

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

## Integrity

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## Integrity

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# September 1975

# Integrity

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## THE CHURCH'S ANSWER

A recent *New Yorker* cartoon, reflecting the unsteady ethics of big business, depicts four businessmen gathered around a large desk. One of them speaks into the intercom: "Miss Dugan, will you send someone in here who can distinguish right from wrong?" In view of the extent to which the world has invaded the church, that caption might well be adapted to the sanctuary. In the absence of solid ethical and moral support from the community, the church is increasingly challenged to hold a steady course in troubled waters. By no means have we all failed to do so, but a good many of us have seemingly lost our ability to distinguish right from wrong. We have adopted the playground philosophy of "all the other kids are doing it" and have detached ourselves from the more substantial Biblical basis of morality.

The church's answer to this problem is not withdrawal but increased activism in the wavering world. A preliminary to such activism is a twofold ministry which will equip the saints with the ability to distinguish right from wrong as well as involve them in communicating their understanding to the world. In other words, the church must function productively in both its *gathered* and *dispersed* senses.

The *gathered* church is like an army base, which, unless it is invaded by the enemy, is not the arena of conflict, but a place for training, refreshment, and supplying with weapons. It is led (theoretically at least) by a ministry that is intended to qualify the members to flourish in their dispersion. Its discipline must recognize that the people it serves are both dependent and autonomous; that is, they need help with difficulties, yet must ultimately make decisions for themselves. If we do not help them, they will faint in the way; but if we overprotect them, they will flee at the enemy's first thrust.

The gathered church's ministry is essential, but its influence on the world is primarily indirect. Unless the members *dispersed* in the community bear good fruit, its effect on society will be minimal. For this reason, the ultimate test of a church's strength is not the quality of its assemblies but the ability of its dispersed members to lead the world in surrender to the will of God. It is the business of *the whole body* "to preach good news to the poor . . . to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed."

Since Christ came to set at liberty those who are oppressed, what could be more fitting for his body in a nation celebrating the bicentennial of its freedom to renew its call for liberty? In many places the church is regarded as having a rather hoarse voice for justice. To use one illustration, this image has not been helped by the apparent indifference of many church people to the frustrations of women (see the letters page in this issue if you doubt such frustrations exist). Whatever the answer to this problem is, the church—both assembled and dispersed, since the problem is internal as well as external—should be involved in the solution. Or do we need Miss Dugan to send in someone who can distinguish right from wrong?  
—HGL

## THE IDEA OF THE STUMBLING BLOCK

### PART TWO: THE OFFENSE AND THE CHURCH

CRAIG M. WATTS

*Flint, Michigan*

While it is true that Christ is inevitably and necessarily a stumbling block, the same cannot be said of the church and the individual members. There are times when the offensiveness in Christ's message can be removed only through destructive alteration and compromise. But his followers are to be willing to limit their freedom and to eliminate from their character anything which might cause another disciple to be led into sin.

The believer's environment is filled with hindrances and stumbling blocks of all kinds. Often life seems to be stacked against him. So intense are the forces of the Evil One that the entrance into eternal life is described as a narrow gate, "and those who find it are few" (Mt. 7:14). It is in light of this truth that disciples are admonished, "Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, just as I try to please all men in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved" (1 Cor. 10:32-11:1).

The Christian must be careful not to set before his brothers any difficulties other than those that are ordinarily confronted

in one's walk through the wilderness of life. It is important that we examine several scriptures in order to determine just what this does and does not mean.

### The Corinthian Example . . .

One of the most extensive scriptural discussions of offense is in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. Paul addressed people who were intoxicated with knowledge of their freedom and tended to exercise it without concern for others who did not have such complete knowledge. The enlightened Corinthians reasoned that since there were no other gods, idols had no real existence. If idols had no real existence, then foods dedicated to idols were not really different from foods not offered to idols and therefore could be eaten without sinning. In principle Paul agreed with this reasoning, but in practice he saw that other things had to be considered. Knowledge is well and good, but if one lives by knowledge apart from love, only disaster can follow. True knowledge is that which is tempered by love. One "does not yet know as he ought to know" if liberty is

set above love (1 Cor. 8:2). Indeed, "all things are lawful," but not all things are helpful" (10:23).

### The Nature of the Problem . . .

The problem at Corinth was that some of the disciples simply did not see all of the implications of monotheism. They still believed that eating meats offered to idols was wrong. Their consciences were genuinely tender; they could not with conviction eat these foods. The enlightened brethren did not consider the weaker one's position. The strong knew they were technically right, but failed to see how selfish and insensitive they were. By their exercise of freedom they were tempting and perhaps indirectly pressuring others to conform in areas which were sinful for them. One's power of self-control is harmed just as much by doing what he believes to be wrong as by doing what is actually wrong. The spiritual effect is the same.

This passage shows, then, that one lays a stumbling block before his brother by setting an example that the weak brother is tempted to follow but can do so only against his conscience. (It would be very easy to list various instances of contemporary application, but I trust the reader can do that for himself.) In short, as James Moffatt has said,

Lack of due consideration for the fellow-communicants is stamped as irreverence towards the Body of Christ; careful devotion to the interests of others is made the supreme spiritual gift in the community (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 112).

Paul deals with a similar, but not identical, problem in Rom. 14:1-15:6, where he again agrees in theory with the "liberal" Christians who teach that "in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself," yet he adds, "but it is unclean for

anyone who thinks it unclean." For this reason he calls upon the stronger in the Lord to limit their freedom so as not to lead others to do what is unclean for them. To ignore the weak brother's scruples will likely result in his spiritual injury, and those who choose to live in such a careless way "are no longer walking in love." On this point C.H. Dodd insightfully notes,

Paul saw in the life of Jesus, all through, a continuous act of self-limitation for the sake of men. Such self-limitation is the very principle of the incarnation. The kind of consideration for others, therefore, which he has been urging has the sanction of the highest Example (*The Epistle of Paul to the Romans*, 219).

Paul does not here set up a legalistic method of limiting one's freedom on various occasions. Rather he calls for a sensitive mutual love of the brethren. This teaching is in no way oppressive or burdensome since it grows out of a love of those for whom Christ died. It is based on a respect for others' views and a realization that any action that goes beyond one's convictions is wrong, "for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" (vs. 23).\*

A companion problem in this passage is that of judging one another. There is nothing more discouraging than to constantly be judged by fellow Christians.

\*Some have taken Paul's statement here that "whatever does not proceed from faith is sin" and linked it with the affirmation in Rom. 10:17, "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God," to conclude that whatever is not of the word of God cannot be of faith and therefore is sin. This is a grossly irresponsible use of scripture! What Paul is teaching in Rom. 14:23 is quite the opposite. Faith in this passage means conviction, and particularly convictions which are *not* based on the Word of God but upon one's personal feelings, yet are nevertheless sinful to act against.

This is a hindrance at which multitudes have fallen, never to stand again. There evidently have always been those who set themselves up as judges over matters on which God has not specifically spoken. They either condemn those who are more restrictive than themselves, i.e., the abstainers, or they will renounce those who are more permissive than themselves, i.e., the liberals. Judgment in either manner is destructive and a cause of offense. To this Paul says, "Then let us no more pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother" (14:13).

Though there are various areas in which Christians must judge those within the church (1 Cor. 5:9-13), far larger are the realms in which no human is able to judge with righteous judgment. For this reason Paul says, "Let everyone be fully convinced in his own mind" (14:5). In these broad areas of freedom we can stand or fall before God alone. So with confidence Paul proclaims, "And he will be upheld, for the Master is able to make him stand" (vs. 4).

### Irresponsible Action . . .

I cannot help but to think of the times when irresponsible elders condemn the younger and more fragile in the Lord for doing such things as dimming the lights when they gather to pray or for holding hands in prayer. I am outraged at those who have stunted and crippled the growth of the new Christians by condemning everything as sinful that they are not familiar with. I'll never forget the occasion, a little over a year ago, when a high school student came to me and said, "The elders never even talked to me when I was doing dope all the time, but now that I'm really trying to serve God they con-

demn me every step of the way." To the best of my knowledge this young man fell away from the Lord within a month.

Men who put themselves in God's place invariably put stumbling blocks before their brothers. Men are simply not able to make judgments in these areas. In the words of Karl Barth,

To judge involves the capacity to assign guilt and to envelop an action in wrath. God has this capacity and exercises it continuously. But, as the capacity of God, it is invisibly one with His forgiveness and with the manifestations of His righteousness. Our action in judging possesses, however, nothing of this double-sidedness. We do not possess the divine freedom of rejecting and electing. When we permit ourselves to judge others, we are caught up in condemnation: the result is that we merely succeed in erecting the wrath of God as an idol (*The Epistle to the Romans*, 516).

The final manner in which one might become a stumbling block is so obvious that it does not need to be elaborated upon. Any sin that one commits can be the cause of offense for another. This being so, it is important, not only to ourselves but also to other disciples, that we live purely and in harmony with the truth of the gospel.

We can look to Peter as an illustration of this type of stumbling block. In Gal. 2 Paul reports an incident that occurred some time earlier in which he opposed Peter "to his face, because he stood condemned." Peter's example was so powerful that "with him the rest of the Jews acted insincerely, so that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy." It is not that this apostle to the Jews rebelled against a specific commandment of God, rather he failed to live out the implications of the gospel and so freely accept all men on the basis that God accepts those who have faith, that is, by grace

alone. Peter's life style seems to support the legalism which would require Gentiles to live under the law. To this Paul says, "I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel."

This biblical example is particularly relevant to so many contemporary situations. Many men who teach salvation by grace through faith refuse to practice fellowship on the same basis, and so in life style are not "straightforward about the truth of the gospel." I am all too familiar with situations where men realize the truth of salvation by grace and recognize the implications of the doctrine in life, but still limit their fellowship in order either to pacify the prejudices of those they are most closely in association with and so remain in their good graces, or they limit fellowship out of a misguided "love of the brethren." That is, they hope to slowly bring the narrow brethren to a broader fellowship but must withhold their presence from other Christians to do so. If the early church had approached the problem in this way, we would probably still have a separation between Gentile and Jewish churches. Those who work in this way are deceptive and with Peter "stand condemned."

### Not Grumbling . . .

It is important that we now note what the stumbling block and the offense is *not*. This is important simply because *some Christians do not distinguish the difference between stumbling and grumbling*. No Christian is required to comply with the selfish whims of the constant complainers. To do so in the end will cause more harm than good. James Moffatt has so appropriately stated,

These weaker brothers were not narrow-minded people who insisted upon prohibition as a compulsory rule for

all others, desiring to impose their scruples upon the Church. Paul would have rejected such a censorious tyranny (x.29) as an invasion of Christian liberty, with the same passion as he rejected the similar plea for circumcision (Gal. 2:4, 5). It was not a case of scrupulous people insisting that others must share their scruples, but of people who were in real danger of being led to violate their conscience by the example and influence of stronger minds (*op. cit.*, 110).

The words "offend" and "offense" have been used in a totally unbiblical way by selfish souls as a lever for those who will cry they are offended every time some change in style or method happens. Several years ago a young lady told me about a preacher who would not stop pestering her brother about the length of his hair. The preacher kept pressing, "You are offending others!" As a result the young man left the church and the Lord. In a truly biblical sense this minister was the cause of offense for this young man, rather than the young man being an offense.

Generally when we use the word "offense" we mean affronted, or disapproval, or arousal against something. But this is not at all what it means in the scriptures. The Christian must be concerned for the weak, but he does not have to walk the line for his narrow and ornery brethren. "Love does not demand its own way" (1 Cor. 13:5), and to satisfy the self-centered demands of the loveless is in no way protecting the weak from being offended.

True love is of course always submissive, and its first concern is not for personal rights but the general well-being of the church. Anything less is not of God. For this reason John says, "He who loves his brother abides in the light, and in it there is no cause of stumbling" (1 John 2:10). □

"I will lift up my hands unto your name"

## SHALL WE BOW?

ALLEN HOLDEN, JR.

Fort Worth, Texas

"Shall we bow for a word of prayer?" So begins an unusually large number of prayers in corporate assemblies around the country. It's not that I really have anything against bowing my head when I pray; what bothers me is the implication that this is the best thing to do while I am praying. If I think about it a bit, I can see a lot of merit in bowing my head when I am talking to my Father: It *does* make it easier to concentrate by cutting out a lot of distractions. Furthermore, I would be the last to insinuate that people shouldn't use this posture, especially if it has proven to be beneficial for their prayer life. After all, it *is* a biblical position; but, the Bible mentions a number of body positions that individuals have used while praying.<sup>1</sup> Beside bowing your head, you can be standing, sitting, or lying down, walking, running, riding, or not moving at all. Prayer is an activity that can take place wherever we happen to be, whatever we are doing, and in whatever configuration our body happens to be.

There is one position that I believe merits special attention: praying with your hands raised above your head. This is mentioned a number of times in the Bible,<sup>2</sup> and has gained a lot of popularity lately, albeit predominantly in gatherings commonly termed "charismatic." In fact, it has been so limited to people of this persuasion that when people lift their hands up in Churches of Christ they are immediately suspected of being "charis-

matic." There are probably some very good psychological and sociological reasons why people who tend toward the charismatic phenomenon would also be open to lifting their hands up when they praise God; what concerns me in this article is the fact that whoever does it, be he a red-necked reactionary or a flaming radical modernist, the fact remains that it can add a great deal to our prayer life, and is rooted deep both in biblical example and theology.

One thing which this can do is to raise our eyes, and hence our thoughts, toward heaven. We are so geared to the here and now that we can become Christian atheists; we no longer believe that Jesus has any real concern with our everyday existence of freeways, mortgages, dishes and migraines. Our sights have been so fixed on ourselves and our own creation that we have forgotten that Jesus cares very deeply about what goes on in my life, my checkbook, my garage and my bedroom. In lifting our eyes upward, we will also be reminded that our Lord is returning soon. Consider the following scripture:

"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth." And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white

robes, and said, "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven."<sup>3</sup> "Surely, I *am* coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.<sup>4</sup>

We need to look up to be reminded that there is more—much more—than just the things that we can see, feel, touch, smell or hear. In looking up, we can be reminded that everything we have actually comes from above, and that we would be in a terrible mess if God stopped caring for us.

### Acknowledging Dependence . . .

When I lift up my hands in prayer, I am sometimes reminded of the westerns I used to watch, where a person had to "reach for the sky" as a sign of his surrender. So, when I appeal to my Father with my hands lifted up, I try to surrender myself to him. I give up my rights to time, my plans, my life. No longer do I make my own decisions, for I am now controlled by another. In prayer, I surrender, acknowledging my dependence on God. In fact, stretching my hands out has always been an appeal for help, an acknowledgment that I need all the help that I can get. Carl Spain, commenting on 1 Timothy 2:8, says that "lifting up holy hands was a common gesture for prayer in the ancient world, as shown by Christian art and sculpture. . . . The hands lifted toward God suggests the hands of a dependent child lifted toward a father who has the power to grant what the child needs and desires."<sup>5</sup> I reach out to the God of all mercy when I pray, painfully aware of my own weakness and spiritual bankruptcy, and beg for strength.

I plead with you to help me, Lord,  
for you are my Rock of safety.  
If you refuse to answer me,

I might as well give up and die.  
Lord, I lift my hands to heaven  
and implore your help.  
Oh, listen to my cry.<sup>6</sup>  
I stretch forth my hands unto you.  
My soul thirsts after you,  
as a thirsty land.<sup>7</sup>

There is another reason that it is important to raise my hands in some of my petitions to God: It is an open and unprotected position. I find it significant that when we pray, we usually come as close as we can to approximating a fetal position. In this position, we are protected, closed up and shut off from outside stimuli. Nobody can sock us in the jaw, punch us in the gut or kick us in the groin. Should someone (God?) wish to catch our attention, he would have to tap us on the shoulder, for it would be difficult to catch our eye or shake our hand. Standing erect with your arms stretched upward is probably the antithesis of this, for it is a way that we can say with our body that we are open to God, and are ready to let him do whatever he would like to with us.

Of course, I would be foolish to imply that lifting your hands up during your prayers or songs of praise will be a panacea for all of your problems in communicating with the King of Kings. A prayer life that is deficient and sterile will remain so no matter where you pray, how you stand or whom you pray with. I do believe, though, that there is good reason that this stance is mentioned repeatedly in the Bible, especially in the Psalms, some of the most moving prayers ever committed to paper.

Nor is it necessary that you do this in a corporate assembly, although I would be the last to specifically discourage this. I realize that there are some very powerful dynamics of peer influence and social pressure at work there that affect all of

us, all of our protests of freedom to the contrary notwithstanding. If it would make you feel extremely uncomfortable to do this in public, why not at least try it in your individual prayers, in your closet, when it is just you pouring out your heart to the Master? I cannot guarantee that it will raise your consciousness, relieve your tensions or heal your hang-

nail, but it just might help you in doing some of the things that prayer is intended to do. It has helped *me* to surrender myself, open up to the Father, and look up to my only hope and help. To the skeptic, I can only respond with Philip, "Come and see."

Lift your hands in holiness, and bless the Lord!<sup>8</sup> □

1. Ezra 10:1; 1 Kings 8:55; 2 Samuel 7:18; Luke 22:41.
2. Psalm 141:2; 69:1-5; 28:2; 1 Kings 8:54; 2 Chronicles 6:13; 1 Timothy 2:8.
3. Acts 1:8-11.
4. Revelation 22:20.
5. Carl Spain, *The Letters of Paul to Timothy and Titus*, a Living Word Commentary (Austin: R.B. Sweet Co., Inc., 1970), p. 46.
6. Psalm 68:1-2.
7. Psalm 143:6.
8. Psalm 134:2.

## WHY WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND

F.L. LEMLEY  
*Bonne Terre, Missouri*

Brethren sometimes wonder why we do not communicate and have to plead for understanding. In part, it is because one mistake compounds another. For an illustration consider this: A person who mistakenly believes that every mistake is a sin hears another say, "God will receive us as children while we are mistaken on many points," thinks he is hearing, "God will receive us while we are rebellious sinners." Not so! It is human to err, and intellectual errors must be distinguished from depravity of heart. Error is similar to disease in that all of it is undesirable, but not all of it is fatal.

But still another hears this and thinks he is hearing, "No mistake can be fatal!" Intellectual errors on the nature of God, the deity of Christ, morality, or a perversion of the gospel can be fatal, of course, even if the holder is a sincere person.

When one correctly distinguishes be-

tween the *seed* that produces the children (that is, the gospel) and the milk, meat and bread (doctrine) which sustain the new life, some think they are hearing, "The gospel is important, but the law or doctrine is not." The word of God is a two-edged sword, one edge gospel and the other law or doctrine. Both are God's words. The problem is compounded when one cannot distinguish the difference between God's word and a human inference or deduction from God's word. Human conclusions arrived at by a process of human reasoning are not divine oracles.

When one correctly says, "Wherever God has a child I have a brother," some think they hear, "We must receive and endorse every one who was once received but who has now fallen away." Such people usually confuse fellowship with endorsement. In receiving a brother

whom God has received we do not endorse his defects any more than God does. We are to receive one another as Christ has received us (Rom. 15:7). God received us without endorsing our shortcomings, and so must we with one another. We may sing, pray, and have com-

munion with brethren without endorsing their defects.

Arguing is an old and honorable art. Perversion of the other person's position in order to be able to refute it comes easy if we need to save our face—or save our party. □

## Some Reflections on Personal Spiritual Growth

# THE FREEDOM TO GROW

JOSEPH F. JONES

Personal spiritual growth was defined briefly in a previous article in terms of Christian maturity (Mt. 5:48; Col. 1:28) and life in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16-25). The Christian life, initially begun in the surrender of one's being to Jesus the Lord and Savior, involves a growth process, development, or maturation; and this is described in the New Testament under the concept of fullgrownness in Christ. But this personal spiritual process is not a matter of mere human exertion, personal striving or individual self-discipline; it is a matter of living daily in the awareness of God's Spirit indwelling or saturating the believer's life, and this Spiritual Source produces fruit in its own likeness. "But the fruit of the Spirit," writes Paul, "is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. . . . If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22, 25).

Now growth of any kind assumes a certain degree of freedom, and anyone who has grown gardens or children ought to know this. Yet it seems that in family life (yes, even nice Christian families per-

haps more so than some others) and in the church we have either failed to see the essentiality of such freedom or have fearfully closed our eyes to it. In either event, personal spiritual development may have been seriously thwarted.

Even a cursory reading of Galatians will enable the believer to feel Paul's focus on the need to be free in Christ. "For freedom has Christ set us free; stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery." "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another" (Gal. 5:1, 13). That freedom in Christ can be abused Paul readily acknowledges; yet this is no reason for the personal or institutional curtailment of freedom that so many have experienced in either family or church life.

Freedom is that essential atmosphere in which growth may occur; it is the opposite of a constricting, stifling, thwarting environment. It implies the freedom to question openly and honestly, in search for reality, or truth. The child who has

his questing spirit stifled by immature or embarrassed parents is hardly apt to grow into an open, whole person. The teacher who is threatened by probing questions in class ought either to experience more growth in his security in Christ or give up his teaching for the moment. It is not uncommon that in church classes or even college classes this freedom to question is grievously restricted.

Freedom to grow implies the right to be skeptical at times, to maintain honest doubts, to acknowledge that one does not have all the answers and may not even understand the questions adequately. If one denies the freedom of an honest skepticism, he will turn seeking into bitterness, disillusionment, and disbelief.

Freedom to grow implies the need to be oneself, and yet be loved and accepted by others. Many marriages might well be held together and strengthened if the spouses could tolerate each other's need to be true to self. Parents may be threatened by allowing a child to express his true feelings; hence he is squelched,

never allowed the freedom to get angry (or at least to express anger). It often seems more essential in our church and college related teaching-efforts to confirm young students and adults in their limited understandings and prejudices than to grant them a genuine freedom to be true to themselves. Let us not confuse the abuse of freedom with the need to be true to one's self.

Freedom to grow implies, interestingly enough, the liberty to make mistakes, even to be wrong. What fear has swept over us as parents, or college or church teachers, that if persons are granted freedom they will make mistakes, they may not get the "right answers," or may come out differing from the mold through which we were forming them!

Paradoxically, to the apostle Paul freedom in Christ began with surrender—not a denial of personhood or genuine autonomy, but an effort to yield one's whole being to the working and willing of God in Jesus Christ. "For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). □

## REACTION

### ANOTHER LOOK AT INTEGRITY AND THE ERA

CAROL FREDERICK

*East Alton, Illinois*

Recently an article appeared in *Integrity* in which Harold Key took Norman Parks to task for statements made in the March, 1975, issue concerning the Church of Christ and its opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment. Harold's objections ranged from Mr. Parks' harsh judgment of the opponents to a position statement concerning God's word and the ERA and the place of women as ordained by Holy Writ. He dismisses the need for such an amendment by

stating that the 14th Amendment is sufficient to guarantee women all the rights they need. While there are probably areas of agreement in my thinking on the issue that could be reached with both these men (Harold being the infamous "liberal" he admits to in his introduction), in general I believe Norman Parks "hit the nail on the head" in his analysis of the opposition to this issue, and that Harold Key needs to review his judicial history concerning women and their

rights under the law for the past 100 years. (And perhaps others should review their label of "liberal" for Harold!)

## The Voice of Experience

Being from Illinois and having been involved closely with the Illinois Legislature as a lobbyist since January, not to mention being a near-neighbor of the leader of the opposition movement, Mrs. Phyllis Schlafly of Alton, Illinois, I feel qualified to speak to the issues and objections that Mr. Key raised. Based on this firsthand experience and observation over the past few months, I feel Mr. Parks' description of the opposition within the church, while hard-hitting, was accurate. I have seen the bulletins; I have witnessed the "big-lie" techniques; and I have been embarrassed by the intellectual poverty of those who claim to love "truth." I have not been able to fathom their motives, but I do feel they have been used to promote personal, political goals.

Mr. Parks discussed accurately some of the ludicrous arguments put forth against the amendment. Half-truths, "guilt by association" reasoning, and outright lies are the tools of those leading the fight against ratification. And many preachers and members of the church have swallowed the propaganda whole, without searching for facts from other sources. Indeed, many of those I have communicated with are not aware of the source of the "anti" literature: they are not aware of Mrs. Schlafly's political ambitions and her need for a political base; they do not know of her staunch Catholicism and of her close association with the hierarchy within this church. They know only the emotional half-truths and innuendoes listed on Mrs. Schlafly's "Public Opinion Poll," that involve totally unrelated issues such as abortion, homosexual marriages and sex-integrated dormitories. All those supporting the ERA, according to Mrs. Schlafly, are "women libbers," the connotation of which she knows so well. Perhaps pity for their ignorance should be the appropriate response, but when such ignorance is responsible for interference with the ratification of a fair and necessary constitutional amendment, then I believe a more serious judgment is warranted.

Another point of disagreement that was raised was the need for an amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing equality under the law regardless of sex. Mr. Key dismissed the

need for the Equal Rights Amendment by stating that the 14th Amendment is adequate to guarantee women any of the rights they seek today. This statement is partially true: the 14th Amendment could be adequate if the courts had so chosen, but judicial history reveals that the courts have consistently refused to use this amendment in finding and objecting to discrimination based on sex. As Representative Martha Griffiths explained when, for the first time in the 47-year history of the Equal Rights Amendment, it passed the House of Representatives:

There never was a time when decisions of the Supreme Court could not have done everything we ask today . . . the Court has held for 98 years that women as a class are not entitled to equal protection of the laws. They are not "persons" within the meaning of the Constitution.

A review of the history of this amendment will help clarify why this last statement is true. The 14th Amendment was proclaimed in 1868. The article has five sections, although the first is the most familiar and is the one usually identified as the complete Amendment. Section I contains the following provisions: (1) All persons born or naturalized in the USA and subject to the jurisdiction thereof are citizens of the USA and of the State wherein they reside; (2) no state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the USA; (3) nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property without due process of law; and (4) nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law. Section I as just repeated sounds sufficient, but it is not as all-encompassing as some would have us believe.

What Harold Key and others who feel that this amendment "covers it" should do is to research this piece of constitutional rhetoric beyond a superficial reading. The fact is that the intent of Congress in securing equal protection for the citizens of the US at this point in time (1868, remember) did not include *women*. They could not vote, hold office or inherit money at this time in our history. The courts have held for 98 years following the enactment of this amendment that women as a class are not entitled to "equal protection" under the law, as the 14th Amendment mandates, because women were not considered citizens at this time. Our court system traditionally relies on more than just the letter of the law in interpreting pieces of legislation and the Constitu-

tion. One of the most important items considered is the "legislative intent" at the time of a law's (or amendment's) enactment. Clearly, the intent of the 14th Amendment in 1868 was not to insure women equal protection under the law. They simply were not persons within the framework of the Constitution at that time.

## Specific Rights Denied

Consider the following facts: Under this amendment, women were denied the right to vote (*Minor vs. Happersett*, 1874), and had to work for a special amendment, the 19th, passed in 1920. In recent years, under this amendment, women were denied the following rights:

1. The right to work in non-traditional occupations
2. The right to practice law
3. The right to attend state universities
4. The right to work overtime
5. The right to equal Social Security payments

There are many more cases that could be reported,\* but I want to mention an 1872 decision (*Bradwell vs. Illinois*) which is pertinent to the dialogue that has occurred on the pages of *Integrity*, since it contains ideas parallel to some of the modern Biblical interpretations that have been put forth in preceding issues. This Supreme Court decision upheld the refusal of the Supreme Court of Illinois to permit women to practice law. Courts do not sit in a vacuum, and the decision of the Supreme Court at that time was based partially upon the prevailing attitude toward women found in the religious thinking of that time. It stated, "The paramount destiny and mission of women is to fulfill the noble and benign offices of wife and mother. This is the law of the Creator." A further assumption was that woman's primary place "is in the home." The courts have relied upon this premise ever since to justify laws which discriminate against women.

My original intention was not to discuss woman's proper role in society, but note how the court in the above case has allowed this subject to influence a decision regarding woman's place *under the law*. The confusion of these two, distinct issues has only reinforced

\*Court cases involving denial of rights include: *Goesaert vs. Cleary*; *Bradwell vs. Illinois*, 1872; *Heaton vs. Bristol*, 1960; *Meglecock vs. Industrial Welfare Commission*, 1968; *Gruenwald vs. Gardner*, 1968.

the need for a separate amendment, spelling out the guarantee of equality regardless of sex, and regardless of personal opinion and theories concerning male/female relationships and "woman's place," supported by Scripture or not. However, I do not believe it is right or fair for anyone to deny others equal treatment under the law. Personal feelings and convictions, while they necessarily dictate opinions about woman's role in society and church, should not enter into a discussion of the civil rights of over half of the population of the United States in 1975. Harold's problem seems to be that he confuses his social and religious thinking with a problem that is really a matter of legal justice.

Is the 14th Amendment sufficient? In 200 years the Supreme Court has not enunciated the application of the amendment to discrimination against women. To use the Court's terminology, sex discrimination—unlike racial discrimination—is not regarded as "inherently suspect." Even in a few recent cases involving sex discrimination, the Court based its rulings on grounds *other than the unconstitutionality* of such discrimination. The courts thus maintain the legitimacy of sex discrimination in our laws and leave individual women the burden of proving that unequal treatment is unconstitutional. The ERA would remove that burden of proof from individuals and would guarantee men and women equal treatment under the law. Is this so radical an idea? Is this simple statement, "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied by the Congress or the States, on account of sex," such a threat?

Senator Mondale has summarized why an Equal Rights Amendment is needed: "The Equal Rights Amendment will go a long way toward rectifying legal inequalities between men and women. It will strike down laws that have required women to serve in prison longer than men convicted of the same crime; that have provided women with inferior medical insurance benefits; that have barred women from serving on juries and from being hired to do certain jobs. Some opponents contend that the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment already provides all the protection needed by women. Yet, in 200 years, the Supreme Court has failed to use this clause to strike down laws which discriminate against women." Hopefully, the ratification of the 27th Amendment to the Constitution will correct inequities in our laws which are based on the quality of being male or female.

## LETTERS

### Words of Praise

To some of us in the church reading [articles in *Integrity*] is like throwing a rope to a drowning man. I praise the Lord for the depth and quality of these articles that cause me to do some serious thinking.

*Boring, Oregon*

JO ANNE WATKINS

I find inspiration and hope in your journal each month. I think your willingness to publish all sides of an issue is very commendable and, considering your restoration background, highly unusual to say the least. It is my opinion that Jesus' words of "blessed are the peacemakers" is an appropriate description of your efforts.

*Muldrow, Oklahoma*

DOUG FLETCHER

### Voices of Frustration

I don't know why I bother to answer articles written by men about women in the church. I no longer consider myself a member of the Church of Christ, and I don't see how any woman with any self-esteem can be. Yet there are roots there and a lifetime, so I guess I do care. I realize that by leaving I can't help make any meaningful change, but I wasn't anyway, and at my age (54) I don't have time for continued frustrations. I would go back if I thought there was a glimmer of a chance of men and women being equals, but the churches I know don't even recognize the problem. Women who care leave, and that's the way the churches want it.

So in answer to Key's "Another Look at Integrity and the ERA," June, 1975, I consider this what I call the Church of Christ mentality. Usually anyone who is against women being equals in the church is against the ERA also. Some churches even brag that they helped defeat its ratification in their state. They are afraid that if women are recognized as equals legally, soon churches would have to do the same. And they are right. As soon as enough women become aware of unequal treatment, they will revolt.

Mr. Key quotes the 14th Amendment to the Constitution as guaranteeing women equal treatment. If this is so, then why has it never been

used for this purpose while there are many laws on the books which do blatantly discriminate against women. The fact of the matter is that it does not include women.

How can Mr. Key claim that women are not treated as inferiors in the church and yet say the Bible teaches such? Churches take what was social custom in Paul's day and make it law. Paul taught many things that no longer fit today. We just say, "Oh, that was custom." Then why are we so dogmatic concerning women?

Marriage is no longer a state of lord and master and slave. Marriage is now a partnership. There is no head of household or it is no egalitarian marriage. A woman now helps decide where they will live and work. She may even use her own name as I do. (After all, using a husband's name is custom too.)

So, no, I guess I cannot accept and love those who insist on the traditional way of things. If that sounds harsh, I've spent a lifetime doing it and I've had enough.

*Mundelein, Illinois*

JEAN OVERTON

I know not whether to laugh or cry over the article concerning women's church role written by Harold Key. It's a joke to think that a man given the reins in the church by Paul could even understand how women could feel stifled.

Another good joke is the Church of Christ professing that the Bible is the word of God. All that the Churches of Christ I have tried to worship with believed in were Paul's letters and Acts when profitable.

I embraced God's Word, Jesus Christ, with joy and a need to follow his steps. At first I thought they led to the Church of Christ but once there I found they hardly knew Jesus. Instead I found formalism, legalism and a man named Paul. Where were Jesus' teachings concerning love, humbleness and spiritual freedom? Did they die on the cross with Jesus?

I died when I was baptized. The worldly me, the female me, is no longer. Jesus Christ lives instead. This is liberation, not only for the female, but also for the male. How can Jesus do any works through me if I am bound by the prescribed traditional role with the Church of Christ? Sorry, Jesus, I can only bear and teach children, keep silent and orderly, and submit to man's authority. If this sounds ridiculous, I suggest group sessions where men and women can exchange traditional church roles. As Mr. Baldwin found when he changed his skin color to black, it's a whole new world looking out instead of in. If elders, deacons, and preachers spent some time sitting in the pew keeping silent they might understand what discrimination means.

*San Angelo, Texas*

BOBBIE SHERWOOD

## TWO VERSE EXPANSIONS OF 1 JOHN 2:12-14

I. I write to you because you need  
To know that youth and age are one.  
The young man's strength and speed  
Confirm the old man's race that's done.  
You fathers lift your hearts in love,  
And clasp the hands of those who thrive  
On valor from above,  
That both may reach the prize.

\* \* \* \* \*

II. The child, the youth, the father are one;  
They all inherit the Blood of the Son.  
All in common are captive and free,  
Bound to each other by what they will be.

The child is the Innocent, cleansed by His blood;  
The youth is the Victor, strengthened by good;  
The father is Wisdom, lent from above;  
All in His freedom can share in His love.

—Elton D. Higgs

## A PRAYER FOR LIGHT

Lord, above all else I desire to know myself and to be able to face up to what I find there. For without the self-knowledge You can give, I am imprisoned by a blindness that cuts me off from meaningful discourse with my fellow human beings. And there can be no contact with You without my giving up the charades which maintain my illusions both for myself and for others.

Pierce deep within, Thou Light of Love,  
And leave no corner unillum'd.  
Make deadly real the hidden sin  
That must in Jesus be subsumed.

May flowing Life that sprang from death  
Now shine throughout my being,  
Replacing fearful, willful dark  
With the terrible joy of seeing.

Enhance that Light, and make it grow,  
And keep its truth unshaded,  
That my dark heart may always cry  
To be by Life-Light thus invaded.

—Elton D. Higgs