

1969-1989 Twenty Years of

Integrity

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Integrity

INTEGRITY, a journal published bimonthly by an independent nonprofit corporation, is intended to be a ministry of reconciliation which utilizes the varied talents of a large community of believers. These believers, united in faith but divergent in opinions, seek to accurately reveal God to both the church and the world so that all may become one as He is one. Accordingly, it should not be assumed that the views expressed by individual authors necessarily represent the opinions of either the editors or the Board as a whole.

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Twenty Years Later

Twenty summers ago we watched men walk on the moon, Ted Kennedy try to explain Chappaquidick, and the U.S. begin its retreat from Viet Nam. This summer we have watched students die in China, the HUD scandal unravel, and Voyager II discover that Neptune has at least eight moons instead of two. Instead of LSD, crack is now king. Woodstock has been replaced by M-TV. And homosexuals fear AIDS more than coming out of the closet.

Evangelical churches have made it to the mainstream of American life during the last two decades. Backed by money and people-power, this segment of Christendom has become part of the "establishment." Evangelical spokesmen influence local and national politicians (and us) over social issues such as abortion, prayer/creationism in schools, and pornography, but are rarely outspoken on such topics as nuclear build-up, housing for the homeless, continuing racial discrimination, or better national health care.

Although the rights of women and minorities have progressed, (for example, ACU has its first woman vice president), women still cannot teach or preach to adult males in our own churches. Many towns containing both black and white congregations still maintain separated fellowship (an oxymoron), and rare are the instances of joint community service.

While some of us Christians argue over who is doctrinally correct or over "who is our brother?", the spiritually dying are either grasping at hope through the Mormons, the Moslems, or the New Age movement, or they are escaping their pain through the misuse of sex, drugs, food, etc. However, many other Christians have come to see beyond a sect built on argument to a called assembly built on Jesus Christ.

The Churches of Christ have made many changes for the good of the world during the last twenty years! It is a joy to read articles in publications such as the *Christian Chronicle* and the *Christian Standard* that document how the Churches of Christ have involved themselves in social issues on the local level; how ministries to the hungry and for disaster relief have been organized from local to international levels; how churches are extending professional help to those struggling with family relationships, substance abuse, and sexual responsibility. Our Chris-

(Continued on page 114)

Maintaining Our Integrity

JOSEPH F. JONES

In the initial issue of *Integrity* journal (June, 1969), the founding board of directors and editor, Hoy G. Ledbetter, spelled out the goals for the paper in a clear and cogent fashion. Through the years we have restated and commented on these same objectives. It is one thing to set goals, make resolves, and state good intentions; it is another matter to maintain such intentions and to realize these objectives. It is a sound biblical principle to determine directions, however, and to establish purposes as an individual, congregation, or a specific ministry. The apostle Paul's life is adequate testimony to this principle of commitment and assessment (Phil. 3:12-15).

Now in our twentieth year of publishing this periodical, it is most appropriate to assess the extent to which we have realized and are maintaining the ideals originally set forth for this ministry. I was aware of the efforts being exerted to give birth to this publication in 1969. Invited to board membership in March, 1974, I served on the editorial staff and as vice-president for several years; and since April 8, 1978 have served as president of the board of directors. I am in full accord with our Statement of Goals, and have through the years attempted to work with the board to realize such objectives through personal articles, decision-making, and working closely with those who are now serving in an editorial capacity, namely, Bruce and Diane Kilmer. It is appropriate here to make public recognition of our board of directors, including our officers, all of whom constitute a working, cooperative, and competent body of Christian servants. It is my sincere prayer that the following effort to assess a ministry such as *Integrity* purports to be, will add a positive note to our year of celebration.

Having noted my agreement with our state-

ment of purposes provides an appropriate setting to clarify again a significant perspective on board policy, and one which our readers deserve to know and understand; for it differentiates *Integrity* from many other such religious journals. Through the years *Integrity* has been a forum for the open discussion of significant brotherhood issues related specifically to churches having their historical origin in what is characterized as "The Restoration Movement," namely, Churches of Christ, independent Christian Churches, and Disciples of Christ. We have required that all materials published meet certain literary standards, but even more, that they reflect high ethical and Christian content, with due respect for the authority of the Word and the right of all others to their own sincere, personal interpretations. Further, our readers need to understand that *Integrity* does not reflect primarily one perspective or religious stance on issues; and that board members and editors do not necessarily agree with all views expressed or conclusions drawn in the materials printed. We do not impose, even on our own board members in their working sessions, a superficial intellectual conformity, but rather rejoice in our basic oneness which we experience "in Christ."

The Meaning of Integrity

The root meaning of the word "integrity" is "untouched, intact, entire;" and denotes soundness and completeness, honesty, sincerity, and uprightness (June, 1969). With the RSV using the word in 24 passages, Hoy Ledbetter understandably concluded, "The Biblical usage of the word points to simplicity of intention, the equivalent of being honest, sincere, and genuine, which is fundamental to true character" (October, 1973). The opening sentence in our

first editorial incorporated the essence of integrity when applied to our perspective of the church, since it was intended that this be "a monthly periodical which is dedicated to promoting unity, soundness, and honesty in the body of Christ" (June, 1969). Even a cursory knowledge of our Restoration Movement's history reveals a dynamic that began with the intent of bringing all sincere believers in the Lordship of Jesus, and who obeyed him to the extent of their knowledge, into a state of oneness (so wrote A. Campbell in his Lunenburg Letter, July 8, 1837). How tragic it is, however, to realize that a movement so conceived and born has become fragmented and divided into multiple groups and parties. We may not have succeeded perfectly in this respect, but *Integrity's* pages have been open to writers who have grieved over this brotherhood's dissension and dividedness, and have addressed themselves to exploring the roots of such a deplorable condition. The roots of disruption have been variously portrayed as ugly, unchristian attitudes which have contributed to a sectarian and party spirit; very inadequate knowledge of the intents and efforts of the Restoration Fathers; or faulty interpretative approaches to both Scripture and the movement's history.

We have made genuine efforts to promote unity, soundness, and honesty in the Body of Christ by healthy exegetical articles based on the biblical text, along with corrective materials directed toward the above divisive roots. In this respect two basic principles in our rich heritage of reformation movements, and expressed clearly in *Integrity's* founding goals, have been constant points of reference: 1) the supreme authority of the Bible, and 2) the right of individual interpretation of the Word. It has been the source of much division and the drawing of party lines when some believers insisted on their own interpretations while denying to others the right to their honest understanding; and this condition has been compounded by the subtle confusion and equating of one's own interpretation with nothing less than the absoluteness of divine truth. The apostle Paul would call this behavior in the Second Corinthian letter, "lording it over other's faith" (II Cor. 1:24).

Focus on Issues

Through the twenty years of *Integrity's* ministry we have sought to keep abreast of current religious conditions further threatening the unity of the church; and in this context have explored on a regular basis societal concerns, values, and life-styles that the church has had to face. Writers have, at times, been able only to identify religious and social concerns without having many solid biblical answers; but our pages have been open to those who were competent to address such conditions with their knowledge of the Word (or at least, their understanding of the Word).

Articles and sometimes entire issues of *Integrity* have been devoted to the deterioration of family in American society, and its impact on the church and the Christian family. We have bravely and humbly faced the grief and hurt which the increased divorce rate has reflected, with capable biblical scholars and competent Christian professionals in the behavioral sciences struggling to find and communicate some "word of wisdom" on this issue. Closely related to the divorce problem is the question of the Christian's right or privilege to follow divorce with re-marriage. *Integrity's* columns have been open to sincere writers who have agonized with both the problem and the teaching of the Scriptures on such complications in human behavior. (Bound issues of our treatment of these concerns about divorce and family life are still available.) Further, we have refused to retreat from facing such controversial societal issues as homosexuality, and its pervasiveness during the past several years in both society and the church. Even at the present our board is exploring the need to address again the vexing issues of abortion and AIDS, and to examine what word from the Lord the Scriptures contain for the church and the Christian family in adequate Christian coping.

Women's Role in the Church

Integrity, as its name denotes, has led in openly addressing the difficult subject of women's role in the life and work of the church. The extensive and varied response to articles on this concern evidence, perhaps, the neglect which

has characterized the church in its lack of an open, healthy, non-threatening approach. One valid conclusion as we approached this complex and complicated issue was the inadequacy of our hermeneutic - our lack of a sound science of interpretation. Nevertheless, we have published in-depth textual studies, welcomed all responses regardless of the reader's stance or perspective, if written with acceptable literary taste and in a genuine Christian spirit. We have never required contributing writers or those responding to conform to certain board or editorial views as prerequisite for publication, since a genuine freedom of expression is essential in the quest for truth. (For this effort to preserve our "freedom in Christ" we have received at times some harsh and undeserved criticism; but for this liberty in Christ we, like the apostle Paul, are willing to pay any price rather than sacrifice it.)

Charismatics and Integrity

The contemporary charismatic movement in all Christian churches has received reasonable and extensive treatment in *Integrity's* pages. Beyond the exegetical exposition of biblical texts about the nature and work of the Holy Spirit, we have sought healthy Christian alternatives toward the acceptance of Christians who honestly differ in their understandings of this controversial issue, thus attempting to maintain the unity of the Body which the Spirit creates (Eph. 4:1ff). Our prayer and our efforts have been, in the words of Francis of Assisi, that the Lord would make us who have the responsibility of publishing this periodical, "instruments of Thy peace." (Our board of directors, in its working sessions, is an authentic witness to the reality that men and women who are "in Christ" and committed to His Lordship can, with honest differences and interpretations, worship and work together to the glory of God, as the apostle exhorted in Romans 15:5-7.)

Fellowship and Leadership

Two of the most vital concerns to *Integrity's* board have revolved around the brotherhood's views on Christian fellowship and unity, and

the closely-related need to explore the nature of authentic biblical leadership in the Body. We have been basically committed to the Restoration perspective which says that nothing ought to be made a matter of Christian fellowship which is not made by the inspired writers and the Lord Jesus Himself a requirement for salvation and heaven.

Within the membership of *Integrity's* board we have felt the powerful impact of the apostle's appeal in Romans 15:7 when he wrote, "Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God." We have experienced this unity amidst diversity among ourselves as Christian leaders, and have consequently allowed the prayer of the great apostle of peace to guide our printed efforts. *Integrity's* pages have cried out with anguish at the multiplicity of views and practices which we have made tests of fellowship, dividing men and women for whom Christ died into separate camps, becoming alienated and consequently even hostile toward one another. Such conditions have not been to the honor but rather the dishonor of our God and Father. And we will continue our intense focus on that unity and fellowship for which Jesus prayed and died and rose again.

Christian leaders — including primarily preachers, elders, editors, and college teachers — who understand the biblical meaning of leadership in the Body of Christ, can do immeasurable good in healing wounds, ministering to the needs of individual members in the Body, and preserving "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." But, grievously, they have, and often continue, to foster attitudes and actions which perpetuate dividedness and a sectarian spirit among the members of Christ. I will hasten to add this note, however, that there appear to be hopeful clouds on the horizon bringing efforts to remove barriers, thus increasing mutual understanding among brethren who honestly differ but who are equally committed to Jesus as Lord. There seems evidence of some relaxing of the need to be judgmental of everyone with whom we may differ, and a greater willingness to see each other's views.

We have focused our attention at times on the role of elders in local congregations who ap-

parently have misunderstood the nature of biblical leadership, and have arrogated to themselves an authority never granted by the Lord, His apostles, or inspired Scripture. We believe that our contributions through *Integrity* have significantly helped to stimulate a more constructive New Testament emphasis on the kind of shepherds which God intends to pastor His flock.

Healthy Efforts on Church Criticism

Some individuals have commented that *Integrity* periodical was born out of reactionary motives of some church leaders in the Michigan area; and use of the term "reactionary" has often been in a negative, disparaging manner. But dictionary definitions of "reaction" and "reactionary" do not necessarily imply something bad or undesirable. Reactions at times can be necessary, healthy responses to any given situation or condition. This is certainly true in the physical and scientific dimensions of our world, and I see no reason why this cannot be true and valid in the world of interpersonal relationships. I cannot speak for the motive in each brother's heart who had a decisive part in founding this journal, for that is God's prerogative. In this context of judging other's motives I take appropriate warning from the penetrating insight of G. Campbell Morgan, quoted by Hoy Ledbetter years ago in *Integrity*. The English divine wrote: "The ultimate sin which any man commits against his brother is that of the misinterpretation of his motive" (July/August, 1976, p. 32). But even with this disclaimer about others' motives, it is historically true that God has raised up men and women in all generations to call His people back to repentance; and this does not imply the perfection of those whom God chooses to use in such ministries. It does suggest, however, that perhaps God has allowed this written ministry of *Integrity* for two decades as a healthy source of self-criticism for individual Christians and the congregations where the journal is read.

Healthy self-assessment with an intent to correct and grow toward greater spiritual maturi-

ty is a mark of the true church of God, so wrote the author of Hebrews (5:14-6:1ff). Truth has nothing to fear from honest examination. Jesus challenged the traditions of His day that kept religion stifled and people enslaved; for He came to bring truth that would set men free. And freedom in Christ (not license to sin) is an exhilarating experience for any Christian or congregation. Our guiding policy through the years has been to publish materials that would challenge the church to examine anew its inherited traditions and interpretations, retaining what proves to be valid, and willingly discarding what does not stand honest, truthful evaluation. There is much in our Restoration Heritage worthy of refining, retaining, and sharing with the whole of Christendom and the world of unbelievers likewise; and this continues to be *Integrity's* intent. Granted, we may not always have achieved this ideal, but we are committed to it. Critical self-awareness and honest examination can point out certain assumptions which are invalid and need to be challenged. Judgmental conclusions often leading to further hurt and division have been exposed, we trust, in the spirit of Jesus. Encouragement to retain and appreciate the biblically valid and spiritually healthy aspects of our heritage has been equally present.

Christ At The Center

Balance at the center of life is not easy in any endeavor, whether guiding a family, leading a church, or publishing a paper. But knowing the history of *Integrity* from its inception, I can affirm that there has been a conscious effort on the part of board members and editors to keep Jesus, the risen and living Lord, at the heart of our ministry. Issues of brotherhood interest are assessed in view of what we perceive to be their importance to an individual's relationship with God, or how these issues may impact on the church's life and mission over which Christ the Lord exercises sovereignty. We try to look at persons and issues as we believe Jesus values them, praying with every mailing that God will use it as an instrument to mediate His grace and mercy to a hurt and desperate world. From this perspective we believe that *Integrity's* messages have touched numerous lives, speaking to the

discouraged and oppressed, clarifying priorities for those confused between multiple religious babblings on the one hand and the clear revelation of divine truth on the other. We have attempted to call the church, and especially leaders in the church, to the imperative need for reassessment of our interpretative approaches to Scripture, since it seems evident that so many of our heart-rending divisions and schisms are the direct result of poor and inadequate approaches to the understanding of the Word. One hardly needs proof of this as a priority when we look at the manner in which major issues have been addressed, i.e., the charismatic movement (the doctrine of the Spirit), the role of women in the life and work of the church, or the nature and basis of Christian unity and fellowship.

While being fully aware of the varied dimensions of biblical interpretation, we have attempted to measure our personal understandings as board members, and consequently every article published, by the mind and stature of Christ. He must become the ultimate norm by which truth, or our understanding of truth, is discerned and measured. "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus," is a very realistic criterion of biblical interpretation. We hold dearly the apostle's claim that he had not tried to "lord it over (another's) faith," and Paul was even an inspired and called servant of God. How dare leaders today presume such a prerogative (II Cor. 1:24)?

Our intent through *Integrity's* pages has never been to become a debate platform, but an open forum where conscientious and competent believers might, without fear, express their understanding of God's Will on any issue or concern relevant to the People of God; and this is not just an intellectual interest that we hold, but a deep, abiding concern for the individual Christian's relationship with the Lord. Reconciliation with God, and of person to person seems to be the undergirding purpose in Jesus' incarnation, life, and death (Eph. 2:11ff). If, through the messages of *Integrity*, some of this

reconciling ministry has been realized, then every effort, every hour of time, every dollar invested have all been worth it. (And from our reader response we have reason to believe that *Integrity* is being used of God to effect reconciliation!)

Maintaining Our Integrity

The apostle Peter's exhortation to Christians of the dispersion centuries ago might well be an appropriate frame of reference to conclude this effort of reassessment on *Integrity's* original purposes and direction, for he wrote persuasively:

"As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who utters the oracles of God; whoever renders service, as one who renders it by the strength which God supplies; in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen." (I Peter 4:10,11)

Have we to some extent maintained those purposes so clearly and sincerely delineated by our founding board and its editor-in-chief, Hoy Ledbetter? Only God can perfectly answer this penetrating and humbling question. But we are responsible now for periodic assessment of this ministry's mission and message; we are accountable as trustworthy stewards of the funds contributed by others who believe in this outreach. At the judgment we can well expect the Great Steward's request: "Give an account of your stewardship." And our prayer is that we may hear Him mercifully say, "Well done, good and faithful servants; enter into the joy of your Lord."

Dr. Joseph F. Jones has ministered to the Church of Christ in Troy, Michigan for 21 years. He holds a doctorate in higher education and a doctorate in pastoral counseling. Joseph has worked and written for *Integrity* magazine since its earliest years and has served as the president of the Board for more than ten years.

He who walks in integrity walks securely. Prov. 10:9

Deja Vu — Cycles of History

BRANT LEE DOTY

Some people have a very low view of history. Oscar Wilde wrote, "History is gossip." Henry Ford called it "bunk." Hegel affirmed that "Peoples and governments never have learned anything from history," and Voltaire wrote that history is scarcely more than "a picture of human crimes and misfortunes." These are distressing views of a study which should be of tremendous help to all of us. Observing both the good and bad of the past, with its concomitant results, should aid immensely in our own present and future. Indeed, to avoid or ignore the lessons taught by previous generations would seem to be the course of a fool.

Doctor Luke wrote his most purposeful biography of Jesus Christ only after thorough research into His life, affirming that "I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, . . . (in order to) write an orderly account for you. . . that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught," (Luke 1:1-4 NIV). The apostle John, with singular purpose in mind, said of his writings, ". . . these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name," (John 20:31 NIV). Clearly, both men believed their historical records would serve useful, and even vital, purposes.

The Bible offers a superabundance of examples where God Himself, or one of His spokesman-prophets, makes direct reference to events of the past, drawing out their invaluable lessons, adding applications to their own generation. Surely God expects us to profit from the recorded good and bad of our predecessors.

In this reference, we may sample a bit of *deja vu* as we take a quick look at our history two decades ago — the turbulent '60s — and note how the same or similar circumstances or events are repeated, ignored, or used to determine a course of action during our own '80's. In the

truest sense of the familiar cliché, "What goes around, comes around!"

Turbulent '60's

All who lived as youths or adults from 1960-1969 remember its significant events. Not the least of these was our national involvement in Vietnam's "no-win" war. What consolation is it today to think about the devastation in that nation, the resultant oppressive government, and its fall into an aggressive, growing Communist camp? Isn't there more than a little similarity to more recent hostilities in Angola, Afghanistan, and Nicaragua? They smack of similar root problems: the invasion (or the attempted invasion) by an atheistic, totalitarian philosophy with the consequent imposition, or attempted imposition, of a totalitarian government, disregarding the will of the people involved. Remembering Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Balkan states, East Germany etc., and, much nearer home, Cuba, the logical questions are: "Where will it happen next? and where will it all end?" And just when rays of hope are smashed in China, Eastern Europe seems to be facing a new dawn. In both places it is *deja vu*.

Again, just how different was the motivation of Lee Harvey Oswald in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy from that of the late Ayatollah Khomeini in his recent offer of a fortune to the murderer of Rushdie, the British writer? Oswald's rationalization for the murder of the president was a distorted sense of riding the world of a perceived enemy. Khomeini offered a huge financial reward and (as if it were his to offer) an honored place in heaven to the murderer of Rushdie for his having written what the Ayatollah considers a "blasphemous" novel in a Moslem setting. Are we then to conclude that those of differing views in the political or

religious arenas are to be summarily dispensed with? More than a few assassins have followed such amoral reasoning. *Deja vu*.

Poisons

During the 60's we were first warned that aerosols and other manufactured gases rising into the ozone layer were destroying that natural filtering system which protects our earth from harmful solar rays. Other voices were raised in warning that our profligate release of pollutants of all sorts into air, land, and water would spoil these natural resources for ourselves and our children's children. The voices are even louder today, but the lessons we should have learned from history have been greatly ignored. Evidences are all about us: hazardous and toxic wastes, manufacturers' of-fal, acid rain, untreated or inadequately treated sewage and lengthy lists of pollutants are spewed into our land, our waters and air. We view with dismay the environmental deterioration about us in two decades: *Deja vu*.

The use and abuse of drugs made headlines in the sixties. Dr. Timothy Leary established his own quasi-religious cult in attempting to make our young collegians "Tune in, turn on, and drop out" with LSD and other mind-altering drugs. Leary is of no significance today; but the impact of drugs on our culture is a deadly serious matter, feeding the addicts' habits and the purses of the major dealers, street sellers, and international crime syndicates. *Deja vu* explodes!

Person-to-Person

The Baby Boom was big news twenty years ago. A much-increased birth rate spurted above that of the recent previous years, and produced a dramatic increase of children whose numbers were especially noted in swollen school rooms. Paradoxically, the trend twenty years later is more than reversed: since many pregnancies are unwanted, (a fact often related to consequences of illicit or immoral sex), legalized abortion is commonplace (2,000,000 per year in the U.S.A. alone), and contraceptives are almost everywhere available.

Widespread divorce rates hold at an intolerably high figure; and labeling it a 'no-fault'

situation creates at least as many problems as it seems to solve. Split families, fatherless homes, abandoned and abused children — these sad situations drive us to ask what we have learned and practiced from the experiences of the past. Again, *deja vu*.

Each of our incoming presidents for more than a generation has declared a war on crime; yet the statistics mount upward: crime on the streets, in the schools, and among the stockbrokers, white-collar businessmen, drug importers and dealers; among young and old, male and female.

And who walks fearlessly alone on the streets of New York City, Washington, D.C., Miami or any of our major cities after dark? *Deja vu*.

Backward/Forward

If the '60's had all of these problems, as well as their Vietnam, Kent State, Castroite Cuba, marijuana/cocaine addiction, co-ed dorms on college campuses, John Birch society, race riots, Bay of Pigs, and early rock music, we should not forget that they also were the time of the first Laser works, the Peace Corps, exploratory and utilitarian satellites, non-violent protests against racial discrimination, worldwide victory over smallpox, quantum leaps in communications, vast improvements in delicate surgery, nuclear power, solar energy, and a host of positive advances.

But dare anyone suggest that we have solutions for issues such as racial discrimination, pornography, gambling, and "gay rights"? In fact, moral, political, economic, spiritual, and social problems are more complicated and potentially disastrous than 20 years ago. We note dulled consciences toward abortion at will, genetic engineering, euthanasia, "consenting-adult sex," pre-marital live-ins, an incredibly huge national deficit, the homeless poor, incredibly large numbers of starving people in various areas of our world, a population explosion especially to be noted in the "Third World" countries, a belligerent, explosive expansion of Islam, anti-theistic philosophies dominating the public school, virtually uncensored television and movies, staggering costs of health care, especially those related to catastrophic illnesses. . . just how long can a list get? We have only just begun.

Pessimism feeds voraciously on these negatives — they are the Devil's own condiments, and we creatures have fed all too often on his will.

Hand-in-Hand

But Christians can never forget two incontrovertible facts: first, God is the master of ultimate history. All things must bend to His will at last; and the sooner, the better for all the world. Second, we are, every one of us, tried in the crucible of history, and our responses to the problems and needs about us reflects our true nature: the love we profess for God is non-existent if it does not move us to express our firm convictions in positive deeds toward our brother, especially the one in need (see Matthew 25:31-46 and I John 20, 21).

Intercepted Correspondence

The following "Intercepted Correspondence" is a continuation of a feature we began in the January/February 1988 issue of *Integrity*. These letters are *Integrity's* version of C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* and more recently Os Guinness' *Gravedigger Files*.

To refresh your memory, we have an im-

Didn't God say something nearly three thousand years ago to Solomon, which is appropriate to our own generation: ". . . if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land," (I Chronicles 7:14)? *Deja vu, America! Deja vu, Christian!*

Brant Lee Doty holds Professor Emeritus status from Great Lakes Bible College, having served the Lansing, Michigan school 36 years. He holds Old Testament and Church History degrees from Cincinnati Bible College, and a doctorate in English from Michigan State University. Lee continues to serve GLBC and local church pulpits as needed, and actively serves on the *Integrity* board. He and his wife, Ruth, reside in Lansing, Michigan.

aginary setting where Bruce accidentally comes across these letters in his computer class. Bruce thought he would warn the rest of us of what may be going on under our very noses. The nefarious teacher Apollyon continues his instructions to the young devil Ichabod.

There are, of course, the truly honest, sorrowful ones who feel alienated from our Enemy and His Son. Only time will tell whether or not their renewed vows are sincere and lasting. If they are, we must temporarily back off and wait some reasonable time before exposing them to the same problems. Others feel a momentary twinge of conscience, and to make a public admission of guilt is a kind of psychological — a pseudo-spiritual — purging. This may or may not be a true exercise of the soul: watch them,

and be ready to proffer the same temptation in a slightly different guise at the propitious moment, especially when the probability of detection is slight.

Some individuals are seeking a kind of sympathetic commiseration — a psychological "bath" to the soul which never quite touches the issue of guilt, shame, or forgiveness, but salves the conscience. This is the "I'm sorry it happened" rather than "I'm sorry I did it" attitude. Now and then there is the habitual repeater who wants to review sordid details of his sin again and again, retelling his sorry tale word for word. His type is especially useful in working with the youth: they hear the redundancies and soon learn to mimic the tone, the vocabulary AND the conduct. And there are those who will publicly admit to trivialities, but hide major flaws. They have learned the nuances of a duplicitous life, oblivious to the fact that the Enemy is aware of their hypocrisy. They have even invented a term to describe the situation: secret sins. Apparently these are not to be compared to the sins which are brought to light, in the minds of many, although they forget the Enemy's omniscience (and that's a factor we will be at great pains to conceal if at all possible).

Then there are the hearers. Their reactions to this turn of events vary widely from the truly sincere to the downright skeptical and the openly derisive. With those of the first type, you will be able to do little. Fortunately, they are a minority. These last types are useful indeed. Through them you can readily spread seeds of doubt and suspicion with a few well-chosen words, like, "I only hope she means it . . .," or, "There would seem to be much more to this. . .," or, "That's the same story she told last year. . ." But the majority will sit in the pews passively, with perhaps an occasional "Tsk, tsk." The whole thing goes over their heads.

And do you know how our tool, Mrs. Snugrug, makes telephone capital of every juicy morsel! On the inside, she really doesn't care a fig about guilt, innocence, pardon, or reputation: every item is just another delicacy to be broadcast, with carefully devised embellishments, in her verbal relay system. You must

never forget that she is invaluable to us.

But enough of this. You should be able to reason, manipulate, and discourage/encourage in this setting according to the circumstance and the individual personalities involved.

Of much more concern is Brother Whitesoul's spiritual stability and influence. It is difficult sometimes to understand his patience with some of his hot-and-cold people, without becoming discouraged. The most distressing fact of all is that the man is genuine in his espousal of the Enemy's message, and effective in its delivery. If we could only bring him down! His fall would cause no end of defections among the flock: the sheep always scatter when the shepherd is felled; but he has been a primary foe for more than a score of years, and shows no signs of vulnerability or slackened effort. Confound it all, it is well beyond my comprehension how the Enemy's adherents can sometimes develop such an unquestioning loyalty to that One who demands such a rigid, disciplined life when we have so many pleasures and gratifications to offer!

You are quite apparently aware of some of the potentialities we face in the discovery of the young man with AIDS. In our favor, most present-day Christians are generally badly confused about the attitude they should take toward such individuals. But one thing is apparent: Broad Way will never become a model congregation for dealing with the situation. The possibilities are legion. This will be a prime test of your own powers of observation, analysis, and strategy. I am not going to make any suggestions whatever. Rather, I shall rely upon your personal report [and that of my "mole" in the congregation at Broad Way] for your plans, their implementation, and success. And you have all demonic powers and scheming at your command.

I add a word about the Broad Way people and their vacations. You have no responsibility for them during the time while they are absent, naturally. But be assured that we have hosts of our forces who work overtime during this season. They are masked as beach boys, life guards, motel clerks, drug pushers, waitresses, prostitutes and pimps — you can hardly name a business in which we are without an implant.

You might note, for your own appreciation of the efforts expended on the good-time crowd, just how many people come back as very different people from their former selves. They may be tanned, healthy-looking specimens, or they may have returned home to 'rest up' from the ordeal; but they are different. It takes something more to entertain them; something more to excite them. Not a few of them have added to their circle of "friends," multiplied their clandestine misbehaviors, and increased their personal debts. And they may be more than a little less interested in living and sharing their faith. Yes, we are all always chalking up overtime in the summer!

I am quite pleased with the progress you have made thus far. I am especially pleased to hear of the development of Scooter's undetected misdemeanors. Keep up the bad work!

Your duplicitous Uncle,
Apollyon

My Dear, Devious Uncle,

This missive will be somewhat shorter than previous ones, because I have been exceedingly busy trying to pick up the pieces of my work after the recent orgy of repentance and revival at Broad Way. Fortunately, as you indicated, much can be regained in the anticlimactic aftermath of all this emotional rededication. I'll be quick to pick up on those who slip back into their old habits of sporadic Bible reading and prayer (or none at all), since they'll be ripe for insinuations that the glow they felt when the Spirit of the Enemy was revivifying them was no more than a foolish giving in to their desire to be a part of what was going on. It will be a delight at the same time to make them feel self-righteous for having gone forward when some of their neighbors didn't. I think the damage to our cause will prove to be minimal when things have died down; it's a good thing for us that most of these fickle humans don't build themselves any defense against a let-down from their spiritual highs.

You may laugh at this, Uncle, but I've just

discovered that the contrasting and sometimes misleading uses of the word "sacred" furnish us with a wealth of opportunities for inculcating misplaced values. For one part of the population, this word, and those kin to it, are used only derogatively and sarcastically. Nearly everyone, for example, tries to avoid being accused of protecting a "sacred cow," a label pasted on any idea or conviction which a group of people considers basic and non-negotiable. Consequently, one who affirms any foundation item of faith (that God exists, that he is the sovereign Creator, that His love was uniquely shown in the death of His Son) is immediately put on the defensive for blindly defending his "sacred cow" and being closed to reasonable arguments. On the other hand, in the precincts of believers, what delightful rows have been generated over the "sacraments" — what are they, and how many are there, and who is authorized to administer them? Then there are special vessels and images and even places that are regarded as sacred by some. And in a recent development in society at large, I'm delighted at seeing the words "sacrilege" and "desecration" being applied to the disrespectful destruction or mutilation of a country's flag, for that confuses disrespect for the flag with blasphemy; if a *flag* is regarded as holy, people won't pay so much attention to the things that really *are* holy. I'm hoping I can goad a lot of the people in my jurisdiction to get exercised enough by some of these controversies that they will concentrate on "sacred" objects, rather than on the terrifying Source of anything that is truly sacred.

The summer is over and church activities are back in full swing now. That's another reason that I'm busy. Because it's been noticed that I talk to a lot of people (they of course don't realize that it's in the line of duty), I've been added to the Fellowship Committee. Between that and the Worship Committee (and oh, yes, the church bowling team has started up again), I'm in danger of being sucked into one of my own traps — being too busy to attend to the damnation of souls!

Yours in the Spirit of Error,
Ichabod

Book Review

The Sexual Christian, by Tim Stafford
Wheaton, Illinois: Victor Books, 1989. 202 pages.

ELTON D. HIGGS

This book by Tim Stafford is the first of a series of books on current issues published by the magazine, *Christianity Today*. It is an admirable survey of some of the pressing issues of human sexual behavior and attitudes that Christians have addressed either ineffectively or not at all. His chief contention in the book is that although the secular assumptions which underlie the modern "sexual revolution" can be shown by Christian doctrine to be shallow and destructively self-serving, the Christian community has not successfully created a counter-culture which can offer support to those (especially teen-agers and other singles) who are committed to Christian living but find themselves almost inundated by the world's encouragement to sexual license. Stafford's understanding of the problem is grounded in both his direct experience as a Christian counselor and his keen discernment of what the Bible has to say about the conduct of our lives in a fallen world. Although he has many astute observations about specific areas of sexuality (e.g., pre-marital and extramarital intercourse and homosexuality), he is insistent that the answers to sexual problems do not lie in methods of conquering sins, but in the surrender of our whole lives to God. He has some particularly challenging observations on the attitudes of Protestant Christians toward celibacy as a positive life-style for Christ.

Stafford begins by pointing out that the physical boundaries of "safe" sex have been changed radically in modern societies by the invention of penicillin, which reduced the fear of venereal diseases; and by the marketing of dependable and convenient contraceptives, which greatly reduced the fear of unplanned pregnancies. The virtual removal of these two consequences as inhibitors to sexual "freedom"

resulted in the first phase of the sexual revolution, embodied in what has come to be known as the "Playboy philosophy," named after the first widely circulated American magazine of "soft" pornography. However, that particular brand of sexual hedonism, according to Stafford, has been replaced by a subtler doctrine of permissiveness, which he calls the "Ethic of Intimacy." At the core of this new doctrine are the current secular assumptions about human sexuality which Stafford spends the rest of the book refuting, and which I would sum up under two principles: (1) No prescriptive standards can be applied to sexual behavior when it takes place between consenting adults, for decisions about sex are entirely private between the individuals involved. (2) Compatibility and incompatibility are self-justifying and fully sufficient reasons for establishing and breaking a sexual relationship. Stafford points out that the Ethic of Intimacy would have us exalt a temporary feeling of the "rightness" and pleasure of a sexual experience to the place of supreme arbiter in deciding whether or not a sexual relationship should be entered into or maintained; and it would also have us assume that the repeated making and breaking of such relationships is to be accepted as merely an inevitable (and relatively inconsequential) part of the trial and error of the human search for happiness. Indeed, according to the Ethic of Intimacy, that feeling of "happiness" is the supreme value in life, for which everything else is to be sacrificed. It is not surprising that such a basically self-serving philosophy should have found a great deal of popular support, nor that what Stafford calls the "Old Consensus" that used to exist in our society about sexual behavior should have come to be considered repressive and sick. The present job of Christians, says

Stafford, is not only to boldly point out the inadequacies of the Ethic of Intimacy, but at the same time to rearticulate and demonstrate the positive messages about our sexuality in the Christian Gospel.

This positive response, argues Stafford, can come only if Christians are willing to embrace an attitude of radicalism in their commitment to God, as well as striving to be good stewards of what God has given us. Stafford's definition of the distinctions between these two approaches provides a valuable tool for analyzing why the church has failed to deal adequately with the sexual revolution.

The steward works with the conditions of life as he finds them; the radical seeks fundamental change. The steward sees the necessity of compromise; the radical sees the necessity of purity. . . The steward assumes that marriage is the normal way to live; celibacy or singleness is a "peculiar" or unusual situation. But the radical answers this with a question: From where do we get our norms? From an observation of what is usual in the world as it exists? Or from the kingdom as it breaks into the world? (pp. 147-48)

Stafford goes on to challenge the overwhelming emphasis given by most Protestant churches to marriage as the only entirely adequate way of handling sexual urges, for to do so merely lends support to the secular assumption that sexual gratification constitutes the supreme human happiness. He points out that "being single is not always a handicap" (p. 153), at least not if "life in the kingdom" functions to "transform [the single person's] situation." If someone without a sexual companion receives

this kind of support, "He is no longer alone, for he has become a member of a family. Making this real for single people should be as important for the church as its concerns for strong marriages" (p. 154). The positive idea of celibacy as an opportunity for radical response to God's calling should find warm and positive reinforcement — of all places — in the fellowship of Christians.

Stafford calls marriage and celibacy two equally important "kinds of signs in our sexuality" which in our history have vied with each other for primacy (p. 160). Each of these signs shows the grace of God at work in our lives and gives testimony to his reaching through our sexuality to show His enduring love and goodness. Each entails its own kinds of difficulty, and we must not succumb, says Stafford, to the worldly idea that human fulfillment comes from the cheap "happiness" of merely satisfying our own desires. There is no true happiness outside the kind of absolute, uncompromising commitment that God requires of both married and single people, and the value of such commitments goes beyond whether we are "happy" or "unhappy" at any given moment. To live in this way together, subordinating the genital expression of our sexuality to our mutual nurturing of God's regenerative power within us, is to "show by our lives as well as our words that there is an alternative to the sexuality of our day" (p. 195).

Dr. Elton D. Higgs, professor at University of Michigan, Dearborn for 25 years, is an expert in Medieval Literature. As a member of the board, he has dedicated time and skills to the *Integrity* ministry for more than ten years.

decade if he were living here. For he IS here, in us, and through his Spirit. As many churches have illustrated, we must go and administer to the world outside ourselves the love and knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Bruce and Diane Kilmer
Co-Editors

Editorial (Continued from page 102)

tian teens are more involved with world evangelism and hunger issues than 20 years ago!

Integrity journal has published evidence of Christians choosing to unite in fellowship and service rather than carry on the divisions of the past. We must keep trying to see through Jesus' eyes, to develop the "mind of Christ," to wonder how he might respond to this coming

Dear Bruce and Diane,

I appreciated your editorial "Unity and Openness — Are They Dangerous?", and I agree that openness is to be desired, and hope that unity can be achieved in fact. I pledge myself to that purpose. However, I think that history proves that it is unlikely. All reformation/restoration movements have foundered on the legalistic mentality, and have tended to set in concrete the views of their most influential leader (not always the one credited with the movement), as witnessed by Calvinism, Lutheranism, etc. Campbell receives credit for our movement, but Daniel Somers is father to most of the legalists of our day. To the legalistic mind, everything you (or Carl Ketcherside, or Leroy Garrett, or Charles Holt, or Cecil Hook, or many others) may say is from a "liberal," and is promptly pigeonholed and ignored (as far as their conscious mind is concerned). Deep down, some are ill-at-ease with this ready categorization, and sense a flaw somewhere, but are none too eager to pursue the matter further, for fear of what they might find. Those who are used to shackles, are sometimes reluctant to lose them, and "guardians" of the truth are not required to face and solve knotty problems, merely to "parrot" shibboleths dreamed up by "leaders", especially if they are "Restoration Leaders".

Your gentle persuasion is much needed in an atmosphere that is more prone to laceration and maceration of brothers and sisters than to toleration and love. Like the Pharisees, our legalists are very much prone to self-righteousness and pride, which are the progenitors of all manner of evil, and, sadly, in the name of our Lord. The ditch is overloaded with the blind; hopefully, a few can be retrieved.

In His grace,
Gene Peacock
Little Rock, Arkansas

Editors,

For several years, I have read and supported *Integrity* Journal. And, it has occurred to me that this society and your magazine are on the same "track." In fact, the Jan/Feb 1989 issue contains a letter from Ed and Bobbie Lee Holley. She is a Director for this society. And, Leroy Garrett is on our Year of Awareness Committee.

I am enclosing a copy of a brochure recently published by the Society.

All who are moved by the Spirit and in the same direction are enriched and encouraged by knowing of each other's efforts.

My prayers and support continue with you in your effective work.

Yours in Christ,
Robert W. Shaw, President
European Evangelistic Society

Editor's Note: The European Evangelistic Society was established in the early 20th century by a Russian nobleman, Dr. Ludwig von Gerdell, who became convinced through his own scholarly research of the validity of New Testament Christianity. He soon made connections with our American Churches of Christ and even lived here in the States when his life was in jeopardy during World War II.

In 1960 this society established the Institute for the Study of Christian Origins at the University of Tubingen in West Germany. It is strategically located to impact the thoughtmakers and to assist in the renewal of the church in Europe through scholarly research into Christian origins. And it is the only mission which continues to receive the support, leadership and participation of all three streams of the Stone-Campbell movement.

D.G.H.K.

(Continued-next page)

I wanted to thank you for the good review of our book *Discovering Our Roots*. . . I thought you captured very well the basic thrust and intention of the book. We have been pleased by the very positive reception of the book among churches of Christ. This past June I was invited to lecture on the subject to Church of Christ and Christian Church preachers in Japan. They are wrestling with the very same tensions and divisions that have racked the churches in America. In addition, the book has been getting a good bit of attention from people outside of our movement. . . Best wishes in your ministry, editing, and teaching.

C. Leonard Allen
Abilene, Texas

Dear Diane and Bruce:

Enclosed please find a poem which I offer for publication if you see fit.

The poem is about my in-laws, Kathleen and Waldo Rippey, Bloomington, IL, who this year celebrate their golden wedding anniversary.

They are not famous or remarkable in any way, yet, as I try to illustrate in the poem, they are the "stuff" of the Kingdom.

The Rippey's possess a simple, deep faith which has been through the crucible of suffering. In 1968 Mr. Rippey lost his left leg at the thigh due to cancer. Their display of faith then and in the years following is as rich as the hyacinth is beautiful.

They have lived simply, in grateful appreciation for the mercies of God extended to them through Christ.

The themes of the poem are: steadfastness of faith in God who has "gone before" them in all of life, suffering faith productive of spiritual richness as represented by the images of the willow and the hyacinth, and an appreciation for God's natural world which provides many small pleasures simply for the looking.

With kind personal regards. . .

Sincerely,
Michael M. Escoubas

Meditation on the Numeral "L"

I

They are married to the Fire and the Cloud,
Faith constant, in the Presence: I AM.

Not as Gomer, these two, no straying
from the Ineffable Name.

Upon the Boulevard they walk, the Willow
and the Hyacinth sing their sweetness.

They are married to the Fire and the Cloud.

II

Suffering abides since '68; the Willow
bowed low then; a branch was lost.

No muttering, sputtering, splattering
of unspecified tears, did we hear,

From them who know to Whom they belong.
The Hyacinth sang, to the Fire and the Cloud.

III

Simple pleasures of life have sufficed,
no need for wealth above need;

Pregnant peaches, and pears and cherries
splashed in Gold;

Wide, green, Sunday afternoons,
pink lemonade,
toads in the window-well.

I AM is everything they are and need.

We are new *Integrity* readers and we appreciate your publication very much. We wish we were able at this time to send it to someone else who is struggling with the legalistic views of the Mainline Church of Christ as we are. Maybe later!

Dumas, Texas

Imagine my surprise to read in the July/August issue the short story "Fruit in His Season" — you see, it was written by my cousin Laurie Hibbitt years ago! It still packs the same force that I felt when I first read it. Only this time, some 20+ years later, I think it is even more meaningful. . .

Am enclosing a small check — and prayers that you can continue in this good work. It is such a breath of fresh air in what sometimes becomes a rather stale "atmosphere" in the "Church of Christ" (not *Christ's Church*).

Martha Matson
Livonia, MI

People are constantly on the move, seeking for the church of their choice, i.e. the "loyal" church of Christ. The party cry is "lo here!" or "lo there!" To cure this silly, sickly, senseless, damnable disease of divisions, one must first attack its symptoms, i.e. the "party spirit." Too many have striven to fashion the church after their own molds instead of trying to copy the one Christ Jesus, who left us a "model" that we should follow in His footprints. (I Peter 1:21) Consequently, the world looks on with amazement at all our different "Churches of Christ."

To convince the world that we are truly disciples of Christ, we must "dismiss" the many "issues" that have separated us, thus, uniting all our forces against a common foe, our adversary, the devil, who is out to devour us. (I. Peter 5:8) The time is long overdue to bring to an end the making of our "issues" tests of fellowship which God has not authorized as conditions to our salvation. Our peace with God is not assured on the basis of being right about "issues," but of being new creatures in Christ Jesus. The cross of Christ is far greater than all of our divisive "issues" combined.

Walter S. Weekly
Auburn, California

We appreciate the magazine and its content much!

Wendell and Lila Prior
Imperial, Nebraska

A Teacher, Learning Still

His education never ended;
The process was ongoing still.
And only in eternity
May it be "finished" and fulfilled.

He sometimes plowed his poignant pen
Into the Fields of Fallow ground,
Or spoke where others may have shunned
To go below the surface soil,

His constant quest and willingness
To go wherever truth might lead
Led him to leave old ruts behind,
A fuller fellowship to find.

The swimmers in life's shallow pools
Of old traditions, legalism,
And keepers of conformity
May see him as an erring child.

And so he was; so are we all.
Dare any say we have no sin?
But, walking in the light, confess,
And constantly in Christ are cleansed.

What are some lessons we may learn?
Examples we should imitate?
His love, his zeal, his quest for truth,
And greater trusting in God's grace.

Written in memory of and as a tribute to Carl Ketcherside.

Roy Harris
Crane, MO

(Continued-next page)

Dear Bruce and Diane,

Enclosed is a small gift to help with your ministry through *Integrity*. I think I have been in touch with *Integrity* almost since the beginning, and it came at a time when I felt like I was in a "spiritual desert." It continues to be an "oasis" in the midst of my pilgrimage. . . the Lord has not taken me out of Chattanooga as I prayed years ago, but rather has brought special people into my life and special "manna" to keep me "fed". . . *Integrity* is a definite part of that "manna". . .

May you continue to let the Lord use you in this much needed way to encourage his people to keep on keeping on. Being in the "Bible Belt" is not necessarily a plus!

Linda Kelley
Chattanooga, Tennessee

As a reader of *Integrity* I am saddened by the death of Brother Carl Ketcherside. His articles have certainly helped me to be "Free in Christ Jesus." His life was a blessing.

In the July/August '89 issue I read with delight "Fruit in His Season" by Laurie L. Hibbitt. Brother Rockwell could have been one of our neighbors back in the 1930's. So much of this story was familiar to me!

Elnora Wilson
Amarillo, Texas

I want to let you know how much I have enjoyed the articles printed in *Integrity*. . . You printed an article some time ago about women apostles as interpreted by St. Paul. Would it be possible to get a copy of that article? I am a postulant for ordination in the Episcopal Church; however, I do not have a bone to pick with those who question the role of women in the ministry. It is, rather, of great comfort and joy to me that one of our great church fathers found humble, submissive service by women to be equal to the service of men.

Thank you for your insightful work. My family, the Boyntons, helped to found the Church at Cane Ridge. Further, my mother's side of the family had been Campbellites for a couple of generations before her birth. I feel a great kinship for the Christian Church.

Jan Carolyn Hardy
Bakersfield, CA

Dear Sir,

In the October 1988 number of the 'Bulletin of the New York C.S. Lewis Society' your periodical was mentioned briefly as being of interest to readers of C.S. Lewis. Would it be possible for my name to be added to the list of subscribers?

Yours faithfully,
Graeme Muirhead
Birmingham, England

Integrity offers bound volumes of series of issues that focus on one theme. These volumes are \$2.00 each, or \$1.50 each in lots of ten or more.

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"Holy Spirit" (5 issue volume)

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