

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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Ketcherside argues with characteristic clarity that abandonment of legalism is no concession to antinomianism. "There is a difference in being without law and being an outlaw." Furthermore, "there is no intimation that service to God is relaxed because the principle of legalistic rectitude is dead. We serve, but in newness of spirit."

The new covenant, which, as Jeremiah foresaw, is inscribed in our hearts, "consists of one word: love!" The author is aware that many people doubt the power of love to regulate life, and to such skeptics he insists that it was "a dynamic so powerful that it not only transformed [the early Christians'] lives but completely altered the world in which they lived."

The two chapters entitled "Answering

Objections" and "The Commandments of Jesus" are particularly valuable in dealing with those legalistic ideas which would lead us to fall from grace, but the book's ultimate value lies in its positive direction to the very essence of discipleship. The author's summary of the ugly effects of legalism in church life, whether in the present or in the past, provides a valuable diagnosis of ills which are all too familiar, but we may be thankful that he has balanced these with a view, couched in personal terms, of the wonderful possibility of expressing love for God and our neighbors without fear.

This book could very well be used as a text for group study or as an inexpensive (as book prices go these days) gift for friends.

—HGL

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EDITORIAL

RANDOM RELIGION

When Paul had to call upon the Corinthians to face up to the implications of their faith (because some among them denied the resurrection), he suggested that they might have believed in vain. He did not mean by that word "vain" that there was no basis for their belief, but rather that they might not have paid enough attention to that basis. The Greek word which Paul used is one to which Arndt and Gingrich assign the meaning "without due consideration, thoughtlessly." People who have arrived at their religious positions thoughtlessly are not likely to survive subversive influences.

One of the chief reasons why the spiritual mortality rate among Christians is so high today is that they have not given due consideration to the real meaning of the gospel. People who decline to use the reasoning power with which their Creator endowed them are easily lured by whatever siren sings the sweetest song. Unfortunately the climate in our churches often encourages such perilous irresponsibility.

The word "scholarship" is almost an obscenity among some contemporary Christians. Part of the blame may be laid on the scholars themselves, who spend too much time on questions nobody is asking and ignore matters of immediate concern, but that blame must be shared at least equally by those who make a virtue out of ignorance (although they call it by another name) and perpetuate mythology. Since a myth is a notion based more on tradition or convenience than on fact, those who draw a line on gathering the facts assume a mythological stance which is not less so because it is called Christian.

Seed which lacks depth of root will never withstand hostile elements, and a religious fellowship which lacks theological depth cannot long compete with the alternative attractions of our enlightened world. Some very good Christians may be quite ignorant, but they would be better branches of the vine if they possessed more information. The kind of ministry our generation needs is just too much for random religion. □

TWO VIEWS OF BAPTISM & FELLOWSHIP

The two articles which follow express alternative viewpoints on the question of whether fellowship with unbaptized believers is scripturally warranted.

THE BAPTISMAL LIMITATION IN CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

CRAIG M. WATTS

Nashville, Tennessee

An ecumenical conservative is unavoidably entrapped in a crucial dilemma. On the one hand, he attempts to encourage and maintain an active fellowship which is broadly based and is as inclusivistic as possible. Yet, on the other hand, he clings to biblical authority and upholds the necessity of commitment to the traditional Christian doctrines. Generally the tension between these two tendencies is, to a significant extent, relieved by persistently playing down the teachings which are the distinguishing marks of various sects and denominations and by emphasizing those great foundational theological affirmations which are shared by all evangelical Christians. Instead of allowing sectarian disputes to attain undue importance, thus further fracturing the church, the ecumenical conservative sets forth "mere Christianity" (as C.S. Lewis would phrase it) as a basis for fellowship.

The recurring frustration for the ecumenical conservative is that though there are substantial grounds upon which agreement can be found, nevertheless there are a number of prominent biblical topics which hinder progress toward a more open fellowship. No attempt to ignore the areas of difficulty can solve the problem, for certain controversial issues are obviously more than superficially serious. The topic of baptism is admittedly one of the most significant issues in this category.

There is no way to avoid the truth

that baptism is a central biblical concern and not something which is hidden in the periphery. In both the proclamation and the life of the early church baptism was given a prominent place. The fact that Jesus considered baptism so important that he included it among his final words to his apostles should be sufficient evidence to dispel any illusion that it is a matter of secondary significance.

Of course, in order to understand the implications of baptism to fellowship one must come to grips with the question of the mode and purpose of baptism. In this article I will assume that baptism is immersion (most New Testament Greek authorities support this assumption). I furthermore assume that baptism is vitally related to the forgiveness of one's sins in so far as it is connected to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ and man's trust in it (Rom. 6:1-11; Col. 2:11-13). In other words, in this article I am basically accepting as a presupposition the traditional restorationist teaching that believers' baptism (immersion) is for the forgiveness of sins.

Within the scriptures it is striking how often the writers appeal to the nature and actions of God as a basis for Christian behavior. Right conduct is seen, not simply as conformity to arbitrary decrees, but rather as the translation of the character of God in the life of man. An action or attitude is right because it is in harmony with who God is. Man does not obey God's commands for any other reason than to reflect God's nature.

This principle can be seen in several portions of scripture. For instance, the apostle John's appeal for love is based in

the nature of God: "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love. . . . Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (1 Jn. 4:7-11).

Paul argued in a similar manner in both Ephesians and Colossians as he encouraged these brethren to be full of forgiveness. The apostle called upon them to imitate God in their action: "Forbear one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgive each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive" (Col. 3:13; also Eph. 4:32).

This approach can likewise be seen in the command of Peter concerning holiness. The attributes of God are pointed

*We find our basis of fellowship
in the ways of God.*

out in order to motivate similar characteristics in disciples. And so Peter makes reference to God in saying, "As he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy'" (1 Pet. 1:16). Peter affirms that true holiness is not decided by arbitrary law; God himself is the standard. We are to be holy because God contains this within himself, and not because there is a law concerning holiness.

This God-centered principle also extends into the area of fellowship in that we find our basis of fellowship in the ways of God. The apostle Paul made this clear in his declaration that we are to "accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God" (Rom. 15:7). Or as the Phillips' version renders it, "Open your hearts to one another as Christ opened his heart to you, and God will be glorified." It is noteworthy that "God will be glorified" is contingent upon the willingness of disciples to receive one another as God has done. Christian

fellowship must have its foundation within God himself in order to be of value.

In view of the above, the question must arise: Upon what basis does God accept us? Large portions of scripture are devoted to the contention that God has accepted us and saved us by grace alone in that Christ received in himself the punishment due to us. In the cross and in the empty tomb we see the acts of God in our behalf. This solely is the source of our salvation. Men reap the blessing of Christ's sacrifice when they place all their trust in what he did and submit themselves to share in his death, burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-11). The Christian then sees his relationship with God as being based in grace alone, while the relationship is sustained by faith alone (Rom. 5:1-2; Eph. 2:8-10). Obedience to God's many commands is the result of this relationship, but the relationship itself is neither established nor maintained by works of righteousness men can perform (Rom. 3:21-28; 4:4-5; 11:6; Gal. 3:10-14; Phil. 3:8-11; Tit. 3:4-7).*

If then God has accepted by grace without regard to works all who believe and are baptized, it is ours to act in conformity to his acts. Our fellowship must include all who are in right relationship with God and, on the other hand, we must limit our fellowship to those who have encountered the God of grace in faith and baptism.

Viewing fellowship in this way requires baptism to be a limiting factor. This no doubt is a disturbing problem, nevertheless if baptism is in fact immersion "for the forgiveness of sins," how else can it be seen? It appears that if we view baptism as being vital to the reception of

*A few years ago I dealt with the relationships of faith, works, and fellowship in a number of articles in *Integrity*. Those interested may want to refer to "The Galatian Heresy" (March, 1972), "But What About Works?" (July, 1972), and "Just As Christ Accepted Us" (September, 1972).

God's grace, the implication of baptism to fellowship should be evident: fellowship of the unimmersed is not biblically permissible.

However, there are some who accept the traditional restoration teachings concerning baptism and yet do not believe that the limiting of fellowship to the immersed is a necessary consequence of such teaching. This view arises primarily, I believe, as a result of certain artificial issues and from an insufficient understanding of the reason why baptism holds a vital place in the conversion process.

Artificial issues are those issues which cloud the real central point with matters which, though important in their place,

*Fellowship of the unimmersed
is not biblically permissible.*

actually do not bring one closer to a solution of the main difficulty. The artificial issues are related problems, but they have no direct bearing on the main problem, which in this case is the relationship between baptism and fellowship. Though perhaps a multitude of matters might appropriately fit into this category, I will comment briefly on two of the most prominent ones: (1) the question of the legitimacy of baptism when performed without reference to the forgiveness of sins, and (2) the question of the possibility of cases of the unimmersed being saved.

Conservative restorationists generally maintain that believers' baptism is effective in bringing about salvation if and only if the believer is conscious of the fact that baptism is indeed "for the forgiveness of sins." For this reason they not only limit their fellowship to the immersed, but they extend their fellowship only to a select group of the immersed. This sort of restrictive practice is grossly unbiblical and is based on the mistaken view that the grace of God in conversion is limited by the knowledge of man. The

fact of the matter is that nowhere in the New Testament does it even hint that the effectiveness of God's grace in baptism is in any way determined or influenced by a convert's awareness of what takes place in baptism. The only saving knowledge spoken of in the scriptures is the knowledge of the gospel, i.e., the saving acts of God in Christ. No one, of course, contends that converts must have a complete understanding of baptism, but many do demand an Acts 2:38 "minimum understanding" of it. The sectarian arbitrariness of this approach is obvious. The only "minimum understanding" is that Christ has commanded it. Baptism is for the forgiveness of sins whether the baptized is aware of it or not. Yet viewing baptism in this way does not remove it as a limiting factor in fellowship; it simply extends the bounds of fellowship to encompass all of the immersed.

The question of the possibility of unimmersed individuals being saved does not remove baptism as an essential for fellowship, whether it is answered in the affirmative or the negative. The reason for this is that if baptism *normatively* is essential for one to become a child of God, as I assume in this article, then any individual who is saved without being baptized is the exception. (It is, of course, debatable whether there are any exceptions; nevertheless I believe there are.) The scriptures do not really dwell on exceptions, rather the *norm* is the focal point. This being so, it is the responsibility of disciples to obey the norm of scripture rather than in practice to assume the uncertain exceptions. There may be unimmersed children of God, but the scriptures neither clearly say whether there are nor who they are.

The most significant question one should ask in a discussion of baptism and fellowship is: Why is baptism necessary? I believe only by incorrectly answering this question can one contend for a fellowship which includes the unimmersed. An insufficient view of baptism's relation

to salvation may inadvertently lead to a legalistic conception of baptism. An accurate understanding of baptism must recognize its unique connection with both faith and grace.

Baptism holds a distinct relationship to faith that cannot rightly be compared to the bond between faith and works. In contrast to acts of obedience in general, baptism is not simply an expression of faith. To view baptism as no more than

Rather than an expression of faith, it would be more accurate to say that baptism is faith.

an outgrowth of faith is to put it on the same level as obedience in general. If that is done, then it is to infer that obedience per se is required for salvation. This, of course, is the essence of legalism.

But in fact, rather than viewing baptism as an expression of faith, *it would be more accurate to say that baptism is faith* (Gal. 3:26-27, Col. 2:11-12, and other scriptures support this). Baptism is an aspect of faith in its totality. Or as James Denney has written in his *The Death of Christ*: "Baptism and faith are but the outside and the inside of the same thing." Both baptism and faith are without merit to claim rewards. Both baptism and faith are primarily submissive in stance. Both baptism and faith point away from the self to Christ. The identity of faith and baptism is such that G.R. Beasley-Murray states, "In the New Testament faith and baptism are viewed as inseparable whenever the subject of Christian initiation is under discussion, so that if one is referred to, the other is presupposed, even if not mentioned . . . In the New Testament precisely the same gifts of grace are associated with faith as with baptism" (*Baptism in the New Testament*, p. 272). These things cannot be said of the relationship of faith and works.

Baptism also maintains a unique connection to the gospel of grace. Its power

and essence reside in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. That baptism is related to the redemptive act of Christ is emphasized in a number of passages (Rom. 6:1-11; Col. 2:11-12; 1 Pet. 3:21). Baptism saves "by the resurrection of Christ," and obedience in baptism is participation in the death, burial, and resurrection. It is in virtue of baptism's relation with the saving acts of God in Christ that it remains essential in salvation and fellowship. Baptism and no other activity qualifies as the all important "obedience to the gospel" which is the only saving obedience, for baptism alone fits the pattern of Christ's acts for us. Only the immersed have accepted this pattern.

It is painful to draw limits of fellowship, but if biblical limits are not recognized, fellowship ceases to be truly Christian. Limiting fellowship to the immersed need not be viewed as a proclamation of condemnation to the unimmersed, but it is an affirmation of the normative will of God. In our practice of fellowship it is our unaltering responsibility as disciples to be as inclusive as possible and as exclusive as necessary. □

A CONSERVATIVE BASIS FOR OPEN MEMBERSHIP

THOMAS LANE
Cincinnati, Ohio

Throughout its history one of the distinguishing marks of the Restoration Movement has been our understanding that baptism is to be by immersion, and for the forgiveness of sins. Two policies have been followed by divergent branches of the Movement in dealing with those not of like mind on baptism. One policy is that of admitting to membership in our congregations persons who have not been immersed or who have not been immersed with a knowledge that their baptism was

for the remission of sins. This policy is called "open membership." Contrary to it is the policy of "closed membership," of restricting church membership to those immersed specifically for the remission of sins.

Considering our Movement's historic stress on doing all things in the apostolic fashion, can we admit, without rebaptism, into our congregations, persons who have not been baptized by immersion and for the intent of reception of salvation? To many of us, open vs. closed membership is a dead issue; the Restoration Movement has long since split over it, and seems content to live with that schism. The association of the practice of open membership with the liberal Disciples has earned for that practice a connotation of liberalism.

Yet, the New Testament theology of baptism suggests a basis on which conservative Christians can maintain a conviction about the mode and purpose of baptism, and still accept as full-fledged Christians and candidates for church membership persons not immersed, or immersed but not specifically for remission of sins. Let's see what that basis is.

Baptism an Expression of Faith . . .

The New Testament mode of baptism, if we translate rather than transliterate the Greek word for it, was immersion. Its function was to procure remission of sins (Acts 2:38). The case of the conversion of Saul is instructive concerning immersion's purpose. Many who do not recognize baptism to be for remission of sins hold that simple belief in the deity and saving authority of Christ is all that is necessary to reception of salvation. The case of Saul refutes this. When confronted on the Damascus road by a miraculous vision of the risen Christ, Saul doubtless had faith immediately. What option did he have? Still, his sins were not forgiven until he reacted toward Christ through obedience to the injunction of Christ's emissary: "Rise and be

baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on his name."¹ (See Acts 22:6-16.)

Salvation is not obtained by baptism alone, as though baptism by the very performing of the rite could confer grace. Faith is the prerequisite. In fact, it is only because of the faith of the individual

*Because of . . . the grace of God,
baptism saves us as the response
which faith makes to God.*

that baptism is effectual in securing for him the forgiveness of his sins. "For when you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ *through your faith in the active power of God*, who raised him from death" (Col. 2:12 TEV; italics added). And again: "It is through faith that all of you are God's sons in union with Christ Jesus. You were baptized into union with Christ, and so have taken upon yourselves the qualities of Christ himself" (Gal. 3:26-27 TEV). Baptism operates to clothe the believer with Christ simply because believers are children of God in view of their faith.

Baptism is commanded by Christ of all who believe in Him, that through putting our faith into obedience we might obtain the imputed righteousness which is the reward of genuine faith. It is to the obedient that salvation is given (Jn. 15:14; Heb. 5:9; 1 Jn. 2:3-4). Faith alone does not save. Baptism of itself cannot save. But because of the promise and provision of the grace of God, baptism saves us as the response which faith makes to God (1 Pet. 3:21). It follows that only persons who profess faith are suitable candidates for baptism. Infants and incompetents, who cannot have faith, do not ordinarily qualify for baptism.

1. Scripture quotations credited to TEV are from *Today's English Version*, 3rd. ed. (New York: The American Bible Society, 1971). All other Scripture quotations are from the *Revised Standard Version*.

Most denominations differ from the New Testament practice of immersion for remission of sins. Some substitute sprinkling or pouring for immersion. Some baptize infants as well as responsible believers. Some believe that baptism is not for forgiveness of sins, but is to be administered to the saved (saved by faith) as a testimony that they are already saved.

Can we accept as Christians, hence as candidates for church membership, persons baptized under one of these incorrect forms or theologies? For that matter, can we accept persons who may profess Christ who have not been baptized under any form? The principle that baptism operates only as a means of translating faith into saving obedience enables us to answer these questions in the affirmative.

Applying the Principle . . .

What of persons who are immersed but without the understanding that baptism is meant to be the vehicle by which they translate faith into obedience and hence validate their faith unto salvation? Many Baptists fall into this category. Some Restorationists maintain that no person is legitimately baptized who at the time of his baptism did not regard his baptism as being for the forgiveness of his sins. Others hold that if an individual was a believing penitent at the time of his immersion, even though he may not have realized the true significance of baptism, his baptism sufficed to obtain for him the remission of sins.

A person who is mistaken about the purpose of baptism is saved by his baptism if he submitted to the ordinance out of a sincere desire to obey and please Christ. Baptism saves because it is an expression of faith in which faith is refined into submissiveness to the commandments of Christ. So then any person, whatever his understanding of the role of baptism, who believes in Christ and submits to the ordinance of baptism with a mind to satisfying the will of Christ, has met the essence of baptism: he has had faith and

obedience. He is saved, and may be accepted into the fellowship of a Restoration church, if he so desires, without being rebaptized.

What of persons who have been baptized not by immersion but by pouring or sprinkling? Should we accept them as brethren on the basis of their experience, or demand that they be rebaptized before they can partake of the fellowship of our congregations?

In the case of one immersed for the wrong reason, his spirit of obedience suffices to save him. This principle may be expanded. Suppose a repentant believer is sprinkled or poured over, and that he at that time to the best of his knowledge regards such rite as true baptism. In his ignorance he has yet had faith, and has put his faith to work in obedience to Christ. He has done what he can with what he understands. God is the rewarder

In the case of one immersed for the wrong reason, his spirit of obedience suffices to save him.

of them that diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). The man of faith and commitment whose knowledge is incomplete may find sanctuary in the grace of God because of his faith, and of his obedience to what he perceives as the will of God. Isaac Errett said it well when he wrote, "We are compelled . . . to recognize as Christians many who have been in error on baptism, but who in the *spirit* of obedience are Christians indeed."²

Still there remains the problem of whether we should admit into our congregations those who profess faith in Christ and who conduct themselves in a Christ-like fashion, but who have not been immersed and who cannot conscientiously believe that immersion is necessary, but

2. W.T. Moore, *A Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909), p. 500.

who are content with baptism as they received it. Alexander Campbell affirmed the existence of born-again Christians outside the Restoration fold, but in deference to the apostolic pattern of ordinances did not favor admitting these into Restoration churches without their being rebaptized. Isaac Errett, already cited as recognizing some unimmersed as saved, opposed admitting the unimmersed into Restoration churches. His position as influential editor sustained closed membership as the dominant practice in the united brotherhood for many years.

Open membership, however, was the earliest stand on baptism and church membership taken by a Restoration leader. It was defined in the early 1800s by Barton W. Stone, who defended it consistently until his death. Stone believed and practiced immersion for the remission

Open membership was the earliest stand on baptism taken by a Restoration leader.

of sins, but would accept the unimmersed into the fellowship of churches where he labored, out of love and forbearance and with the hope that they could eventually be convinced of the value of immersion.³ Stone emphasized love and tolerance as the most profitable way to lead men to accept divine truth.⁴

Since the believing, penitent, committed unimmersed are saved in view of their faith, repentance, and obedience to what they understand, to reject them as members of our churches would be to deny the Christ who Himself accepts them. To reject the unimmersed to maintain a purist emphasis on immersion would be to transform our churches from

3. James DeForest Murch, *Christians Only* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1962), p. 93; cp. p. 119.

4. John A. Williams, *Life of Elder John Smith* (Cincinnati: R.W. Carroll and Company, Publishers, 1870), p. 446.

communities of the redeemed to parties rejecting some of the people of God. Barton Stone's approach, that of teaching immersion for remission of sins yet embracing the faithful unimmersed with love and toleration but with concerned instruction in the perfect way of the Lord, is most true to both the broad constitution of the kingdom of God, and the historic Restoration emphasis on following New Testament forms as well as New Testament principles.

Exhortation . . .

We have seen that the New Testament prescribes baptism by immersion for forgiveness of sins, only in view of the fact that submission to baptism validates faith as obedience, obedience being necessary to salvation. We have seen that persons who have undergone what they to the best of their knowledge considered baptism, but which did not accord with the Biblical form or purpose of baptism, are saved by their baptism because in their ignorance they have yet fulfilled that requirement for salvation which baptism defines: obedience to the will of God. There is, then, no valid reason why persons who have been baptized as repentant believers, but not by immersion or specifically for remission of sins, should not be accepted as members of Restoration churches. Moreover, persons who believe in Christ and strive to obey Him but who are not convinced of the need of baptism in any form may be accepted because of their faith and service even though they have not been baptized under any rubric. To reject such persons is to divide the community of the redeemed. Seeing these things, let us follow the procedure of Stone, embracing *all* believers as our brothers and sisters in Christ—for that they truly are—yet continuing to teach the proper form and purpose of baptism, hoping that one day all Christians will be agreed in the "one baptism" of the New Testament. □

PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONAL DIFFERENCES REGARDING ABORTION ATTITUDES

SONDRA E. WILCOX
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Current literature regarding abortion attitudes has tended to lump all Protestants together and compare them with the Jewish and Catholic philosophies. Philosophically this cannot be done because there is such a wide divergence of opinions and beliefs among members of the various Protestant denominations.

In a study conducted during the fall semester of 1975 at Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, 296 students were chosen from nine health classes to participate in an abortion attitude survey, using the Wilcox Abortion Attitude Questionnaire.*

Demographic material collected from these students included the student's religious affiliation. Eleven students (4%) indicated they were Catholic; two were Jewish (0%); and the Protestants comprised 89%. Of the Protestants, thirty-

*The Wilcox Abortion Attitude Questionnaire is a thirty item questionnaire, using a Likert format, with a reliability coefficient of .96. The WAAQ was developed as part of a doctoral dissertation at Boston University. For a free copy please write: Dr. Sondra E. Wilcox, MTSU Box 251, Murfreesboro, TN 37132.

eight percent indicated they were Baptists, nineteen percent were members of the Church of Christ, eighteen percent were Methodists, and six percent were Presbyterians. Seven percent professed no religious affiliation.

The following material as presented attempts to reveal the differences toward abortion on certain pertinent items of these four Protestant groups.

TABLE 1

"I would not respect someone who had an abortion."

	Baptist	Church of Christ	Methodist	Presbyterian
Strongly Agree	0.90%	3.57%	0. %	0. %
Agree	5.41	10.71	3.77	0.
Undecided	10.81	25.00	9.43	11.11
Disagree	43.24	32.14	33.96	44.44
Strongly Disagree	39.44	28.57	50.94	44.44

Results indicated in Table 1 revealed that fourteen percent of the members of the Church of Christ felt they would not respect someone who had obtained an abortion. This group also had the largest percentage of persons who were undecided. The Methodists and Presbyterians were in apparent agreement that they would not feel any disrespect for someone who had obtained an abortion.

TABLE 2

"Abortion is against my religious views."

	Baptist	Church of Christ	Methodist	Presbyterian
Strongly Agree	8.11%	23.21%	1.89%	5.56%
Agree	25.23	41.07	11.32	22.22
Undecided	19.82	17.86	30.19	22.22
Disagree	38.74	12.50	47.17	38.89
Strongly Disagree	7.21	3.57	9.43	11.11

Table 2 revealed that sixty-four percent of the members of the Church of Christ felt abortion was against their religious views. For the reader's benefit, it may be useful to know that the Church of Christ has no written creed or doctrine other than the Bible. Fifty-seven percent of the Methodists and forty-six percent of

the Baptists disagreed with this statement.

TABLE 3

"My close friends would not approve of abortion."

	Baptist	Church of Christ	Methodist	Presbyterian
Strongly Agree	8.11%	10.71%	1.89%	5.56%
Agree	18.92	33.93	22.64	16.67
Undecided	23.42	25.00	26.42	27.78
Disagree	38.74	21.43	43.40	44.44
Strongly Disagree	9.91	7.14	5.66	5.56

Information in Table 3 indicated that Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians were within one percentage point of exact concurrence. Forty-nine to fifty percent of them disagreed with this statement compared with twenty-nine percent disagreement from members of the Church of Christ.

TABLE 4

"The liberalization of abortion in the United States has sanctioned immorality."

	Baptist	Church of Christ	Methodist	Presbyterian
Strongly Agree	6.31%	8.93%	0. %	0. %
Agree	13.51	37.50	13.21	11.11
Undecided	34.23	17.86	24.53	38.89
Disagree	34.23	21.43	41.51	33.33
Strongly Disagree	9.91	10.71	20.75	16.67

Table 4 revealed that forty-six percent of the members of the Church of Christ felt this statement to be true. This group also had the smallest number of undecided students. Sixty-two percent of the Methodists disagreed with this statement.

TABLE 5

"Abortion would be acceptable if the couple expecting the child is in the process of divorce."

	Baptist	Church of Christ	Methodist	Presbyterian
Strongly Agree	9.01%	5.36%	7.55%	5.56%
Agree	28.83	12.50	32.08	22.22
Undecided	16.22	19.64	24.53	38.89
Disagree	27.93	33.93	22.64	11.11
Strongly Disagree	18.02	28.57	13.21	22.22

In Table 5 slightly more than one-third of the Baptists and Methodists agreed

with this statement, whereas almost two-thirds (62.5%) of the Church of Christ disagreed. The Presbyterians were the most indecisive.

TABLE 6

"Abortion should be permitted because it is a lesser evil than giving birth to an unwanted child."

	Baptist	Church of Christ	Methodist	Presbyterian
Strongly Agree	18.92%	14.29%	26.42%	5.56%
Agree	33.33	21.43	45.28	55.56
Undecided	20.72	19.64	11.32	0.
Disagree	18.92	30.36	14.09	38.89
Strongly Disagree	7.21	12.50	1.89	0.

Seventy-two percent of the Methodists agreed with this statement along with sixty-one percent of the Presbyterians, but forty-three percent of the Church of Christ students disagreed. The Presbyterians had an interesting division with no persons undecided.

Conclusions . . .

Data revealed in this study indicates that generally speaking the members of the Church of Christ are less supportive of abortion than are the Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists in that order. The differences were great enough between the Church of Christ and the Methodists to be statistically significant as revealed by the Newman-Keuls test.

No one can speak authoritatively for all Protestantism. Attitude studies reveal that each denomination has its own individuality. □

SOME GOOD READING

For a copy of Norman L. Parks'
Woman's Place in Church Activity
send \$1 to Amos Ponder, 1269
Pickwick Place, Flint, MI 48507.

THE DISCOVERIES IN EBLA (SYRIA) AGAIN

Last May it was reported in these pages that recent exciting discoveries at Tell Mardikh, 30 miles south of the Syrian town of Aleppo, may hold the key to many of the riddles concerning the origins of ancient Israel. Professor David Noel Freedman of the University of Michigan has consulted with the Italian archaeologists from the University of Rome who excavated the site and in a brief memorandum has provided some of the details of the startling contents of the ancient tablets.

It is now certain that Tell Mardikh is the site of ancient Ebla, previously known only by occasional references in ancient literature. The tablets are dated securely to the reign of Sargon of Akkad (circa 2360-2310 B.C.), who is mentioned in some of the tablets related to the textile trade which was the special business of the royal palace of Ebla. The great kings of the Ebla dynasty were Rishi and Ibrum, both contemporaries of Sargon. Apparently, Sargon was instrumental in removing Rishi from the throne and replaced him with Ibrum. Later, Ibrum reversed the relationship by mounting a successful campaign against Sargon's successors at Akkad and placing it under his suzerainty. Under his reign the kingdom of Ebla was extended so that it controlled the territory from Egypt in the south to the middle of present-day Turkey (the land of the ancient Hittites) in the north and as far as the Iranian plateau (ancient Elam) in the east. The kingdom included Palestine and Syria, Sumer and Akkad.

It is not improbable that Ibrum is to be identified with the biblical 'Eber, the eponymous ancestor of the Hebrews and a lineal ancestor of Abraham. The tablets do refer to a number of biblical cities including Hazor, Megiddo, Gaza and Jerusalem (Urusalima), the earliest reference to the famous city in ancient literature. There are also a host of personal names in the tablets which are similar to noted biblical names. These include Abraham (*ab-ra-mu*), Esau (*e-sa-um*), Israel (*is-ra-ilu* = Hebrew *yisra'el*), Saul (*sa-'u-lum*), and David (*da-'u-dum*). As Freedman has observed, "If the patriarchs and their descendants did not actually live in Ebla, they clearly belonged to the same cultural tradition and came from the area in which that tradition survived and exerted a powerful influence."

Some of the interesting tablets contain a creation epic of the world and a story of a great flood, the names of various deities (including Baal, Ishtar, Dagon, and Chemosh, the national god of Moab in the Bible), and two tablets dealing with case law. The latter are concerned with payment of damages to injured persons and illicit sexual relations (a man who is guilty of raping a single woman who was a virgin is sentenced to death). These texts provide additional evidence that Hammurabi (18th century B.C.) was not the originator of the law code.

These tantalizing matters should stir the interest of every student of the Bible and create an excitement about any forthcoming light the tablets not yet translated may shed on obscure passages of the Bible. What is certain, while NT scholars diligently attempt to extrapolate solutions to the relative unknown history of the early church from the 1948 discoveries of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran and the Nag Hammadi Gnostic library of Egypt, OT scholars and students will be attempting to unravel some of the mysteries of early Israel from the Ebla discoveries for decades to come.

—David F. Graf

WE GATHER AROUND THIS TABLE

These emblems are the visible symbols of the life and work of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Bread is so basic a food as to be called the Staff of Life. A prisoner reduced to a starvation diet is given bread and water for bread is that which, when all else is gone, sustains life.

Jesus said, "I am the bread of life," and again, "This is my body which is broken for you." No one takes an entire loaf of bread into his mouth. It must be broken to be consumed, to be taken into and used by our bodies for renewal and strengthening. Had Jesus not submitted to having His body broken, we would have had only his good teachings. Because He was broken He was exalted and He now sends His own Holy Spirit to dwell in us. His life thus nourishes and sustains us.

Israel was symbolized by the Vine (Psalm 80:9). The purpose of planting a vine is to produce fruit, just as the purpose of Israel was to bring forth the Messiah. Jesus, indeed, was the fruit of that vine Israel.

Fruit, the ripened grapes, also had a purpose. They were crushed until the juice was completely separated from the pulp in order to make wine. Likewise, the Messiah's life had to be crushed and His blood shed to instill the wine of gladness and joy in our hearts (John 16:22).

Jesus said of the fruit of the vine, "This is my blood which is shed for you." We see centuries of tender nurturing of a vine that produced the perfect fruit of Jesus. We see the cruel punishment endured so that we might have that abundant life of joy and gladness in the Lord. We see His blood covering and cleansing us, reconciling us to the Father.

The act of drinking the wine and eating the bread is an intense, personal communion between the supplicant and the Supplier (Phil. 4:19), between the redeemed and the Redeemer. But it must also involve communion with other Christians for as we experience that fellowship with our Lord, we are brought into fellowship with His body, His church. His people minister His life to us. His people feed us spiritually. The life of Christ in other Christians teaches us, comforts us, nurtures us, cherishes us, and may even tenderly discipline us. As we draw near to Him, we draw near to them.

—Janice Lembegan

REVIEWS

EVANGELISTS AND LAWYERS

All Things Are Possible: The Healing and Charismatic Revivals in Modern America by David Edwin Harrell, Jr. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975. 304 pp. \$10.95.

The product of a tremendous amount of work by a widely respected religious historian, this book makes a strong bid for being the standard work on an aspect of American religious life which scholarly discussion has tended to ignore. The title may be somewhat misleading in that it represents the viewpoint of the revivalists themselves rather than that of the author, who does not share their presuppositions, but the treatment is historical, not theological. Harrell has attempted to tell the story with a minimum of theological criticism, although some value judgments must inevitably intrude when one deals with such a controversial phenomenon. However, the work is eminently fair and not infrequently sympathetic.

Harrell divides the revivalist movement into two sections. The first, the *healing* revival, "was a relatively homogeneous cultural unit that particularly emphasized the gift of healing" and lasted from 1947, when it suddenly erupted, to 1958. The second, the *charismatic* revival, "was culturally mixed and displayed a broader interest in all of the gifts of the Spirit" and is dated 1958-1974 (the terminus marks the end of the author's research and not the demise of the movement).

The book is not a history of Pentecostalism but a study of the healing and charismatic ministries which revolved around such prominent evangelists as William Branham and Oral Roberts (the two giants), and Gordon Lindsay, Jack Coe, A.A. Allen, Morris Cerullo, Jimmy Swaggart, Leroy Jenkins, Reverend Ike, and several others (with passing notice being given to such fellow travelers as Rex Humbard and Kathryn Kuhlman). It is not, however, merely a series of biographical sketches.

Harrell's subjects are a motley collection—the hypocritical and the honest, the arrogant and the humble, the backward and the modish, the restrained and the bizarre, the triumphant and the desperate, the unlearned and the intellectual. Some, such as Oral Roberts, are symbols of integrity; others are plagued by scandal. They are rugged individualists, whose charisma is the power behind their organizations. They are ambitious men, whose reach has often exceeded their grasp and brought immense financial problems. Although often haunted by their own faults, for the most part, Harrell believes, they are true believers: "No matter how calloused or depraved the minister, no one was more primed for the miracle, or more impressed by it, than the man who stretched out his hand to heal."

The book tells of their frequent battles with hostile churches, expose journalism, tax collectors, and the legal maneuvers against them, as well as their internal divisions, doubts over their failures, and their common struggle for financial survival. Even a fair-minded treatment such as Harrell's cannot ignore the extravagances—charges of drunkenness and immorality, psychological manipulation, highly inflated reports of conversions, boasting about having the largest tent, and claims of bizarre miracles. But some of the severest criticism has come from within the movement, not only from turncoat Marjoe Gortner, but from such insiders as Gordon Lindsay, Donald Gee,

and especially G.H. Montgomery, the one-time advisor to Oral Roberts who published a blistering critique of the evangelists in *International Healing Magazine*.

The book tells of their adaptation to changing times (and of some who failed to adapt and were left behind), of the shift to other bases of appeal (such as emphasis on financial prosperity) when people grew tired of miracles, and of the movement's progress from the sects to the traditional denominations and from the sawdust trail to the Hilton Hotel.

Harrell's research for this volume led him to over a hundred revival meetings, to formal interviews with twenty-six participants in the revivals and discussions with hundreds of people, and to countless magazines, tracts and books issued by the revivalists. The fifteen-page bibliographical essay not only attests to the author's thoroughness, but also provides the reader who wishes to conduct his own excursion into primary sources with a valuable tool. There are also sixteen pages of photographs, forty-two pages of footnotes, and an eight-page index.

The critics of the revivalists will probably find Harrell too kind, the sympathizers will find him too harsh, but the sober student of the subject will find him immensely valuable. —HGL

The Death of the Custodian: The Case of the Missing Tutor by W. Carl Ketcherside. Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Co., 1976. 152 pp. \$2.95 (paperback).

One of the most despised writers of the revolutionary era of our country was Tom Paine. To many, then and later, Paine was a pain. Yet he wrote very little that had not been said before. Even his *The Age of Reason*, which aroused the hostility of conservative Christians, contains nothing which had not been formulated by others. Why, then, was that "filthy little atheist," as he was wrongly

called, subjected to such vicious attacks? The answer is simple: people understood him!

Carl Ketcherside by no means fits into Tom Paine's theological pigeonhole, but he does have the same problem: people understand him. No writer within our contemporary communion has spoken with greater force and clarity, and no writer has been more vigorously attacked by the sectarian opposition.

One of the most difficult lessons we teachers of the Bible have to get across today is that of the apostle Paul concerning the law. Anyone who tries to communicate Paul's message to the Romans and Galatians to a contemporary Bible class faces a challenge that is on a par with putting toothpaste back in the tube. The roots of legalism have so deeply penetrated our hearts that they often will not come out even by prayer and fasting.

This is why I am delighted that Ketcherside's persuasiveness has been brought to bear on the subject of *The Death of the Custodian*. The title, in case you have to think about it, is from Paul's statement in Galatians 3:25 that "we are no longer under a custodian" (i.e., law).

Ketcherside starts at the beginning, pointing out from the Scriptures that God has ever been the God of covenants, that this is his concession to the dignity with which he made his creatures. It is the unfortunate tendency of many impatient readers to ignore that part of books which begin with Old Testament background material, but one should not make that mistake with this book. The discussion of God's covenants with the early Messianic community is neither dry nor unimportant. We can hardly understand the meaning and implication of the synonyms "covenant" and "testament" in the New Testament without some knowledge of the Old. Incidentally, the word "Testament" as applied to the Scriptures is a misnomer (as Ketcherside argues), for the Bible does not—and could not—use the word in this sense. (cont. next page)