that. Placing too much confidence in the scientist and having him be both executor and judge would be most unfortunate. In certain basic areas, the public can judge the validity of a project, that is, whether it will be beneficial to mankind, much more rationally than the scientist. Lay people can have a feel for potential benefit of certain scientific projects without necessarily being scientists."

It is not, however, the role of the organized church to always take an initial lead in questions concerning scientific research, contends Dr. Chetsanga. "In a lot of cases these new frontiers of research are still fuzzy and the scientists themselves are not agreed as to what the net

result is going to be; for the most part, the church should take a wait-and-see attitude until there is a clear-cut scientific finding that shows how safe genetic engineering is and whether it has the potential for interfering with human life as we know it or for interfering with what we believe is God's purpose for mankind. Once that is established we can take a stand from a much more informed viewpoint."

Dr. Chetsanga sees a positive benefit for the church when it learns from and incorporates what is usable from the society around it, including scientific knowledge. He notes that the church is all the better for having incorporated some of the social concerns of the past decades. For example, before the impact of the

civil rights movement, most congregations of the Church accepted membership on the basis of race, but today the Church is much broadened in thinking and practice. It is unfortunate that society instead of the church was the forerunner for better racial relations, yet a healthy church will be wise enough to learn, when appropriate, from the society around it.

As Dr. Chetsanga talked about his own research, it was obviously important to him that his work be of benefit to mankind; yet, he certainly defends basic research, as opposed to "mission oriented" research which has a goal of being beneficial in some specific way. Even though basic science allows the scientist to seek knowledge for the sake of knowledge, such work has often resulted in unexpected benefits which would not have come to light in any other way. Allowing the scientist a certain degree of freedom will, in the long run, usually prove to be very worthwhile.

... the aging process

About his work on the effects of aging in body cells, Dr. Chetsanga states that the more we understand about the properties of cells, how they function and how they are regulated, the more we shall be able to understand how the aging process itself is initiated. "And if we understand how the aging process starts then we shall understand how it can be regulated." The goal is not to eliminate the aging process altogether but to restrain the diseases and discomforts of old age. If one lives to the age of 80 but has been sickly since the age of 60, then promoting longevity is of questionable value. We know that cancer, which brings great suffering, is more prevalent among the aged, and by tackling these two problems together, Dr. Chetsanga hopes to give people a healthier and more productive old age.

He hopes that his discovery of the enzyme which repairs radiation damage will shed new light on remedies for both

cancer and aging, since it is widely assumed that radiation both causes several types of cancer and accelerates the aging process: "The enzyme that I have discovered helps to correct the damage done by radiation to cellular DNA. We want to learn more about how this enzyme works, how cells produce this enzyme, and also try to measure the amount of this enzyme in different people. Some are more prone to suffer radiation damage than others, and if we can find ways to identify and help those people who are more sensitive to radiation, perhaps we can eliminate some cancers, particularly skin cancer and leukemia. Also, if we can develop easy ways of measuring the amount of this enzyme in people, we can make intelligent predictions about how those individuals will be affected by natural radiation in the environment. It should provide a more rational approach for radiation therapy."

It was refreshing to see how Dr. Chetsanga had succeeded in blending his professional goals with his Christian commitment. He is obviously convinced that his search for truth in the physical world is quite compatible with a respect for the mystery of God's creative power which underlies that world. In fact, he believes that a greater understanding of health and disease in our physical bodies provides a sympathetic context for spiritual growth. He is unafraid that scientific research will uncover any truth which is within itself a threat to Christian faith; but on the other hand, he recognizes that we must make value judgments, especially as Christians, as to the use of those facts once they are clear. He advises the church not to be paranoid about the activities of the sciences but rather to remain open to the successive revelations that God allows us through the exercise of the intellect. If we conclude with Dr. Chetsanga that "there must be an Almighty who created all this," our knowledge of His creation will be an avenue to Him rather than a barrier. □

LETTERS

On Creed and Cruelty

Praise the Lord! Your June 79 *Integrity* "Creed and Cruelty" is a masterpiece for peace. Christians who read with understanding can only weep for the sins of our past. Further, the reader cannot help but search his own conscience about current burnings at the stake, excommunications, etc.—albeit somewhat less dramatic but no less inhumane than those of our forefathers.

Thank you, brother, for sharing with a brotherhood suffering from an elitism generated by ignorance and pride. It is indeed encouraging to see one address a conservative "C of C rooted" reading audience with quotes from Erasmus and Milton. May the God of Peace and Understanding continue to bless you and to fortify you.

GARY W. BOGGESS
Murray, Kentucky

Your thoughtful "Creed and Cruelty" in June *Integrity* has elicited this note, my first "letter to the editor."

I have read and reread it, finding it quietening and disquietening in turns, but a positive and valuable contribution to my ongoing search, particularly the balance of zeal and respect for others' quests.

Thank you for this light. We enjoy *Integrity* and its invitation to think, to change and to love.

SANDY BELL
Dallas, Texas

One of the Best

Being always behind in my reading, I just finished your June 1979 issue, including the letter from Ray Hawk of Jackson, Tenn.

Although I don't find a shred of his letter that I can agree with, I do appreciate your magazine printing alternative opinions such as his. I was impressed by the thinking done by C.W. Zenor in his article and consider it one of the

best pieces that you've published. Keep up the good work and stand firm in your willingness to present all viewpoints. Your readers know the truth when they see it. Thanks.

RICHARD SCHRAMM
Dallas, Texas

Best Wishes

I have appreciated *Integrity* through the years. Your openness and Biblical stance is very heartening. May you have many more years to stimulate us through the journal.

CHARLES R. GRESHAM
Grayson, Kentucky

An Appeal for Good News

I sometimes wonder if we have joined the world in proclaiming a message of doom. I have heard so many negative sermons over the past few years that even though I know better, I sometimes come away from church depressed. I do not believe this is really the result preachers want. The preachers I know are all dedicated men of God with good intentions. But shouldn't our message be predominantly one of hope? It is with this in mind the following is offered:

A Note to the Preacher:

We turned from the cares of our daily work and listened for the uncommon message of Christ to lift us out of the mundane. We got a lecture telling how we were concerned only with material things. We left discouraged, trying to remember that He can transform the mundane into a work of beauty. And because He lives nothing is mundane.

We came away from the television, the movie, and the modern novel with their corruption of the mind and searched for the message of His purity. Instead we were told in pornographic detail how we were just like the world. We left struggling to remember, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

We ran from a world yelling obscenities and profanity yearning to hear His name praised that our souls might be refreshed. It was impressed on us how unworthy we were to even wear His name. We left trying to recall He is our righteousness.

We are come from a world of violence and intrigue, but we hope for a message of peace and good news. Dear preacher, "are there any things true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report? Is there any virtue or praise?" Could we think on these things?

BETTY STOCKSTILL
Springfield, Missouri