

*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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Norman O. Weston  
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fering" in dealing with the racists in the Church. A hierarchy of values which ranks playing a piano in worship "services" as a crime but condones and tolerates those who abuse and diminish the worth of other human beings has ever been incomprehensible to me.

Jack Evans names the name of this heresy: it is *Racism*, it is condemned in the Scriptures, and those who practice and teach it will burn in hell. And Mr. Evans is no "liberal"; his challenge to the leaders of the Church of Christ is inescapable; his Biblical exegesis sees in the faith and works of the first-century Church the prescription of "Dr. Jesus" for the racial ills of their time and ours.

I for one will begin to take more seriously my brethren who are forever "draw-

ing the lines of fellowship" over some "issue" when they begin to "withdraw from" those people who mistreat, verbally and physically, their fellow human beings. I will take seriously the claims for "Christian Education" in the Church of Christ segregation academies when they bring into those institutions, with scholarships if necessary, the same proportion of blacks and other "minorities" as found in the local school-age population. And I will take seriously the claims of the Churches of Christ to be the "true Church" when the local congregations throughout this country are racially integrated in membership, eldership, teaching offices, and ministries. Then will the Church be, as Jack Evans would wish, "a thermostat in the world, and not a thermometer."

MAY 1977

# Integrity

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MAY, 1977  
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## CHURCH SEGREGATION

The problem dealt with in last month's special issue, as well as in the following articles in this one, is not new. According to A.T. Hanson, "Obviously one of the features of the Church situation in Western Europe at the time of the Reformation was the conviction in the minds of many Christians that the ministry had, so to speak, captured the Church." Martin Luther attacked this problem in a sermon in which he concluded "that where there is a Christian congregation that has the Gospel, it not only has the right and power, but is in duty bound . . . to withdraw from the authority which our Bishops exercise today." Although Luther did not quite succeed in restoring the New Testament pattern of ministry, which in effect had been lost to the church by the middle of the third century, he did at least set us on the right road. And a sense of history would be a great help to the church today.

Ever since the Corinthians segregated themselves after their favorite ministers, the church has tended to break itself up into parts. The fundamental mistake of the so-called "anti" brethren is their conviction that the individual Christian can be separated from the church—that good (or bad) deeds may be done by the individual without involving the whole body.

A similar mistake is made by those who would break up the church into ministry and laity and give to the ministry rights and authority over the laity. The practical effect of this, in many cases, has been to repeat the ancient error of equating the ministry with the church. This equation is illustrated by modern instances of excommunication where elders make the decision, announce it to the congregation, and then declare that *the church* has disfellowshipped the person involved.

We are trying to do our part to put the church back together, believing that our people have good intentions, and that our blindness to current trends has not turned our communion into a hopeless Humpty Dumpty.

## THREE MODELS OF CHURCH LEADERSHIP

### 1. Decision-Making: Where There are Elders

JOSEPH F. JONES

For the past fifteen years I have shared primarily in the life and work of two churches where there were elders. There have also been several deacons and two preachers of the Word in both of these congregations. What can be said for the decision-making process where there are elders?

First, efforts have been constantly exerted to set *the role of elders in the churches in true Biblical perspective*, i.e., as *functionaries* to offer services for which they were believed to be uniquely prepared. The churches had called them to a work or place of service (1 Tim. 3:1). It is to the ministry of caring, sharing with, and guiding the growth and development of believers that elders were called.

In the second place, since the elders in these churches were asked by the members to assume a function of leadership, focus has been upon the exercise of their leadership gifts in the most effective manner possible. Good leadership in any organizational structure includes *open communication* with those who are being led. Elders have been encouraged to trust and share with the congregation in their consideration of various ministries, solving of problems, and in the spiritual well-being of all members. They were not called to sit secretly in closed door meetings, aloof from the body, as though leadership were a clandestine matter reserved only for this elite group. Secrecy in the deliberations and decisions of elders tends to breed either distrust or disinterest. Members

must know what is at the heart of the church's life and work. Congregational meetings for all members provide one avenue of communication where mutual sharing between elders and church is experienced.

A third emphasis has been on *extensive involvement* of all members in keeping with their various *gifts* and *commitment*. Creative thought and planning have found numerous methods for individual involvement; and group involvement has provided an efficient instrument for service along with the fellowship of mutual sharing. Effective elders initiate involvement of members in whatever needs may arise; they are not threatened by nor afraid to tap the personal resources of others, even should the talents of some exceed the strengths of the elders.

In the fourth place, elders who have been asked to function as leaders for the congregation, to assume heavier responsibility in decision-making, *have ears to listen* to the thinking and feelings of all the members of the Body. Response from the membership has been strongly encouraged in the two congregations previously mentioned, with prayerful and thoughtful assessment made of the members' responses. And the church's response must be vitally integrated into any decision which the elders reach. Elders must be deeply sensitive to what the church's thinking and needs are at any given time; and must find appropriate means of eliciting valid responses from

the congregation on any decision facing the corporate Body. Loving, careful consideration of the members' response must be assured; tokenism is both ineffective and offensive. To ignore or disregard the church's feelings is to forfeit one's call to lead.

To be respected by the church, the *elders must respect the spirituality, sincerity, and integrity of the members*. Effective elders trust those with whom they are a part, seeing themselves as fellow-members in the Body, with no special status felt because they function as elders. Respect does not come by virtue of occupying a position, or the mere holding of authority over others; but is the logical response to one whose life has demonstrated godliness, love, and work. These are the elders whom the church will respect: men of compassion where there is human hurt and failing, forgiveness where

there is sin, kindness where harshness and ugliness exist, and openness in their search for God and Truth, as they lead others in the same pursuit.

Finally, *elders must be known to the members*, as the shepherd is known by the sheep. This obviously implies the meaningful involvement of the elders in the lives of others within the congregation. They must be men of trust and confidence, with whom members can open their hearts, to whom confession of failing can be humbly made, forgiveness assured, and acceptance offered. It is not theirs to judge, but to be good shepherds under the leading of the Chief Shepherd, in the nurturing of Christians. When such godly leaders reach decisions after full involvement of the entire church, their decisions will be respected and efforts will be extended by the church to effect their implementation.

## 2. If No Elders, Then What?

DEAN THOROMAN

The Church of Christ heritage with which I am most familiar assumes that each congregation either has elders or church leaders or is in the process of training someone for this responsibility. It is not the purpose of this article to criticize this heritage nor to suggest that changes be made. For those churches which do not have elders and see little hope of appointing such in the near or distant future, I suggest at least one alternative to assist in the decision-making process.

One church in this area has gotten along quite well using the following organizational arrangement. First, it is constantly made known that anyone who desires to do so is welcome to attend and to

participate in the monthly business meetings of the congregation. These meetings are chaired by one selected at the previous meeting and the chairperson is responsible for preparing the agenda as well as conducting the business meeting (usually following fairly close to Roberts' Rules of Order). One of those present is appointed to take notes which are later available for anyone to read. These notes are subject to approval at the subsequent business meeting.

Second, the members have approved the formation of standing committees charged with particular responsibility. One committee plans the youth work. Another has the teaching program to

direct. Still another takes care of matters relating to the meeting place. There are others, but these will serve as examples of delegating specific concerns. Membership on these committees is largely voluntary but an attempt is made to make certain that everyone has an opportunity to serve—even to the point of personal invitations to be on at least one committee. Chairpersons for these committees are approved by the congregation in a regular business meeting.

Third, each chairperson is asked to report to the congregation at each monthly business meeting. In this way members know that individual responsibility includes group accountability. Communication has improved because each member feels free to ask questions and to make suggestions about any phase of congregational activity.

Fourth, special committees are appointed as needed to deal with matters which may not be continuous in nature. The size and makeup of such committees is usually determined by the problem or

issue needing attention. When the solution is found, the committee is dissolved.

It is important to note that all committees are responsible to the entire congregation. Thus, it is increasingly imperative for members to attend business meetings to help make decisions which affect the entire group. No committee may rightfully assume more authority than the church gives to it. Conversely, no committee may rightfully dodge responsibility by doing less than it was created to do.

Finally, neither committees nor their memberships are presumed to be eternal. They are subject to annual review by the church and changes may be made even sooner than that if circumstances so demand. I see several advantages in this, not the least of which is that more people feel more responsible for more of what happens. Even in congregations which have elders it seems to me that a greater scattering of responsibility would benefit all parties concerned.

## 3. An Alternative Form of Leadership

HOY LEDBETTER

It should be apparent to any but the most sheltered Christian that in the centuries since Christ established his church many terms have radically changed in meaning. An illustration that quickly comes to mind is "baptism," but a more pertinent example for this article is provided by an elder of my acquaintance who used to gain admittance to a hospital which restricted visitors by asserting that he was a bishop, knowing full well that the hospital personnel would not understand the term in the sense in which his

church occasionally applied it to him, since "bishop" to most people no longer carries the meaning it bore in the New Testament period.

Another acquaintance, a champion of women's rights, momentarily assuages his critics who ask if he believes women should be elders with an emphatic "No!" and then candidly adds that neither should men be elders in the commonly accepted sense of the term. His view is that the word elder, like the word bishop, has come to be defined according to post-

apostolic tradition rather than Biblical teaching, and that this definition is so firmly rooted in contemporary minds that restorationist churches may find it expedient to apply alternate terms to their forms of ministry.

### The Pioneer Ministry . . .

The congregation I work with refers to its leaders as pioneer ministers (i.e., "those who take the lead in serving"), and we may be profitably stimulated by reviewing some of the factors which contributed to the proposal and adoption of this form of leadership.

For one thing, the word elder, at least within the experiences of many of the members, had taken on connotations of function, authority, and permanency which did not correspond to the Biblical pattern of ministry. Having minimized the New Testament emphasis on serving, elders had in popular thought become "officers" who were the exclusive holders of decision-making rights in the congregation and to whom all other functionaries were necessarily subordinate. Moreover, the widespread notion that, once they were appointed, elders remained such for life appeared to be equally as unscriptural as it was detrimental to healthy congregational life and outlook.

Another consideration in the establishment of the pioneer ministry was the belief that the Bible does not lay down a particular form of ministry as the essential pattern for all churches in all generations. (My convictions on this question were set forth in the February, 1974, issue of *Integrity*.) Not only would it be virtually impossible to restore all of the church leaders of the New Testament period (since we do not know for sure what some of them did), but one looks in vain in the Bible for references to many which contemporary churches consider important to their work (such as educational directors, youth ministers, ministers of music, counselors, and even the

so-called minister of the church). So, appointing pioneer ministers instead of elders simply carried one step further a tradition among the churches of adopting ministries for their needs in the modern setting.

Finally, notwithstanding the fact that the congregation had several responsible committees, a paid preaching minister, and (as a nonprofit corporation according to state law) officers of the corporation, there was a recognized need for some form of appointed ministry which would provide the church with a broad base of administration, cohesiveness, spiritual stimulation and guidance, and equipment for corporate ministry. Hence, out of much prayer and study came the pioneer ministry.

The pioneer ministry consists of the preaching minister and six other members of the congregation, seven in all. (The number seems appropriate to the size of the group and the availability of candidates.) They are selected by the congregation at an annual meeting from a list of names which the general membership submits in advance to the preaching minister. Their terms are for one year, with the provision that any one who betrays the congregation's trust may (and should) be replaced at the regular business meeting.

The pioneer ministers have no authority in the worldly sense of the term. Any decisions they make must reflect a determination to serve, rather than dictate to, the church and, accordingly, may be set aside by the congregation if it chooses to do so. It is understood that the pioneer ministers are a leadership group whose purpose is to encourage rather than discourage initiative on the part of all members of the church.

The pioneer ministers have a mandate to: generally superintend the affairs of the church, looking out for, and acting on behalf of, the spiritual welfare of the congregation; plan and set in operation such programs as they deem necessary to the

accomplishment of the church's mission, for which they are authorized to spend reasonable sums from the church treasury; be alert for signs of individual weakness and seek to provide encouragement and educative discipline wherever necessary; work hard both to discover and to execute any needed reforms and/or promotions; and inform the congregation if any of the pioneer ministers become slack in meeting responsibility. The pioneer ministers do not replace, but work in connection with, various committees as well as other functionaries in the church. One of their responsibilities is to determine what committees are needed and to select committee members each year, their selections being subject to ratification by the whole church.

### Some Qualifications . . .

Each pioneer minister is required to pledge himself to put the church of the Lord first in his life, to work harder than members are ordinarily expected to, and to assume personal responsibility for the success of any and all worthy goals of the congregation. He or she is expected to attend the meetings regularly and to contribute to the development of goals.

In choosing the pioneer ministers the church seeks, not perfect people, but the best people available. Some guidelines the members follow in choosing who will serve them are that the pioneer ministers should: be mature in the Scriptures and sound in faith; have demonstrated in the past their devotion to the work; have exhibited a willingness to give themselves and their substance to the cause; be of proven reliability in completing assigned tasks; love people and be willing to put others first; be concerned about the growth of the church and the realization of individual spiritual maturity; have a good reputation; be free from bad habits, bad temper, or materialistic attitudes; know the church they serve and the world

they live in, and be able to provide the church with the moral and spiritual direction it requires in its time. It may be noted that this church does not practice sexual discrimination and that three of the six initially chosen were women, a proportion that has been substantially maintained.

The pioneer ministers are supposed to meet together each week (except the week during which the congregational business meeting is held), with the preaching minister acting as chairman. These meetings are to be open to all members of the congregation who wish to attend—who may bring up special problems, suggestions, or criticisms—with their time and location being announced to the congregation in advance.

The results of this approach to service have been very good. The fear of authoritarianism which originally deterred acceptance of an appointed ministry was overcome through terminology which was essentially Biblical and yet was not corrupted by post-Biblical connotations, and through safeguards adopted at the outset. The submission of the members to each other has been elevated from the realm of human demand to the voluntary basis which the Bible specifies. Individual growth has been encouraged through all members exercising their right and responsibility to be involved in making decisions, yet without becoming weighted down with endless details. Creative ideas have been heard and acted upon, criticisms have been dealt with, moral and spiritual problems have been solved, and, although other factors have surely been involved, a tendency toward destructive individualism has been reversed and rapport within the congregation is excellent. Such results might well have been attained through other means, and a better form of ministry may yet be discovered, but so far this church has not found a more effective answer to its need for leadership than the pioneer ministry. □

## Christian Capitulation

HANK KERR

Springfield, Virginia

John Questor\* has asked a question that probably every Christian has asked. I would like to try to help him with that question through some insights that I have had over the last couple of years.

The key to being transformed and knowing the will of God is found in Rom. 12:1 where Paul tells us that we must present our bodies as a living and holy sacrifice to God. In other words, we must surrender our lives to God as our spiritual service of worship to him. This surrender is not just once when we commit our lives to Christ, but it is daily, hourly as we live our lives for him as an act of worship.

Surrender, however, is easier said than done. I thought I had surrendered my life but have found recently that I did not even know what surrender meant. Now, I think I am beginning to get an inkling of what it means to surrender each and every portion of my life to him, even the cherished areas that I really want to hold on to and continue to be lord of. Oh, I still have not released them all, for there are many areas of which I am not even aware. As I become aware of them, however, I intend to surrender them to God.

But how do we surrender? In order to be able to surrender we must first know without a doubt that we have eternal life as John promises us in 1 John 5:13. That does not mean that we cannot turn away from God if we so choose. What it does mean is that we

can know today that we have eternal life.

Next, we must believe beyond a doubt that God loves us in a very personal way. There are many scriptures to which we could turn to show this wonderful truth, but I believe the most beautiful is Ps. 139. This psalm clearly shows that God knows us completely; he knows our every move. Yes, he is a personal God who loves us each personally and who, I believe, works in our lives in a very personal way. If we do not believe this wonderful truth, then I don't think that it is possible to surrender to God. For who is going to surrender the position of lord of his life to an impersonal God who does not care about who he is or what he does? We will only surrender that position to a very personal God who cares about us personally and cares about our every move. That, I am convinced, is the God whom we worship.

Next, in order for us to surrender it is important for each of us to realize our own self-worth. We are each unique and important members of the body of Christ as Paul sums up in 1 Cor. 12:18. Realizing this, we can accept ourselves just the way God made us and love ourselves just as he intended. Jesus told us that we should love our neighbor as ourselves (Mt. 22:39). We have heard a great deal about loving our neighbor, but very little about loving ourselves. Yet, it is impossible to love our neighbor unless we love ourselves. We usually react against loving ourselves, believing that would make us egotists. This is the opposite of what is actually the case, for the egotist does not love himself and, therefore, spends most of his time talking about himself in an effort to build up his ego. He has no time for anyone else because of his concentra-

## Full acceptance of ourselves also allows us to give others the freedom to be themselves.

tion upon himself. The person who loves himself, however, does not have to spend time building himself up. Consequently, he has time to love others. He loves himself because he knows God loves him personally and accepts that love.

When a person loves himself he fully accepts himself just as God made him, for he is indeed just as God wanted him to be. This full acceptance allows us to take off our masks that hide our real selves and gives us the freedom to be ourselves. We can be honest with ourselves, reveal our true selves, and be able to grow in Christ. Full acceptance of ourselves also allows us to give others the freedom to be themselves. Also, it gives us the freedom to surrender to God. Yes, we can surrender to God because we know that we have a God who loves us personally, who cares about everything we do, and whom we can trust with our lives.

Now that we have come to the point where we can surrender, we must understand how we surrender. This brings us back to Rom. 12:1 where we are told to present our bodies as a sacrifice to God. We can do this only when we are able to deny ourselves and lay our total being on God's altar. This includes our desires, our goals, our job, our money, our sins, our everything. We can only do that when we know that God cares about us personally and works in our lives daily. If we do not believe this, then we will not trust him with our lives, for we will hesitate to trust someone who really doesn't care what we do. Also, often we don't surrender a portion of our lives because we don't want to take a chance that it may not come out the way we want it to come out. We decide to be lord of that portion of our lives, letting God have the rest.

Now we can come back to John Questor's question: how do we learn what the will of God is? I believe that it is only possible when we surrender that par-

ticular question to the Lord. When we surrender something, we are not anxious about it any more. We don't care how it works out because we know that whichever way it does, it will be for God's glory. If we continue to be anxious, then we know that we have not truly surrendered the question to God. It is only by surrendering the particular question, however, that we can hope to know what God's will is for our lives on that particular subject. For only then will our minds be open and receptive enough to determine God's will above our own. Only when we have surrendered the question will we have peace on that particular subject.

Assuming now that we have surrendered our question to the Lord and are receptive to knowing his will on a particular subject, what do we do while we are waiting for his answer? It may not come as quickly as we prefer. If the question is such that we can wait for God's answer, then I believe we should do so. If, however, a decision must be made, then I believe we must weigh the pros and cons of the question or of the alternative courses of action and prayerfully select the one that will give maximum glory to God. This will not be easy, but if we even the balance sheet of advantages in taking a particular course of action as opposed to not taking it, then as much as is humanly possible we can look beyond our human desires and attempt to perceive God's will. Once we've done this we can present the decision to God and ask him to stop us from going in that direction if he does not want us to do so. The main thing is that we have surrendered the issue to God and allowed him to be lord of this area of our life. Having done this we are not concerned about the outcome any more, for we know that whatever happens it will be to his glory. (If we still are concerned about it, it means we have not really surrendered it and we are still trying to be

\*The reader is referred to John Questor's letter in the December issue, and to the articles in that and succeeding issues. The letter provoked a great deal of material from readers—more than we can use. We feel that this article should be enough on the subject, at least for the present.

**. . . we are not concerned about the outcome any more,  
for we know that whatever happens it will be to his glory.**

lord of that particular area of our life.)

After we have surrendered a question or a particular course of action to God so that we are not concerned about it any more, then we can be sensitive to indications of what he wants us to do. We will miss these indicators completely if we are still intent on being lord over the situation. Let me give an example from my own life. For five years or so, up to a year and a half ago, I was making plans and preparations for entering Bible college after retiring from the Air Force. I truly thought that was what God wanted me to do. Then, in the Fall of 1975, I realized that I had never surrendered that question to God. I just assumed that was what he wanted me to do. When I became aware of this, I knew that I had to surrender it. That was one of the most difficult things I have ever had to do, for by that time I *really* wanted to go, I could hardly wait. After I surrendered it I waited, and during the ensuing time I was more relaxed about that question than I had ever been before. I had peace because I had released it to God and was no longer concerned.

However, I also told God that I was going to continue to plan on going and asked him to show me if he did not want me to go. It was almost a year before I received an indication that I should go in a different direction. I believe that if I had not surrendered the problem in the first place, I would never have received those indications. Now I am pursuing the new direction, but that one has also been surrendered. In the meantime I am assuming that it's what God wants me to be doing.

I will summarize by addressing each of John Questor's questions individually. First, he asked how we learn what the will of God is. We can know the will of God only when we have surrendered to God not only ourselves, but every aspect of

our lives. Specifically, to know God's will on a particular subject we must surrender it to him. Only then will we be open and receptive to indications on what he wants us to do.

Next, he asked if God works in our lives in a personal way. God *does* work personally in our lives. In fact, we will not surrender our problems to him if we don't believe he works with us personally. We will not really trust our lives to someone who we feel is impersonal and does not care what we do or when we do it. God *does* care whether we take a job in Grand Rapids or stay with our job in Detroit. We must believe this if we are to truly surrender to him so that we can know his will.

John Questor then asked that if we have trouble knowing God's will, does it follow that we are not transformed people? I suspect that many of us have trouble knowing God's will for our lives. This is because most of us hold back areas of our lives and don't surrender them. Also, it is probable that there are areas we do not even know are not surrendered, such as the example I previously related. Does this mean that we are not transformed? I believe that the answer is both yes and no. No, it *does not* mean that we are not in Christ, for I believe we are in Christ from the day we commit our lives to him and are baptized (unless, of course, we subsequently reject him). Yes, it *does* mean that there are areas of our lives that we have not surrendered. We are holding on to them ourselves due to lack of trust.

Finally, he asked how we know when to make decisions ourselves and when to wait for an answer from God. I believe that we must surrender all decisions to God. We do this in prayer and, therefore, it is very appropriate for each of us to wait and pray about every decision before we make it. As explained above, once we have released the problem to God, then

we will be receptive to his answer. In the meantime I believe it is proper, after prayer and meditation, to pursue a particular course of action without a clear indication from God, provided that course of action has been surrendered to God so that we will be receptive to changing direction if God shows us that is what he wants. As we surrender more and more of our lives to God, looking to him for

more and more decisions, we will draw closer and closer to him until finally we are walking almost continuously with him. Then we will be truly transformed and manifest the qualities Paul attributes to this condition in Rom. 12:3-21.

I hope that these few words will help John Questor's search for the will of God for his life. I know that they have helped mine. □

## LETTERS

### An Irony

The excellent article by Norman Parks [in the March issue] omits one remarkable fact: The church colleges in Tennessee hired Charles Wilson, professor of law at the Jesuit college of Georgetown, to argue the rightness of tax support for church colleges. Wilson is the leading Catholic attorney for the Catholic Bishops Conference and has argued the Catholic causes before the Supreme Court in almost every case for the past 20 years. It is ironic that Church of Christ colleges should share in hiring a Catholic lawyer to defend the right of Church of Christ colleges to compel Caesar to support them. Not incidentally David Lipscomb contributed more to Wilson's reported \$50,000 fee than any church college in the state.

I dedicate the following poem to these men who believe that Caesar should be indentured to service to Bible colleges:

Our Christian College Presidents,  
Who once denounced "socialism,"  
And preached self-reliance,  
Have made piping tax money  
from government to religion  
Into pure political science.

HAROLD STEELE  
Nashville, Tennessee

### Appreciation

I wish to express my appreciation to you for running Jim Sims' review of the Warren-Flew Debate in *Integrity*; also for your later defense of his review. The reason I am so appreciative is that the articles show far more clearly than anything else possibly could the antagonistic, un-Christian, fault-finding, contention spreading attitude of the supporters of *Integrity*. They also show, far more effectively than anything else I can think of, the complete lack of integ-

rity of *Integrity*. It would take an extremely blind and prejudiced reader not to see this. Thanks again for finally letting your true colors be shown totally clear.

HERB SMITH  
Haskell, Oklahoma

### Sincere Appreciation

Thank God for you and for *Integrity*. I wonder if you realize how you really do fulfill your motto and encourage us so very much. More and more I see individuals lifting their eyes to the gracious beauty of our Lord. But many of us need help. We need you to point a finger and say, "before we can convincingly persuade others of the terms of covenant relationship with God, we must know by joyful experience the meaning of our own agreement with Him." We need exhortation that God is "love, acceptance and forgiveness."

Personally I have been helped immeasurably by the articles on the role of women. Now I can see myself in a better perspective—with the same worth as my brothers and consequently our equality before God in every respect responsibility as well as privilege.

I wish I could tell brother Norman Parks what his articles have meant to me. He has certainly helped me to see our freedom in Christ and caused me to want to help my fellow man. And all the others who write for you—all I can say is Thank you. May God bless each of you.

NAME WITHHELD

*The foregoing is typical of many letters we have received. The writer's name is withheld at our own discretion (sad to say, we can never be sure that a public statement of sympathy with Integrity will not expose one to local hostility). The reader may write to Norman Parks at 404 Minerva Drive, Murfreesboro, TN 37130.*

## Smoked Ham—Too Well Done

DON HAYMES

Memphis, Tennessee

*The Curing of Ham* by Jack Evans. Terrel, Texas: Southwestern Christian College, 1976. 118 pages, \$5.50.

There was a time, not so long ago, when debating and debates were the life and breath of the Churches of Christ. A J.D. Tant, a Daniel Sommer—or a Marshall Keeble—would get off the train in any of a thousand dusty towns, where half-a-dozen struggling souls were meeting upstairs in the lodge-hall, and take on all comers, baiting the preachers of all denominations until they rose to the challenge. The debates might go on for a few nights or a few weeks, in courthouses or church-houses, or under tents pitched on vacant lots. Debating and preaching by night and baptizing by day, the Tants and the Keebles—self-taught, unlettered men of rough manners and colourful speech—“wouldn’t quit” until the local Church was on its feet, and maybe even putting up a little frame meeting-house where the tent had stood. Only then would they move on, pausing to fire off a ringing report to the *Advocate* or the *Foundation* of errors vanquished and sinners saved.

But somewhere it all went sour—perhaps it was the very success of the debates that killed their popularity. The churches built by the sweat and shouting of the old-time preachers grew in numbers and wealth and moved across the tracks into buildings as grandiose as those of the rest of the religious establishment. And while one might wish to share the Gospel with one’s Baptist neighbour, one did not wish

to so alienate him that he would not also buy one’s services or one’s goods. By the end of the 1920’s a new style of religious confrontation had emerged in the more affluent congregations of the larger cities, in which the preacher, now educated in one of the church’s new colleges and suitably genteel in deportment, would take on not just another local preacher but nationally famous leaders of other organizations in polite and semi-learned discussions. In these forums, the letter of the old arguments was present, and occasionally an exchange would bring back the heat and odour of the tent, but by and large the spirit, the passion, the gut-wrenching involvement of the old days were gone, and with them much of the *entertainment* value.

And finally, in that dark time after the Second World War when a whole nation would be enlisted in the hunt for political traitors, witches, and misfits, the desire for controversy turned inward, and the debate became a battle-ground of internecine combat as members of the Church of Christ fought each other over numberless “issues.” The climactic volleys of that sad decade were fired by E.R. Harper and Yater Tant in Lufkin, Texas, over the errors, real and imagined, of the national radio program *Herald of Truth*. After that bitter confrontation, which sealed a major division in the Church’s ranks, the zeal for debate dwindled away.

But there are still a few debaters and debates around, if they are not ballyhooed as loudly as in the past (leaving aside such

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plastic-fantastic, oversold media events as the Bill Banowsky-Anson Mount discussion of the “Playboy Philosophy” and the recent meeting between T.B. Warren and Antony Flew). In some quarters a young preacher is required to earn his spurs by demolishing some denominational foe; but these ritual blood-lettings are pallid copies of the battles of yester-year, and only the most avid of audiences can bear, in the television age, yet another technical dissection of the Organ Question or Predestination. Such encounters may have more impact on the preacher’s employment resume than on his audience, no matter what its enthusiasms.

In the Black Church, which has rarely “crossed the tracks” or escaped the grinding poverty which oppressed white and black alike in other times, the passion for debate remains relatively undiminished, although dampened somewhat, perhaps, by the channeling of the energies and interests of the black community into civil rights and politics. Which brings us to the present work: a debate which combines the flavour of the old-time encounters with the implications of the social advances of the past 20 years.

Jack Evans has packed a lot of material into a slender, 118-page paperback volume, but its heart is a verbatim transcript (with editorial comments and stage directions!) of a debate between Mr. Evans and Vernon Barr, in which Mr. Barr affirmed that:

*The Holy Bible teaches that it is Scripturally wrong and against God’s will for members of the white race and members of the black race to intermarry.*

I suspect that few white readers will be able to lay this book down without mixed emotions, rising from the pit of the stomach. Many of the pure in heart who would “sympathize” completely with Mr. Evans’

position will be repulsed by his rhetoric and his tactics, while many others who yearn for the old-time brawls with “the denominations” will find their nostalgia evaporating in the heat of Mr. Evans’ well-founded fury and, on *this* subject, discover an unsuspected empathy with Mr. Barr.

Jack Evans is a disciple of Marshall Keeble who learned his lessons well; but he is also a proud and capable black man in a time of revived black manhood and pride. He would not be likely to suffer silently the indignities inflicted on Mr. Keeble by the likes of Foy Wallace. In fact, without the modern Civil Rights Movement this debate could not have occurred. But the combination of modern social consciousness and traditional bellicose religion, in the person of Jack Evans, will make this book a new—and potentially educational—experience for almost every reader.

Vernon Barr, an aging war-horse of the Missionary Baptist Church, is no match for Jack Evans in this debate, except in the size of his ego. Certainly he *believes* what he says here; why else would he affirm an intellectually and morally bankrupt proposition, and challenge Jack Evans to debate it on Mr. Evans’ home ground, before an almost entirely black audience at the Southwestern Christian College Lectureship? Of Mr. Barr’s sincerity I have no doubt; his intelligence and sanity are quite another matter.

In his presentation, Mr. Barr recapitulates most of the old arguments—including the so-called “Curse of Ham” of Genesis 9:25—concocted by white “Christians” to justify the enslavement and subjugation of black people. But he has debated Mr. Evans before on other matters, and the core of his argument rests on the lack of a “direct command”:

I believe strongly that if the Creator of the black and white races had intended them to

intermarry and become one, He would have commanded them to intermarry. Where did He do it? You hear both of Dr. Evans' speeches and you jot down the chapter and verse where God commanded the two races to intermarry. You remember that! Remember it please! (p. 31)

Now I tell you what, if I deny the proposition that he is denying tonight, then I would affirm that they *should* marry. Because if it's Scriptural and right, according to God's will that they marry, then they *should* marry. People ought to practice what they preach. (p. 71)

This is the supreme confidence of the ignorant—and, given Mr. Evans' positions in other matters of doctrine, it is a cunningly-laid trap. But it does not ensnare its intended prey:

... I do not say that members of the black race and members of the white race SHOULD marry. I am not saying that members of the black race and members of the white race SHOULD marry. (Amens) I am saying that God did not condemn their marrying each other, and He does not condemn it now. God doesn't tell any two people that they SHOULD marry. You are free to choose whom you want to marry. I have whom I want as my wife. I want Mr. Barr to realize that. I have whom I want! I CHOSE my wife. It was not a matter of God's saying, "You, Jack and Patricia SHOULD marry." (pp. 73-74)

Those readers who have never seen an old-time bare-knuckle debate will marvel at the exchanges in this one. From the moment he rises to speak before this highly-partisan audience, Mr. Barr is on the defensive. Jack Evans' attack is fierce, relentless, withering:

There is no need, Mr. Barr, of your screaming as you did last night and in our previous debates that "this is suppose to be a college president." I am not debating you as a "college president," I am debating you as a gospel preacher. (Amens) If you want the "President" in me, you get your President of your Baptist Institute, and I'll take him, too. I'll take on the whole bunch of you Missionary Baptists. . . . He says "Ham" meant "black." But it literally means "hot." And sometimes when you get "hot" you will do like Mr. Barr did last night, you'll turn "red." (Laughter) And he is going to turn "red" again tonight before this debate is over. . . . I am glad I picked up this little

book on the "Meaning of Names." Now if "Ham" meant black, and if that means that all his descendants were and are supposed to be black and under the "curse of Ham"; then the name "Vernon," which is Mr. Barr's first name, means, according to this little book, "growing green." (Laughter) At least, he is growing, and I am glad. And I am going to help him "grow up" tonight. (p. 41)

Now you said, Mr. Barr, that somebody over there at your table tonight knows Greek. Of course, it's like I told you in the last debate, in the words of brother R.N. Hogan, Mr. Barr doesn't know the difference in a Greek letter and a "chicken track." (Laughter) But here is a Greek New Testament right here, and Acts 17:26 is not translated like Mr. Barr has said. It is not in the plural, "RACES," as Mr. Barr has said. It is written (Anglicized) "pan ethnos anthrōpōn," translated and meaning "every NATION of men." There's your original Greek on that verse. (Evans walks over to Mr. Barr's table and gives the Greek New Testament to Dr. Albert Garner, Barr's moderator, who is supposed to know Greek.) There's your original Greek on it. Read it to him, Dr. Garner. (Amens and applause) Now in verse 29, you get to "genos," meaning "offspring," from which we get our word "genealogy." Now the level of this debate is coming up a little. Now I am getting to be "President of a college." (Laughter) You see you have to handle these false teachers on all levels. And when I get on Mr. Barr's level, I have to be in "Sunday School." (Laughter) Now get your Institute's president, Mr. Barr, if you want to argue translations. (pp. 82-83)

Now if some of you, even members of the church, don't like the way that I'm talking, that's too bad. Somebody will say, "Well, brother Evans, if I were you, I wouldn't say that." Well, you are not me; and you are not saying it. (p. 76)

Well, a little of that goes a long way; but there is more to this little book than steaming rhetoric bulldozing dead dogma. Jack Evans is a proud black man who has studied his Bible, who believes in the literal truth of every word, and who believes that the racial problems in the world and the Church can only be solved "on the basis of the Word of God."

The solution to the racial problem cannot be found on the pages of any of the thousands of sociology books of the world. And as far as their value in *that respect* is concerned,

they could all be gathered and burned. And once the fire of the thousands of man-theorizing, conflicting books has subsided, we must then, for the real answer to the racial problem, open the Book of books, GOD'S HOLY BIBLE, and let the inerrant, God-breathed Word speak to our souls. (p. 2)

... what I am presenting here on the racial problems among us comes not from the resources of other secular books, but from my knowledge of God's Holy Word, my knowledge of the psychosis of racism, my experience of daily associations with black and white people in churches of Christ and those outside the church, my past study and teaching of secular history, my twenty-two years of speaking and preaching throughout this nation, and from a heart of love. I do not read "Mohammed Speaks," "Black World," "The John Birch Papers," the literary trash of the "Ku Klux Klan," Gunnar Myrdal's *The American Dilemma*, brotherhood papers, or any other literary works of black or white people or organizations for "documentation" and bibliography. I need only to "document" what I believe on this critical subject with the Word of God, the *only Book* that can and does provide the answer. The Bible is self-sufficient! And my motto is: "God said it! I believe it! That settles it!" (p. 104)

It is Jack Evans' understanding of Scripture which leads him to confront his fellow Christians with the pervasive racism of the Church and apply to it the "Bible solutions" he finds in the Text. That message, presented with passion and power, makes this a valuable book.

That racist doctrine creates the atmosphere for racial hatred. That's why we are having racial troubles in America. These so-called preachers, "Bible-quoting preachers," are causing much of it. Everytime some racists want to substantiate racism and get away from the integration of schools, they will run into some little church building. . . . God means for the true church of Christ to be a thermostat in the world, and not a thermometer. God wants the true church to change the world with his word. (p. 76)

Many preachers . . . and other religious leaders among us have soothed their conscience for not preaching God's truth on the racial problems that are plaguing us and diluting our efforts to Restore New Testament Christianity by labeling that portion of the truth of God "Social Gospel," thus

misleading the sincere church members into thinking that God's Word has no answer for the social problems of the world. These cowardly preachers and church leaders who are guilty of using such tactics to keep from discharging their responsibility to teach TRUTH on this subject are . . . saying through their actions that men must turn to the books of sociology and anthropology for the answer to this perplexing racial problem, which exists not only in America and throughout the world, but in some parts of the church of Christ. (p. 2)

I am not surprised or concerned when denominational false teachers . . . twist the Scriptures to their own destruction and fail to speak out against racism, but try to justify it. . . . But I am concerned when many of my brethren in the churches of Christ have written and are writing on every subject imaginable, from "Humming in Worship Services" to the "Communists' Infiltration of America," but have, like the priest and the Levite . . . "passed by on the other side" of the racial problem, perhaps the greatest problem of humanity in the 20th century, which is greatly affecting our effectiveness in "contending for the faith." These brethren who are doing this, black and white, are content with keeping the racially-oppressed quiet so that the racist oppressors may continue to slumber and sleep. But, brethren, there is more to "RESTORING NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY" than condemning denominationalism, which I also do with all my might. A part of our "Restoration Movement" must be that of restoring the *spirit* of New Testament Christianity. This is not to imply that there were no racial problems during the days of the apostles and the first century church. There were many of them. But those problems were not ignored or covered up with hypocritical piety by the apostles, preachers, and church leaders. They were faced and solved on the basis of the Word of God. (p. 3)

More than a decade ago, at the famous "Jerusalem II" semi-secret conference in Nashville (widely reported at the time by people who weren't there), William C. Martin found himself in a hailstorm of criticism for simply saying that "I will not rear my children in a racist church." Men who would break fellowship at the plinking of a piano key or the phrasing of a syllogism fell all over themselves in a rush to counsel "patience" and "longsuf-