

INTEGRITY, a journal published by an independent nonprofit corporation, is basically a ministry of reconciliation which utilizes the varied talents of a large community of believers who seek accurately to reveal God to both the church and the world so that all may become one as he is one.

Integrity

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Integrity

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reflections, Hoy's personal statement, and the Board's effort to respond with words which at times seem so inadequate as a vehicle for the deeper feelings of the Christian's heart.

Supportive of our efforts in this transition issue is the appeal of J. Ervin Waters, "A Strategy for Peace," since one of *Integrity's* stated goals is a continuing quest for clearer understanding and implementation of the Biblical basis for unity and fellowship. Hoy has provided an incisive editorial note at the beginning of Waters' article. And what could be a more appropriate inclusion than words from the warm heart and bright mind of Carl Ketcherside, in his continuing series on the Body of Christ.

In the five remaining issues of 1984 we will develop the Biblical theme, "Life in the Spirit," the intended theme which Hoy Ledbetter himself fixed upon last Fall, and to which he has committed himself to contribute.

To Hoy and Jary Ledbetter, whom we respect so highly in the Lord, for whose past labors we will never cease to be grateful, and whom we esteem in love sincere, we say "Godspeed to you, but never good-bye."

Joseph F. Jones, Chairman
Integrity Editorial Board

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Jan.-Feb. 1984
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are by written request. Although there is no subscription charge (we depend on contributions from readers and God's grace), contributions are necessary for our survival. Since we are approved by IRS, they are deductible.

Manuscripts

written exclusively for INTEGRITY are welcomed.

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when you change your address, so that you will not be dropped from our mailing list.

Available back issues

will be sent upon request, but our treasurer would like a contribution to cover mailing expenses.

Continuation and Commitment

With this issue we mark a most significant juncture in the history of *Integrity* journal. Late in 1982 Hoy Ledbetter, founder and only editor of this paper for its fifteen year existence, wrote in an editorial about his decision to accept the ministry at Brookvalley Church in Atlanta. While we did not know at that time the full implications of his move for *Integrity*, our intention was that the ministry of this journal would continue; and continue it has.

In the *Integrity* Board meeting of March 3, 1984, the resignation of our dear brother, Hoy Ledbetter, as Editor-in-Chief was read and accepted. Along with his resignation Hoy has prepared a brief but descriptive statement for our readers, a statement that breathes the very spirit of this great man of God. Although Hoy has resigned his unique role as chief editor of the paper, his relationship with *Integrity* is far from ended; for he has agreed to continue in support with material from his creative and studious mind and trenchant pen. He will also serve in a very real capacity as Editorial Advisor to the newly appointed Editorial Board, which will guide the publishing and direction of *Integrity* for the foreseeable future. (Members of the new Editorial Board are listed on the mast.)

The re-publishing of our "Statement of Purpose" should indicate that the present Board still holds firmly to the philosophy and goals which Hoy Ledbetter had for this paper while he served as its only editor; and further, the members of the Board wish to assure every reader that this shift in role or primary responsibility in no-wise reflects any personal differences or basic theological variance with Hoy. We love him and wife Lillian (Jary) with all genuiness; we are committed to continue on with that which he so nobly began fifteen years ago; and while he bids us Godspeed in his statement, it in no way means Goodbye.

The present issue of *Integrity* focuses on continuation and commitment to this ministry. We have prayed fervently for God's controlling presence in this transition of roles and responsibilities; and our prayer is that you as readers may catch something of this fervent spirit in the various editorial

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Godspeed, But Not Goodbye

For the past fifteen years I have devoted a great deal of my time to the publication of this magazine. I have done so because of my enthusiasm for its objectives and my belief that it was helping to meet a great need. My attitude has not changed; in fact, I think *Integrity* can be even more useful in the future than it has been in the past.

However, I think it is time for me to step aside as editor-in-chief, and I have submitted my resignation to the board. I have done so with the reluctance characteristic of one who relinquishes what has been so much a part of his life for so long, yet with relief to be free to devote more attention to other important matters. Of course, as God permits, I will continue to serve the magazine in other ways and be as helpful as possible.

Once again I must acknowledge my debt to numerous colleagues. To the board of directors, who are not only highly competent and committed but are also fun to work with. To the faithful supporters, whose abiding loyalty has been vital. To the excellent writers, without whose assistance nothing else would have meant a thing. To the countless men and women who over the years have provided invaluable encouragement. To the critics, who have kept us on our toes. To the readers, who have stayed with us even when we got a bit dull. And to the Lord, who supplies all our needs as he leads us to glory. Thank you all, and Godspeed.

—Hoy

Board's Response to Hoy Ledbetter

It is with sadness that the Board of Trustees of *Integrity* accepts the resignation of Hoy Ledbetter as Editor-in-Chief of this journal, which would not be in existence without him. We rejoice that his present activities as minister of the Brookvalley Church in Atlanta (the "other important matters" of his statement in this issue) has been both absorbing and fulfilling, but we regret that these duties have made it impossible for him to continue to bear the level of responsibility for *Integrity* that he has in the past. We are happy to report, however, that Hoy has consented to con-

tinue his association with the journal as Editorial Advisor, in which capacity he will consult regularly with the Board and with those who will have direct editorial responsibility for *Integrity*.

The Board has taken an increasing role over the past two years in the planning and writing of *Integrity*, and it will continue to do so as necessary. The direct editorial responsibilities for the journal will be undertaken for the next year by an editorial board of four: Joseph Jones; Laquita Higgs; Natalie Randall; and Dean Thoroman.

The Board re-affirms the purpose of *Integrity* as printed elsewhere in this issue. Readers are invited to share in this reaffirmation. Written responses are invited and welcome. Manuscripts submitted for publication will be considered in terms of current and long range purposes.

Statement of Purpose

In order that our readers and writers may have a clear understanding of our objectives, and that we ourselves may maintain a clear perspective and a balanced journal which both reflects and inspires integrity, we issue the following statement.

We intend to provide a refined and respected literary medium for sharing the Good News of God in Christ to people of varying needs: to all who are searching for the abundant life; to believers who require reaffirmation of their faith and the reassurance of the Christian message; and to the corporate body of Christ whose mission is to witness his message to the world.

Since the Word of God is the ultimate criterion for determining the authenticity of everything the church is and does, our aim is to publish articles that are the result of keen exegetical study of the Scriptures and are at the same time interesting and understandable to our readers and related to their moral and spiritual needs.

In order that our efforts may be directed toward the mission of Christ, and not our own, we will encourage intensive inquiry into the origins of the Christian community and our religious heritage. This goal implies a recognition that dogma is often formulated as a defense against what is considered heresy, that the interpretation of Scripture is conditioned both historically and ideologically by the context in which it

Every effort is being made to publish and distribute *Integrity* regularly. Your prayers and continued patience on this behalf will be deeply appreciated.

Board of Trustees
INTEGRITY PUBLICATIONS, INC.

is articulated, and that multiple pressures are exerted on the conscience to remain loyal to the particular religious tradition one has embraced.

Since the Christian life essentially involves right relationships, we will make a concerted effort toward providing Biblical answers to questions of fellowship and unity.

We believe that all Christians must share the responsibility of determining the meaning of Jesus Christ in our lives and that the Spirit of Truth is not confined to any enclave of believers. Accordingly, we encourage response from all who recognize Jesus as Lord, irrespective of their convictions or affiliation.

We will continue to provide a forum in which sincere yet different points of view may be stated with Christian candor and competence. This policy necessarily entails publishing some conclusions at variance with our own, which will ordinarily be done without editorial judgment under the assumption that our readers are capable of evaluating diverse viewpoints for themselves.

We will provide an opportunity for the publication of at least limited amounts of reader response, negative as well as positive. This freedom of expression will be restricted only in terms of irrelevance, undue repetition, blatant crudeness, personal

attack, and shallow treatment of subject matter.

Our writers will speak with dignity, sincerity, and seriousness, honestly expressing the truth they have received from God, in words that are rational because they reflect His perspective and bear conviction to reasonable minds. Since a valid teaching ministry requires continual awareness of and adaptation to the needs of a changing world, we expect to constantly adjust our emphasis so as to remain pertinent to the serious issues our readers face.

Finally, it is our unwavering aim to remain totally under God's guidance and dependent upon his grace.

A Strategy for Peace

J. ERVIN WATERS

Temple, Texas

NOTE: This article is an address made to the Christian Unity Conference in Conway, Arkansas, in January. You will find it valuable reading for two reasons. Not only is it a fine statement of truth that needs to be repeated many times, but it is significant because of who the author is. Ervin Waters was for many years, as he puts it, "party champion" of one of the most conservative segments of the Restoration Movement. He is still a champion, but now of the brotherly spirit. And he is a great model of what the Lord can do with those who allow him to lead their lives. I hope you will feel, as you read this, some of the joy I felt when I heard it presented at Conway.

—Hoy

Joy wells in my heart and my cup runneth over to be blessed with the privilege of shar-

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ing with you in a common concern for unity and peace among brethren. I confess that a few years ago I would not have come had you invited me, and you probably would not have invited me! And if, perchance, I had come, I would have considered it my "boundin' duty" to edify you on what are called in brotherhood parlance "the issues." You see, I come from a small exclusivist and narrowly legalistic segment or sect of our restoration heritage. I once thought that surely that group constituted the kingdom of God on earth and within its folds were circumscribed the elect and the saints! Most of you could not have been in my exclusive, faithful fellowship. You were to be delivered to the devil, shipped to Satan, or tossed to Tophet! And some were so unkind as to think that I was in "the objective case, the kickative mood." You name it and I probably was "agin" it!

Nurtured in Factionalism

I was nurtured at the breast of factionalism and suckled sectarian milk from its paps. I cut my debating eyeteeth as a lad on the bone of controversy. I became a party champion and jostled in the arena of debate with other party champions, bathing my polemical sword in the blood of brethren. While even in my twenties in dozens of such conflicts I crossed swords with many dear brethren, the names adorn in the pages of our history, but who have now passed on and gone the way of all the earth. Since I am in Arkansas, I think of debating Joe Blue, called the "watch-dog of the Ozarks," at the age of twenty-five, and at the age of twenty-eight, meeting that giant debater, W. Curtis Porter. At long last I saw the folly and futility of such fratricidal blood letting. The walls we erected to keep our brethren out became our own prison walls which fenced us in. I have seen about twelve divisions of some widespread significance in my life time.

I did not learn debating in the cultured academic forensic platform of the university, but in the rough and tumble, yes, the life and death struggle of party polemics where the law of the jungle, of fang and claw, of the survival of the toughest and shrewdest ruled; where weapons honed to razor sharpness could split the finest of theological hairs and where the smallest of nuances assumed in our sight the largest of problems; where one had to learn to parry the puns of party pundits, endure the willy witticisms of wits, and where usually Hedge's Rules of Honorable Controversy were read with "tongue in cheek" and "fingers crossed" because we were "after the man." It is not that what we said and did was not "according to Hoyle" but that it was not "according to Heaven"!

From Triviality to Truth

What experience awaits when you leave the treadmill of triviality and enter the

realm of reality! Remember that reality is truth. Jesus is THE TRUTH, the REALITY in a world of unreality, of phantoms, of ghosts, and of mirages. Like David, I have watered my bed with tears in the night. With sob-wracked body, on my knees, I have agonized in prayer. Like the Jews in captivity by the river of Babylon who hanged their harps upon the willows and wept when they remembered Zion.

Division is the *SCANDAL OF THE CHURCH*. It vitiates our plea, enervates our spiritual health, and neutralizes most of our efforts. Our divisions and sub-divisions have made of us a sordid and sorry spectacle. What started out as a unity movement to unite the Christians in all the sects became, perhaps, the most divided religious movement on the American scene. Should our name be *ICHABOD* because the "divine glory is departed from us"? Our glory is our shame. We are our own enemies. We stumble over our own feet. The greatest barriers to unity and the subsequent conversion of the world to Christ are of our own making. We have taken the deadend streets of division.

Some of us have been brainwashed into thinking that we presently are a unity movement. That the Stone-Campbell restoration movement of the nineteenth century was a unity movement is evident to students of religious history. This unique feature gave to it an impetus and dynamic which was lacking in the Scottish restoration movements immediately preceding ours, the Glassites, the Sandamanians, the Scottish Baptists and the Haldaneans. Most of what we think are the peculiarities of our movement were learned from them since both Thomas and Alexander Campbell had acquaintance with some of them personally and with their writings, and Walter Scott was immersed at one of their congregations at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. But they were not unity movements. They subdivided and died. Our restorers caught the vision of a united church. A close examination of the historic documents and writings of Barton

W. Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and Walter Scott reveal the simplicity of their unity foundation. They offered something new to a divided and warring religious world. Their unity principle provided such vitality and cohesion that our brethren constituted the swiftest growing religious body in America for decades. From the early 1830's to the early 1850's it is claimed that they multiplied by at least six to ten times and projected to 1866 some claim by twenty to thirty times.

Unity Despite Differences

They were able to unify the separate Stone and Campbell movements despite such differences as those on Unitarianism, Trinitarianism, Arminianism, Calvinism, Universalism, the Atonement, the Name, the Working of the Holy Spirit, etc., and, furthermore, were able to survive as a fellowship until near the close of the nineteenth century, some ninety years after *THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF THE SPRINGFIELD PRESBYTERY* by B.W. Stone and his co-laborers in 1804 and the *DECLARATION AND ADDRESS* of Thomas Campbell in 1809. The Civil War tensions brought divisions to just about all of the denominations in the nation, but our brethren survived in fellowship those provocations and tensions, albeit that fellowship was strained. And this survival was despite differences on Open Communion, the Missionary Societies, Cooperation, Sunday Schools, Instrumental Music, the Millennium, the Number of Cups in the Communion, Fermented or Unfermented Wine in the Communion, Uninspired Literature in Class Teaching, Rebaptism of Immersed Believers who did not thoroughly understand that baptism was for the remission of sins at the time of their baptism, Located Preachers, Bible Colleges, the Nature of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, Baptistries, the Marriage Question, the Nature of the Indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Christian, the Acts and Order of Worship, etc. Whatever unity plea and program they had and applied we either lost or came to misunderstand, for we developed a different response to dif-

ferences and produced some three divisions on the average for every decade since the turn of the century, three when actually the things we claimed to divide over had existed for decades.

The unity plea of our restorers possessed validity and produced cohesion. They practiced what they preached. We preach unity to a divided world and practice disunity before their very eyes! We preach peace to a warring world and hold up to them the spectacle of fighting factions! We preach oneness to a broken world and present to them a fragmented and fractured body! We preach love to a hating world and before their very eyes we are hateful and hating one another! We preach mercy to a lost world and unmercifully judge and condemn one another! We say to the world that Christ leads us to one sheepfold and yet we present several dozens of factions to that world, with each exclusively claiming Christ as its leader and saying that it but does Him service in discriminating against the others!

Unity A Divine Reality

Our restorers actually had a panacea for division. Their plea was not a delusion or an illusion. It was not a mirage upon the desert wasteland of sectarian strife and desolating divisions. Our restorers did not chase an illusive will-o-the-wisp of a dancing Jack-o-lantern. They saw no pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. They could vision a divine reality.

We wandered far afield. We substituted our own unwritten creeds, our opinions and human interpretations, for the Scriptures, for revelation, for fundamental faith. We substituted Law-Works for Grace-Faith and took the path of super humanism. Freedom and liberty guaranteed to the individual by the Priesthood of All Believers were destroyed by various forms of usurpations upon that freedom and liberty. Brethren were not permitted to be the Lord's free men but were placed in sectarian bondage and enslaved by a compulsive conformity. Every faction among us

stands on the threshold of possible and potential new divisions which may be brought about with as much consistency as existing ones.

It is not too late! Within the past few years scales have been dropping from the eyes of many and we have begun to practice some spiritual discernment. I am too soon old and too late smart, but against my brethren I have sheathed the sword of war. I will no longer pick up the gauntlet thrown down by petty people who "understand not what they say nor whereof they affirm." I face the setting sun of life as I move down the western slope. I have no time to waste; the time must be redeemed for His use. I will not waste that time in defending myself against the innuendos and the libels of labels, the sleuces of slime and the slices of slander! No more will I sound the war tocsin against my brethren in Christ. I no longer hear those trumpets in the morning. My feet now march to the beat of a different drum. Sectarianism in the church must make way for the onward march of better things.

Listen, my brethren! If we are not capable of self-examination and searching introspection there is no hope for us. If we cannot accept unity in diversity, there is no place for us. If we cannot deal with differences and new concepts by dialogue between brethren who love one another and the Lord, there is no progress in us, only a retrogression, a denigration and degradation of the spiritual, the ennobling and the good. If we cannot preach the "good news" of Christ instead of the legalistic "bad news" of our sects, there is no need for our cluttering the contemporary scene. If we cannot promote the ethics of Christ which will reconcile rather than alienate, heal rather than injure, then there is no vitality in us.

I am, however, glad to be alive in 1984. We live in a fortuitous time pregnant with hope for the future. Catholicism and denominations are in ferment. So many are reading the Bible as if it were a brand new

book. Human creeds are losing their hold upon the minds of men. There is a lessening of loyalty to denominational structure. House study and prayer groups, identified with no organization, are springing up all across the land. Methinks we stand on the threshold of a reformation and restoration which will dwarf any such that has gone before. But it will be sparked by and fired by others rather than us unless we get our heads out of the sand, unless we quit sulking in our tents and hiding in isolation in our buildings, and unless we go out into our world to listen and to talk, to present a Jesus Who is the only answer to our searching questions and the only solution to our painful problems.

I propose *A STRATEGY FOR PEACE*:

1. I propose the *UNIFYING CROSS*. "If I be lifted up," said Jesus, "I will draw all men unto me" (John 12:32). At the *CROSS* he offered alienated men *PEACE* with God and *PEACE* with each other (Eph. 2:12-17). If at the foot of the *CROSS* a perfect God can accept an imperfect me in His perfect Son, then at the foot of that same *CROSS*, imperfect I can accept my imperfect brethren in that perfect Son. It should be much easier for the imperfect to accept the imperfect than for the perfect to accept the imperfect.

2. I propose the *PEACE OF A PERSON*. He at Whose birth the angelic choir sang, "Peace on earth to men of good will" (Luke 2:14), was the Prince of Peace (Revelation 1:5). "He is our *PEACE*" (Eph. 2:14). He said, "*PEACE* I leave with you" (John 14:27), and "In me ye might have *PEACE*" (John 16:33). His gospel is the Gospel of *Peace* (Romans 10:15). His kingdom is *PEACE* (Romans 14:17).

I propose His *PRAYER* (John 17:20-23) for *ONENESS*.

I propose His *PROGRAM* (Ephesians 1:9-11) for bringing together in *ONE* all things and integrating heaven and earth.

I propose His eternal *PURPOSE* (Ephesians 3:6,11) of making Jews and Gentiles heirs together in *ONE BODY* and partakers

of the *PROMISE* in Christ.

Division would tend to thwart all of this.

3. I propose *SPIRITUALITY* as both a preventative of and an antidote for division since Paul accused the Corinthians of carnality because of their divisions and parties (1 Corinthians 3:1-4) and said he could not address them as spiritual. Peace is a fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) while strife and heresy are a work of the flesh (Galatians 5:20).

4. I likewise propose *MATURITY* as such a preventative and antidote. Paul called the Corinthians "babes" because of their divisions and parties and said he had to give them "milk" and not "meat" (1 Corinthians 3:1-2). Our propensity for division is a symptom of our immaturity. When will we grow up?

5. I propose an unconditional commitment to the *LEADERSHIP* of *JESUS*. The schismatics at Corinth were committed to the leadership of men (1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:4). The elevation of men as leaders is involved in schism and heresy.

6. I propose restoring Christ as *THE FOUNDATION*. It was in the context of divisions at Corinth that Paul reminded: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus" (1 Corinthians 3:11).

7. I propose that we internalize *UNITY ATTITUDES* such as are taught and manifested in Philippians 2:1-8. The soothing of *LOVE* would furnish a good beginning. Jesus set it forth as the distinguishing badge of discipleship: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). We divided when we quit loving one another. There is also *MERCY* which inhibits judgment. "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13).

8. I propose that we practice the *CONGREGATIONAL AUTONOMY* we have always claimed to believe in. Each con-

gregation is responsible to King Jesus. There is no inter or super-congregational structure or organization. There is no court of brotherhood judicature before which a congregation may be brought for trial. This principle is constantly abridged and violated. Congregations are pressured to conform. They are threatened. Some are black-listed and avoided when they exercise their right of decision. We do not believe in a controlling heirarchy which passes down the orders. Congregations are intimidated by other congregations or some preachers and editors. We have our power structures, unofficial though they may be, and most of us deny it.

9. I propose a return to the principle of *INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY*. We pay lip service to it and generally violate it. "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant: to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him to stand" (Romans 14:4). "But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (v. 10). "So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God" (v. 12). "Let us not therefore judge one another any more" (v. 13). The ostracizing of brethren is widespread. How would or could a sect or party be formed without violating this and number eight? I am here proposing a scriptural methodology for congregations and individuals.

10. I propose a restoration of *THE PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS*. Every child of God is a priest. Christ is our High Priest. There is no earthly priestcraft to interpose between us and Christ. We abort this principle while denying that we do. Note 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Hebrews 3:1; 4:14-15; 5:5; 6:20.

11. I propose that brethren *RECEIVE ONE ANOTHER*, as Christ also received us to the glory of God (Romans 15:7). In his *DECLARATION AND ADDRESS*, Thomas Campbell used this as a major part of his launching pad for our Restoration

Movement. He then warned that our conclusions must not be exalted against this premise. Our deductions, inferences and opinions must not be allowed to negate this principle or be exalted against his premise. Our restoration movement would scarcely have got to first base without honoring it. Christ receives us in spite of them and our sins and errors of judgment and interpretation, in spite of weakness and ignorance. Thus must we receive one another or not be received by Christ. The door we shut to our brothers may be the door we shut to ourselves. Our too short bed and too narrow cover will be stretched for us with their inadequacies.

12. I propose that we cultivate a proper *SENSE OF VALUES*. Our value system seems to be off. We seem to value our opinion more than our brother. We value conformity to our opinion or interpretation more than we value unity. We value too highly our human interpretation of God's revelation and sometimes confuse the two. Even in Bible statements and Bible language we need to realize that *ALL TRUTHS ARE EQUALLY TRUE BUT ALL TRUTHS ARE NOT OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE*. Jesus in Matthew 22:34-40 said there was a greatest commandment and a second greatest commandment. In Matthew 23:23 He pointed to some matters as being "greater matters" even among Divine appointments. In 1 Corinthians 13:13 Paul said that love was the "greatest" in the triad: faith, hope, and love. Moral precepts take precedence over positive precepts. "I will have mercy and not sacrifice" (Mt. 9:13; 12:7). "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27). Ceremonial and ritual law gave way to the weal and welfare of David and his men in the case of the shewbread (Mt. 12:3-5).

13. I propose that we accept a *BROTHERHOOD* based upon *FATHERHOOD*, a *FRATERNITY* based upon *PATERNITY*. We are brothers because we have the same father. If we ac-

cept our Father, we must accept His children. "Every one that loveth him that begat loveth him that is begotten of him", or "Every one who loves the father loves his children" (1 John 5:1). "We know that we love the children of God, when we love God" (v. 2). "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20). "And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God loves his brother also" (v. 21). "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us" (v. 12). We may choose our father but we may not choose our brothers and sisters. We were not asked and we had nothing to say about who they were.

14. We must recognize *A UNITY IN DIVERSITY* among both individual brethren and congregations. There is no other kind of unity We are diverse in talents, gifts, and potentials. We are diverse in IQ and in knowledge. We are diverse sexually, culturally, socially and racially. We are diverse in language and vocabulary. We are diverse in functions and offices. We are diverse in both physical age and spiritual age. We are diverse in logical acumen and in academic education. We are diverse in skills and trades. We are diverse in domestic relationships. Thus we are diverse in interpretations, opinions, and judgments. We are diverse in personality. We are diverse in physical size, stature and looks. A compulsive conformity or enforced uniformity among us is contrary to our inherent and acquired natures. It is antithetical to Divine ends and purposes with reference to us.

Healing divisions and promoting unity among us will not necessarily come with more head knowledge. It will only come with more heart conversion, more Christ in us, more love to hold us together.

Restoration and reformation are incompleting tasks. Alexander Campbell once said: "It may yet deserve the construction of a larger vessel in a more propitious season."

May the scales drop from our eyes and may we possess spiritual discernment.

An old nursery rhyme I learned in my early school days most aptly describes the attitude of so many and the destructive effects of "in fighting" and trying to "kill each other off."

There were two cats from Kilkenny.

Each thought there was one too many. So they fought and they fit,

And they scratched and they bit, Till except for their nails

And the tips of their tails Instead of two cats there weren't any.

The One Body (No. 4)

W. CARL KETCHERSIDE

It is interesting to note the use of the word "body" in the last nine verses of First Corinthians. It is found eight times in the Authorized Version. It occurs in a context which begins with a discussion of things which are lawful and expedient. Paul had just finished dealing with the problem of brethren suing and impleading each other in heathen courts and before pagan judges. He concludes that it would be better to take wrong and to suffer oneself to be defrauded. Instead he accused them of acting unjustly and of defrauding the brethren.

He then points out that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God and details a number of sins of which they were guilty at Corinth. Next he mentions their statement that "All things are lawful for me." He shows it was not without limitation in its practical use. It is true within a certain sphere. One is that it also be profitable. It is quite true that there may be no law against certain things, but they are unprofitable, that is inexpedient. The smoking of cigarettes may be lawful, but the fact that they are with increasing frequency the cause of cancer makes them highly unprofitable. No doubt it is this fact which make so many of those who plead their

lawfulness also deplore the fact that they began what has turned into an inveterate habit.

This is the second reason why Paul argues against indulgence on the basis of pure legality. Some things tend to enslave. They cease to be servants and become masters. Who has not known of alcoholics, hopelessly enslaved by their intense cravings? These things dominate the person until he becomes crushed and hopeless under their influence. Some are gluttons. They dig their graves with their teeth. They eat, not to gratify hunger but from a craving which grips them. The apostle argues that though it be admitted that all things are lawful, it is not lawful for one to be under the dominance of anything.

There was a proverbial statement bandied around half-jokingly - meats for the belly and the belly for meats. Paul points out that while there is a measure of truth in the proverb it is equally true both will be destroyed. Meats will decompose, spoil and be cast aside. Those which are taken into the body will not permanently satisfy hunger. They will be digested, absorbed into bodily tissues, and the residue or waste resulting will be cast off in defecation. And the belly itself is only for this life. It too will

resolve itself into elements and will be eaten by worms of the dust.

And while it may be argued that the belly was made for meats it can be equally affirmed that the body was not made for fornication. It was easy to contend that the only way hunger could be satisfied was by the eating of meat and the only way sex hunger could be satisfied was by the indulgence in sexual activities. The warped philosophy of the Corinthians coupled with the tendency to engage in sexual congress made it easy for their reason to be distorted. The apostle argues that instead of the body being made for fornication it is rather made for the Lord. And the Lord is for the body. Just as it requires two to engage in illicit relationships so it requires two to have spiritual affinity.

The belly will be destroyed and so will the meats which gratify it. But that is not true of either the Lord or the body. God has raised up the Lord and He will also raise us up by His own power. There is a permanence about us which cannot be satisfied by casual indulgence or temporary liaisons. We were not made for a temporary relationship but for one which transcends this life and will be validated by our being raised from the dead as Jesus was.

Our bodies are members of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12:12 the word declares that "As the body is one and hath many members. ...so also is Christ." Our bodies are his members. He functions through them. From another standpoint our members are instruments of righteousness unto God. We are to yield them as servants to righteousness unto holiness. One cannot be holy and engage in fornication. It is noteworthy that it is not the congregation as such, which constitutes Christ. It is our bodies which are members of the Lord. If I join my body with a prostitute I am not only reflecting against myself but against Jesus. Such momentary indulgence in gratification "bought for a price" dishonors the Lord who craves me for his very own and paid the price for me.

The apostle points out that to join in illicit sex with a prostitute makes you one body with her. In this intimacy both lose their identity and merge together into one body, a new body which did not exist before the union. He reasons that this is true because God taught in the beginning of marriage that the two shall become one flesh. But that is the desire of Christ, to have such a relationship with us that the two of us become one. To disregard this and indulge in the passionate embrace of a prostitute is to thwart the divine purpose. We sustain the same relationship with Jesus in a spiritual sense that we sustain physically with a member of the opposite sex. The orgasmic reflex of the spirit should be just as acute and carry the same thrill as that of the flesh.

Flee fornication. This is the only sin we are specifically told to run from. The only way to fight fornication is with the hat. Grab it and run. To play around with it means loss of virtue. It cannot be argued with, for he who stops to argue has half succumbed. Joseph fled, leaving his coat in the hands of the temptress. He kept himself pure. In doing so, he set an example for every other teen-ager in the world. Fornication is an especially destructive sin because it affects the body of him who commits it. Every other sin is without one's own body. He who commits fornication sins against his own body. Take notice that fornication is branded as sin, and a precious sin at that. In our present culture it is often winked at or made the butt of jokes. But in "the great payday in the skies" when God settles up accounts, he who is guilty and has not repented and secured forgiveness will find that his indulgence was no laughing matter with the judge of all the earth.

Another reason for abstaining from fleshly lusts which war against the soul is that they defile the temple of the Holy Spirit. One of the great blessings of the new covenant is the fact that Deity dwells in us. A temple, among the Greeks, was the lodging-place of a god. The temple of

Aphrodite at Corinth was considered to be her habitation among mortals. God's design for man had been gradually leading him to this day. At first man drew near from an altar of earth, then from one of unhewn field stones, then God met with man from between the wings of the cherubim on the mercy-seat in the inner sanctum of the tabernacle. Finally, Solomon created a magnificent temple made with hands.

But the coming of Jesus banished ritualism, institutionalism and liturgy. Pure and undefiled religion became a matter of relationship to widows and orphans. It consisted of maintaining the purity of one's garments from the filthiness of the daily contact with the world. We became sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, He dwells in us and walks in us. He became our God. We became his people, the temple of the living God. In the progress of time there awaits but one more dimension. It is the eternal city. John saw no temple in it, for the Lord Almighty and the Lamb is the temple of it. The only city in history in which was no shrine, holy place or temple. The evolution of man's association with the divine will be complete.

The Universal Orphan

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The streets were jammed with humanity, a scene not at all atypical for a Saturday afternoon in Mexico City. Wealthy tourists who spend thousands to travel south and haggle the peasants out of a few pennies for a blanket, a vase or some other such trinket that will then stand for them as a trophy to

As for the present status of our relationship upon earth my body is the temple of my God. It is composed of cells and capillaries, of tissues and tendons. These are attacked by disease and weakened by age. Pain and suffering occur. Sometimes it seems too great to bear. Yet I am the temple of the Holy Spirit. God gave us the Spirit. He sent Him to dwell in me. I do not belong to myself. I cannot do my own thing. I cannot please myself. I am not my own. I was purchased, redeemed and reconciled. The price was not silver and gold but the precious blood of Jesus as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.

I am to glorify God in my body and spirit. They are God's. He bought them for a habitation. Shall I trash them, vandalize them, smear them? Shall I make them look like the city garbage dump? Shall I value the tenant so lightly as to expose him to the sin of prostitution? It would be ridiculous to pass by a beautiful mansion inhabited by the governor of the state and fling tar upon it. Those who do such things speak far more eloquently of themselves than they do of the governor. Vandalism never reveals the character of the one being attacked, only that of the attacker. □

their abilities to bleed the poor. Shop owners hustling their wares while mischievous little children scavenge about surveying the possibilities of obtaining something, anything for nothing. Business types and saloon keepers, indigents, animals, visitors, vagrants, hookers and

Holy ones and all the countless others for whom no label might be appropriate all blissfully unaware of one another, all somehow meshed together in one great paradox of rich and poor, one grand sensual tapestry of sight, sound and confusion.

And yet in the heart of this confusion there was solitude, merely waiting to be discovered. As the wealthy American traveler made his way towards his destination, the restaurant where he would enjoy the pleasures of food and friendship, his eye quickly caught sight of the little beggar girl sitting near the steps of the eating establishment silently asking for handouts. And the American responded accordingly, throwing her a few coins and going into his meal; his conscience purchased, assuaged of guilt at the relatively cheap price of a few coins tossed thoughtlessly in the general vicinity of the one who is poor. Salvation comes cheap to the one who need not measure the cost.

Nagging Hurt

But for whatever reason this little scenario was to be different because this was the time for conscience to be neither bought nor sold and a nagging hurt accompanied this man into his restaurant and in fact drove him back out again into the streets, back to the little orphan whose silent request for money had hooked into him, had imbedded itself within him, had now threatened to become a part of him. And so he went, and he sat with her and he realized that by so doing his destiny would now meet hers; that his story must now be enhanced and liberated by hers, that he must first find in her not the poor, not the outcast, and not merely another intrusion into his already overburdened sense of social responsibility.

No, in her he was to first find a human being, in his sitting with her and thus in her witness to him it was her eyes that told him, "You and I both know what it is to cry" and it was in the prematurely weathered lines etched upon her face that he saw the

truth of a human struggle with which he could only today identify. It was in her crouched and cowering posture that he saw the ubiquitous spectre of fear with which this little girl lived. A fear which he might want at times to claim for his own.

In the presence of the one who was barely living he discovered what it means to be fully alive because in the story of a stranger he had touched the thread of commonality that has knit together the whole of the human race.

We are alone, basically, and simply. When pretense has surrendered to truth we find ourselves, as did this American traveler, witnesses to a revelation.

For the little orphan the human tragedy is most vividly expressed in the form of imprisoning poverty for which she will be asked to serve a life sentence; but the dilemma in fact stretches far beyond that poverty to the place which theologian Paul Tillich has labelled the human predicament. And that orphan in her station as the impoverished beggar becomes then the manifestation of this predicament for all who will meet her. She is, if you will, an extension of the very roots of human existence. The one who by cruelty of circumstance has had thrust upon her the hell of anonymity in the heat of a city deaf to her cries and blind to her tears.

Dare we crawl out of our shells just long enough to recognize that we are all orphaned from one another; separated, in a cold and meaningless world, a world in which significance is not indigenous but must be garnered? To recognize that the orphan is the supreme articulation of our greatest unspoken fear? She stands where we all stand and insodoing she speaks the truth of the human predicament. And so it is here, in what Camus has described as our own personal Gethsemene that we will finally confront ourselves unmasked and disarmed.

It is, if you will, the existential reality, the reality that speaks to us of a universe devoid of any heart of compassion or soul of understanding. The admission that compas-

sion and understanding must instead be located elsewhere in the human arena. There is no inherent kindness to life, but here is inherent struggle meted out in unjust proportion and distributed in unjustifiable quantity.

Existential Predicament

But the extension of the existential predicament is an awareness both of human capacity and of human responsibility to address the self-styled demon and blunt it of its might. The escape from weary isolation for the orphan and the imprisoned, for the poor and the neglected comes first from our capacity to recognize that indeed the plight of the poor is the human plight, the plight of the orphan is the human plight, the plight of the homeless is the human plight, is our plight, is what makes us kin. From such a recognition can then come a time of healing.

If ever we are to locate the touchstone of truth whence we can then locate one another we must first recognize the commonality of the soil upon which we tread, we must overcome our deepest fears just long enough to acknowledge the truth and we can then permit the orphan to have a ministry to us. To open our eyes and to allow the emptiness of her gaze to soften the hardness of our stare, a stare in which confusion and rejection might melt away and leave in its wake a more tranquil pool of empathy and identification. There are few experiences that more closely resemble the miraculous than this, the I-Thou.

At the moment at which the dim walls of isolation have surrendered to a mirror of understanding, community is possible. When stranger becomes friend and enemy is now sister or brother, when oppressor and oppressed embrace in a bond of common weakness. When the reckless insanity of the nuclear arms race is silenced by sensitivity to life and its burden is lifted off the backs of the poor and the disabled of the world. When multinational greed gives way to

global good and children no longer starve to death while rich Christians pray forgiveness for the commission of calculated sins. When that which unites us in the admission that we are truly needy, and the only escape is a paradoxical plunge into the depths of that need.

There exists no more certain avenue to this understanding than the sign of the Christ, the living example of what it means not only to preach a commandment of divine love but to live it in radical obedience.

To accept this commandment as your own is to see in the face of the orphan the face of a suffering God, crucified upon a cross of neglect. And to choose allegiance not with the perpetration of the sin but rather with the innocent suffering of the one who otherwise dies a thousand deaths in the anonymity of her own despair.

Jesus Becomes Our Savior

Existence becomes authentic only when we choose to die with her. We stand alone, but never fully alone if we are willing first to find in the person beside us a gesture of reciprocated forgiveness that will make real the story of the cross. It matters not that Jesus became a savior. It matters only that he becomes our savior, in a moment not of strength but of weakness. He is the orphan, the imprisoned, the poor; and so are we. Jesus wept. And so do we. □