

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

## Integrity

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# Integrity

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pew in front. A bunch of churches are like that. Who kneels down in that church! I'll tell you who kneels. The man kneels who's settin' the toilets in the restrooms. He's got to kneel, that's part of his work. The man who nails the pews on the floor, he had to kneel down. The man who put the receptacles in the walls that turn that I-don't-know-how-many-horsepower organ they got in that Riverside Church—that thing'll blow you halfway to heaven right away, pow!—the man who was putting the wire in that thing, he kneeled down. Any work, you kneel down—it's a kind of worship. It's part of the holiness of things, work, yes. Just like drawing breath is. It's necessary. If you don't breathe, you're dead. It's kind of a sacrament, too (p. 670-671).

Throughout *Working* human needs leap from the page. The next quote speaks to man's need to be recognized, while the following quote shares a feeling often known in the work world. A laborer says:

I would like to see a building, say, the Empire State, I would like to see on one side of it a foot-wide strip from top to bottom with the name of every bricklayer, the name of every electrician, with all the names. So when a guy walked by, he could take his son and say "See, that's me over there. . . . I put the steel beam in." Picasso can point to a painting. What can I point to? A writer can point to a book. Everybody should have something to point to (p. 2).

A former conglomerate president states: Fear is always prevalent in the corporate structure. Even if you're a top man . . . by the slight flick of a finger, your boss can fire you. There's always the insecurity. . . . Your wife, your children have to behave properly. You've got to fit in the mold (p. 531).

Truly great literature speaks graphically to the human condition. The Scriptures do this constantly. *Working* is such a book, from which the church can draw guidance as it works the work of Jesus.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

### HOW TO BE A BETTER READER

Beyond the help we get from our corporate family, each copy of *Integrity* costs ten cents (or \$1.10 a year for eleven issues) which must be raised somewhere. Although that amount is far below the *real* cost, it is good enough for my present purpose, which is to ask **every reader** who has not sent a contribution this year to **send a dollar before the year ends**. I do this not only because we need the money, but—more important for you—because you are more likely to read a journal for which you have paid something.

Some people get on our mailing list who don't want to be there (we would not have it so, but can't help it); from them we expect nothing. A few readers want to keep up with what "those far-out people are saying"; surely such information is worth a dollar! But most of our noncontributing readers are just absentminded or suppose we don't need help; if you are one of these, consider this a reminder. But if, as some are, you are hard up for cash, don't feel guilty about it and write and ask us to take your name off the list. We ask you not to give for the same reason we ask others to give: so that you will keep on reading.

Finally, to the many readers who have shared our financial burden during the past year, we say THANK YOU, and we thank God who has enabled us all to work together for his glory.

We close out this, our final issue for the year, with special thanks for "peace on earth" in the land where that message was first proclaimed. We are thrilled that those two nations who have epitomized the world's hostilities have moved a step closer to peace, and we are especially impressed with the courage of Anwar Sadat. Who knows what this will lead to? In a dream we see Freed-Hardeman College being so moved that they invite Leroy Garrett to speak in chapel!

—HL

## The Christian Joy in Beauty

ELTON D. HIGGS

*Dearborn, Michigan*

Neither the doctrinal nor the cultural background of the Churches of Christ has encouraged the cultivation of a sense of beauty as a way of drawing near to and understanding God. That is not to say, however, that an appreciation of beauty in the exercise of religion is incompatible with conservative, evangelical Christianity. On the contrary, it is those who have deep convictions about the need of man for God and about the moral order of the universe who can best integrate aesthetic sensitivity with the love of God. It is the devout believer who can go beyond the triviality and nihilism—even, at another extreme, the idolatry—often associated with art, and find the root of all order and all imagination in the Creator. But in order to do so, one must counteract a certain kind of religious "practicality," sometimes verging on asceticism, which has its origins more in an austere and stifling strain of Protestantism than in the Bible.

The common ground of faith and aesthetic experience is joy. Although either a servant of Christ or an art critic can go about his or her work sourly, it is easy to see in those cases that there is an incongruity between the inherent nature of the activity and the attitude of the participant. The only justification of either belief in Christ or dedication to beauty is that, although the commitment does not escape the pain of human existence, it finds joy beyond the pain and in spite of it. One can have religious faith without being sensitive to beauty in the material universe, but the two complement each other, and the expansion of the soul in knowing the goodness of God leads naturally to an acceptance of the beauty of His creation, fallen though it may be. Furthermore, it should be noted that when faith is found in opposition to the appreciation of beauty, the joy that should characterize that faith is nearly always in danger.

At the center of Christian joy, in both faith and beauty, is the acknowledgment of God as Creator. First of all, He created the universe as the perfect environment for mankind; then, when man sinned, He provided, by His creative activity, the means by which man could be restored to his perfect oneness with God, the culmination of that process being the molding of a piece of Himself into another perfect man, Jesus Christ. His final, culminating act of creation will be the forming of "new heavens and a new earth" (2 Pet. 3:13), concurrently with "the redemption of our bodies" (Rom. 8:23). God as Creator is the perfect model of the artist; He has the ability to imagine what is not, then to mold what He imagines out of formless material to make something which then becomes a reflection of His mind and perception. That is why the Psalmist can say, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handi-

**When people experience beauty together, they do not easily harbor those emotions which bring them into conflict with each other.**

work" (Ps. 19:1). But the height of our joy at knowing God as Creator is that He carries on His creation *within us*: "For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). As Paul makes clear in Romans 8, God has imagined what He will make of us, and He is in the process of bringing it to fruition. Furthermore, we are participants with God in this new work of creation; just as Jesus shared in the initial creation and as He was a partner with the Father in the forming of the New Adam, so as His brothers and sisters, we work with God in molding the new life within us. He holds our hands, as it were, as we sculpt the image of Christ.

But what does all of this have to do, you say, with the human appreciation of beauty? Everything. Because human creativeness reflects the creativeness of God, because beautiful things created by human beings have an attractiveness akin to beauty in nature, human art easily comes to take the place of God. That is why God is so strict in His commands against idolatry; He knew that man, in the corrupt state of his imagination, had the ability to create that which would come between mankind and God. It is essential, then, that the Christian's love of beauty be a result of and subordinate to his love of God. His appreciation for art must be firmly rooted in the realization that God, rather than man, is the ultimate source of creation. But in the context of that realization, it is a sad omission of a source of great joy not to cultivate a sense of beauty, for such a sensitivity can bring enrichment beyond measure to our relationship with God and with others.

I believe the greatest reward of the experience of beauty, whether in nature, or in music, or in poetry, or in painting, is the joining of spirits—God's with ours and ours with each other's. When Paul admonishes the Philippians to think noble thoughts (Phil. 4:8), I think he is not merely giving instructions for a narrow devotional exercise; he is rather defining the level at which true communion of minds and spirits becomes possible. I believe he is trying to say something about the cultivation of the beautiful in our lives, along with the good and the true, and he says it in a letter that emphasizes Christian joy more than any other epistle in the New Testament. When people experience beauty together, they do not easily harbor those emotions which bring them into conflict with each other. There is no deeper communication of people with each other (with the possible exception of sexual union) than when our perceptions of a work of art lead us into the mind of the artist. And there is a great drawing together of those who have this experience in common.

God does not expect us all to be artists or aesthetes. Our levels of appreciation will vary, as do our tastes. But I believe that God does expect us not to be satisfied with ugliness or drabness when we can create or experience something better; I believe He intends us to find the beauty in holiness. Filling our minds with that which is good, true, and beautiful will affect the allocation of our time, emotional energy, and resources. In our homes, it will mean reevaluating the time and money we spend on leisure pursuits; in the church, it will mean asking ourselves whether we are as eager to improve the quality of our worship and our fellowship as we are to streamline the building or make a show of the budget.

There is no more room for pride in the ignorance of that which is beautiful than for haughtiness in the knowledge of it. Many Christians might be surprised at the wells of creativeness and aesthetic enjoyment that lie untapped within them. We must share our perceptions of the beautiful with each other in the same spirit that is proper to the sharing of our other resources: the recipient must not be put down, and the giver must not be lifted up. The patience required to appreciate a painting, a poem, or a sculpture may not accord very well with the predilection of our culture to push every endeavor to the speediest results; neither the creating nor the perceiving of beauty is a hasty matter. But as we spend time in the quiet activities of prayer and devotion, let us also make opportunity for God to speak to us in those pursuits of the imagination which are so much like God's creation; and let us always be willing to find room for more beauty in our worship. □

## Renewal, Unity, and Restoration (1)

HOY LEDBETTER

When Handel, in *The Messiah*, set to music the words of Isaiah 40:5, he taught the world to sing one of the greatest of all restoration texts:

*And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,  
and all flesh shall see it together . . .*

Whatever these words may have meant to Jews returning from exile, to Christians, living on this side of the incarnation, they epitomize the incomparable story of God coming down to us in order to bring us up to him. If we understand the Good News, we cannot contemplate "the glory of the Lord . . . revealed" without thinking of our renewal to his likeness and of our restoration as his community. Nor can we read the phrase "all flesh . . . together" without recalling the creative power which unites the most hostile elements of society.

*Renewal, unity, restoration.* These three aims of all serious Christians are like the sides of a triangle: when one line is removed, the other two lose their original meaning and become something else. Since according to the Bible it is impossible to achieve one without the other two, all efforts toward renewal, unity, and restoration will never be more than fruitless exercises unless the three objectives become one common goal. Moreover, when men put asunder what God has joined together, renewal becomes a futile individualistic affair, unity is confused with conformity, and restoration merely exhibits the party spirit.

Since these key words have acquired connotations which, if not actually erroneous, are hard to find in the New Testament, we should note, first of all, that in the Bible

the word restoration implies sin and entails a recovery from the condition described in Romans 3:23: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." This passage is extremely important, for *any* restoration movement should be no more and no less than an attempt to return to the glory of God. Also, from the Biblical viewpoint, the quest for unity implies a loss of the solidarity that has always characterized God's true people and which is related to the Hebrew and Greek notions of the body.

### THE MEANING OF RENEWAL

The nature of renewal is revealed in two fundamental statements by Paul, which also suggest its conjunction with unity and restoration. The first is Ephesians 4:22-24: "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old man, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new man, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness." The second is Colossians 3:9-10: "Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old man with its practices and have put on the new man, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."

The quotations are from the New International Version, except for one alteration. I have changed the word *self* in that version to the literal rendering *man*. I prefer to talk about the old *man* and the new *man*, rather than the old self and the new self (or the old nature and the new nature, as some versions translate), because I believe the key to understanding these passages is the corporate personality concept which Paul employs in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. That is, the old man is Adam, in whom we sinned and in whom we die, while the new man is Christ, in whom we are saved from sin and death. Although it is not actually incorrect to apply the terms old man and new man to the fallen and restored states of the individual, it nevertheless seems to me that in these passages they are bound to have more corporate associations.

We are to lay aside the old man in the sense that the personality with whom we are identified can no longer be Adam, our fallen forefather, because in him all have sinned and are falling short of the glory of God. The instruction to "be made new in the attitude of your minds," or more literally "in the spirit of your minds," emphasizes the totality of the required renewal; it is to involve man's innermost being, the very core of himself. Then we are to put on the new man, who is first of all a person, Christ, the divine answer to the damage done in Adam. This new man has *been created*, which means that our renewal—and hence our restoration and unity—does not result from some hitherto untapped resources within ourselves, but is given to us from outside ourselves by God.

As the Greek present participle in Colossians 3:10 indicates, this new humanity is constantly being renewed. At least as it applies to us individually, this renewal is not a once-for-all event but is an ongoing process in which we as Christians are continually rejuvenated and begin anew. This renewal is for us both a gift and a task. While we are not the creative power, it is our duty to actualize what has happened, to accept and to make real in our experience what God has done for us, to enter into that new humanity which already exists in Christ, so as to recover our original status as beings who were created in the image of God.

### THE ULTIMATE RESTORATION

The word image takes us back to Genesis 1:26-27, where, in the Septuagint, the same Greek word, *eikōn*, is used. God said, "Let us create man in our image, after our likeness . . ." "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." Since the use of this word in the New Testament in reference to Christ as the image of God emphasizes his equality with God, its occurrence in the Genesis passages indicates that man's original position was a lofty one indeed. And it was for the precise purpose of restoring us to that exalted status that Christ became God's image in the world. Hence we read in Romans 8:29-30, "Those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. And those whom he predestined he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified."

In order that we might belong to the heavenly family, or, conversely, in order that Christ might be the eldest among a large family of brothers, God has ordained that we should be conformed to the image of his Son. In the brotherly relationship we partake of the divine nature of Christ, and in our likeness to Christ we participate in the brotherly relationship. This marvelous potential is realized through God's calling, justification, and glorification. Whereas in the old man (Adam) all fall short of the glory of God, in the new man (Christ) we are restored to that glory. In this passage glory and image are obviously equivalent terms. Hence, through the establishment of fellowship with Christ one attains glory.

### THE MEANING OF GLORY

The subject of glory, although it generally receives little attention in the commentaries, is a very important one as far as unity and restoration are concerned. In the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* Gerhard Kittel has argued convincingly that in the Septuagint and therefore in the Bible generally (since the New Testament follows Septuagint usage) *doxa*, the Greek word for glory, acquires its distinctive sense as a term for the divine nature or essence either in its invisible or its perceptible form. Just as the Old Testament translator used the word to denote the reality of God, so in the New Testament it indicates "the divine mode of being" (to use Kittel's term). It follows, then, that when we fall short of the glory of God, we lose our identity as the image of God; and when we are renewed, that image is recovered.

That this glorification is both a present and a future reality is brought out most forcefully in 2 Corinthians 3:18, where Paul says, "We all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit." Once more Paul brings together, and equates, the words image and glory. Our vision of the Lord is oblique, as in a mirror; but what we see in that mirror is the reality of God. And by this vision we are transformed into the same image, the same divine likeness which Christ has, "from glory to glory." Paul could just as well have said "from image to image," since his point is that we move progressively from one phase of divine likeness to another.

But what does all of this have to do with renewal in relation to unity and restoration? Very much indeed, for it is striking how often the New Testament ties unity to

glory. Even in the angelic praise of Luke 2 "glory to God in the highest" corresponds to "peace on earth for men on whom his favor rests."

### GLORY AS A SOLUTION TO PROBLEMS

But the connection is more obvious in those passages which deal with problems of fraternal relations. For instance, Paul prayed in Romans 15:5-6 that God would "grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." To glorify God—to acknowledge the divine reality—is something which we must do together if we are to do it at all. This fact is supported by Paul's charge in the next verse: "Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God."

Let us remember that these verses are a conclusion to Paul's extensive discussion of the problem of diverse viewpoints regarding observing days, eating meat, and drinking wine. At the heart of that discussion is the principle that regarding such matters "each person must arrive at his own firm conviction." Paul vigorously contends that if one allows his brother, rather than God, to determine what he will do, then the basis of his religious life is not living faith but lethal conformity. And unless the church recognizes this fact and lives by it, it cannot manifest God in the world.

A similar discussion in I Corinthians is concluded with these words: "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all for the glory of God." Again the context accentuates the necessity of respecting the convictions of those who may differ from the majority. If the rights of all Christians to experience God according to their own understanding are not respected, if they are forced through any kind of pressure, no matter how subtle, to conform to the thinking of those who may be stronger and indeed may be absolutely right, then God cannot be glorified. Far more important than unanimous consent about every point of view is the church's mission of expressing the divine mode of being in the world.

The same point is made with regard to social diversity in James 2:1, where we read, "My brethren, show no partiality as you hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory." It is my conviction that the literal rendering of this passage should be followed, according to which the reading is not "our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory," but "our Lord Jesus Christ, the glory." "The glory" in the original Greek is a genitive of apposition, which means that the Lord *is* the glory. It is a subtle way of reminding the readers of who they are. The problem James confronted was that of the church assigning the best seat to the rich man and insulting the poor man. Such snobbery is disruptive of the oneness of the church and an abdication of the image of God. Hence James calls upon those involved to actualize their renewal within the new man by pointing to the one model of unity, the Lord who is the glory. He argues that since God has chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he has promised to those who love him, the church which accords more status to one social element than to another can hardly claim to be the glory of God.

Another suggestive passage is Hebrews 2:10-11, where the writer, after speaking of the Lord's bringing many sons to glory, immediately states that "he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call

them brethren." This passage appears in a context which stresses that, in order that the children might partake of his nature, Christ partook of their nature, that is, of flesh and blood. This solidarity of the sanctifier and the sanctified is due to their one origin. The attitude of this family is such that all who are bound for glory are bound to call one another brother. To fail to do so is to fail to reflect the divine nature.

### GLORY IN JESUS' PRAYER FOR UNITY

But the most extensive correlation of unity and glory occurs in Jesus' well-known prayer for unity in John 17, in which, first of all, attention is focused upon the glory of the Father and the Son. Having entreated the Father, in verse 1, to "glorify thy Son that the Son may glorify thee," he says in verse 4, "I glorified thee on earth, having accomplished the work which thou gavest me to do; and now, Father, glorify thou me in thine own presence with the glory which I had with thee before the world was made." Next, he speaks of the original disciples, saying in verse 10, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them." And finally he talks about those who would believe in him through their word, in verses 22-24, "The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that thou hast sent me and hast loved them even as thou hast loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou hast given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world."

It is remarkable that expositors of this prayer so often overlook the thread that ties it together. That thread is glory, and its concomitant is unity. Jesus had glory with the Father before the foundation of the world and was himself present when man was created in the image of God. But because man fell from his original nature, Jesus descended from that level of glory to participate in the human situation. However, while on earth he glorified the Father by accomplishing his historical work, fulfilling in himself the requirement of Isaiah's evangelist: "Say to the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God!'" Then Jesus gave to those who believed in him the glory which God had given to him. But let us note that this giving of glory cannot be a purely future phenomenon because it is a *prerequisite* to unity: "The glory which thou hast given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one . . ." Jesus, then, is glorified by the disciples, who can manifest his nature in the world after he has departed from it. And finally they are to be with him where he is, on the highest level of glory.

The only way the church can have unity, therefore, is through its participation in "the divine mode of being." This unity is never regarded in the Bible as a human accomplishment, but is modelled upon, and springs from, the unity of the Father and the Son. Its secret is "I in them and thou in me." This is why it is nonsense to talk about unity apart from renewal. The creative power of Eden is the power of the new creation. The same Power who once breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life and made him a living being also breathed on the disciples, after the resurrection, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit." Henceforth they live as that new creation, and the unity they are to maintain is not their own creation, but the Spirit's.

(to be continued)

## Beyond the Cross

NORMA LEMLEY

*Allentown, Pennsylvania*

It is with great joy that man, convicted of his sinfulness and aware of his own inability to deal with it, meets Jesus as Savior at the cross. The New Testament writers graphically describe the work of Jesus on the cross as buying us with a price, redeeming us by blood, delivering us from the wrath to come, a propitiation for sins, a ransom, justification, reconciliation, cleansing us, and appointing us to salvation.

But we who so quickly embrace the salvation of the cross are hesitant to submit to the Lordship of the one who was resurrected. In fact, we seldom understand the possibility or necessity of Christ reigning in our lives today. It is much easier, after accepting Jesus as Savior, for a new Christian to accommodate his life to a list of do's and don't's (which differ from region to region) and to center his life on church activities rather than meeting and submitting to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

We in the United States are proud of our democracy and individualism, and are not well acquainted with the concept of lordship. In primitive tribes, when A saves the life of B, B no longer considers his life his own but dedicates himself to serving A. But how can physical man serve a Lord who reigns in a heavenly kingdom? My intellect accepts that my body has become the very dwelling place of God (1 Cor. 6:19), but what does that come down to in day-to-day living?

Hallelujah! The God who asks me to crucify the flesh and bury the old man does not leave me without my own resurrection—a new life by the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 6:6; 8:9-11; Gal. 5:24-25; Eph. 4:22-24).

In many congregations, the indwelling Holy Spirit has been quietly ignored except for an occasional reference to receiving it as a gift after water baptism (Acts 2:38). Among others, the charismatic movement has caused such a negative reaction that Christians are unsure of the God-given earnest of their inheritance. But the Holy Spirit is a gift which must not be refused or ignored simply because others make claims or use it in ways one may find disagreeable or incomprehensible.

It may seem unfortunate, even an oversight, that the New Testament does not set forth a clearly defined list of methods for walking in the spirit—an updated Mosaic law, so to speak. But the joy and love, the spontaneity and freedom, the beauty of the Christian life cannot be reduced to mere formulas and rituals. Our understanding of our new life in the Spirit is gleaned from every page of the New Testament.

The indwelling Holy Spirit is the expression in our lives of the power of the risen Lord who reigns. While our eyes did not see his resurrection and ascension, the power of the Spirit that he gives is our own witness to this fact. It is a testimony to the covenant we have entered into with him and an earnest of our inheritance (Rom. 8:11; 2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14; Heb. 10:12-15; Jn. 15:26; 16:14).

As we submit to our Lord, his Spirit teaches us and leads us into the depths of God himself where we can greatly adore and worship him. The holy Spirit guides us in our

daily walk, refining us, purifying us, renewing us, making us holy unto God (1 Cor. 2:11; Eph. 2:18; Gal. 5:16-25; 1 Jn. 2:24).

The Holy Spirit gives us power to mortify the deeds of the flesh which sheer will power could never accomplish. In the Spirit our inner selves grow into conformity to Jesus Christ (Romans 7 and 8).

All the studying and practicing in the universe cannot produce the attitudes instilled by the Holy Spirit. An apple tree does not strive or study to produce apples but simply sinks deep its roots and absorbs all the necessary nourishment. Likewise, the person seeking to be totally committed and completely submitted to Jesus as Lord will sink deep roots into the word of God and into prayer, acknowledging and yielding to his life indwelling one's own. The resulting fellowship with our Lord and Father through the Holy Spirit will show itself in love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness, and self-control—fruit that the flesh has never successfully counterfeited. □

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## The Restless Ones

CRAIG M. WATTS

*Nashville, Tennessee*

We are a restless people, an unsettled people. The sensitive individuals among us are acutely aware of this. In a way more extensive than at any time previous, it seems that ours is a generation adrift. We are a people without a place. This restlessness manifests itself in a multitude of ways.

Our society, as it is presently designed, denies us the right to roots. The average American family has to move every few years. A man's job determines his location and his relocation, so the family must avoid feeling too settled. The individual who becomes especially attached to physical situations must be prepared for disappointment because the norm is to be periodically plucked up and the demand is swift readjustment. It could be argued that society forces a certain restlessness upon man, but I suggest that man has stamped his inner flux upon society.

A display of restlessness particularly among the youth can be found in the protests we saw across the country several years ago. Though at times Vietnam may have been the occasion, I doubt if it was the real reason for protest. I cannot help but wonder if perhaps those protesting needed Vietnam nearly as much as Vietnam needed them. The demonstrators strongly opposed the horrid, unnecessary crimes against the land and the people, but I believe beneath the cries for the oppressed were cries of unfulfilled lives searching for something beyond mere existence, craving a reason for being.

Perhaps the most universal evidence of restlessness is boredom. This condition strikes all of us at one time or another, but with some it seems to be a continuous state. For them life is an exaggerated yawn. Eric Hoffer in his book *The True Believer*

reflected, "When people are bored, it is primarily with their own selves that they are bored. The consciousness of a barren meaningless existence is the main fountainhead of boredom." As a result people try to cover their monotonous minutes by constantly occupying or entertaining themselves. But in the end, it doesn't seem to make much difference.

We can offer no new solution to the present situation. There is little original left to be said. Hundreds of years ago Augustine summed it up when he confessed, "You have made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you."

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## "The Most Vital Issue"

CECIL MAY, JR.

*Florence, Alabama*

"The vital decisions that affect community life are not made in churches, but in City Halls, board rooms, political caucuses, and in the neighborhood organizations. If the church is to be relevant, it must be there." So spake an Episcopal clergyman in an ecumenically circulated religious journal. And so believe many people both in and out of the church.

But whether that is really true is to be determined by the answer to a prior question: What are "the vital decisions" that affect community life? If those really vital questions are all concerned with the kind of housing we shall have, how food stamps will be distributed, how environmental standards can be enforced, and which party shall enjoy the spoils of political office, the statement is obviously true. But there are other questions: "What shall I do with Jesus?" "What must I do to be saved?" "Where shall I spend eternity?" Even, "Where can I find the power to live the kind of life that will transform my community?" If these are the really vital decisions that affect both our community and individual lives, then these decisions are still being made, if they are being made at all, "in the church."

I suggest that these latter decisions are the ones that concern the most vital issue. Consider: If by some miracle all the hungry people in the world could be fed; if this month legislation were passed outlawing every evil and every form of discrimination; if every industry in the world suddenly began putting all of its profits into cleaning up the environment and better wages for its poorest workers; if all the rulers of the world suddenly made a sincere commitment to peace and the alleviation of human suffering; if all of these things occurred at once, mankind would still be lost!

Without discounting at all the importance, and even the relevance to the church's mission, of some of the issues referred to above, it is nevertheless true that "the most vital issue" facing any person today is his or her own relation to the salvation from sin and from the wrath of God that the love of God makes available through the death of Jesus Christ. City Hall cannot legislate that into any one's life. The welfare board

cannot parcel it out. It cannot be determined or affected by vote in political caucuses. If it is to be made known to those who need it, the church will have to decide to do it. If anyone is to be saved, it will be by deciding through faith in the preached word to receive the salvation of the Lord. Where then, if not in the church, will these decisions be made? (Read "in the church" in its Biblical sense; not in the modern sense of "in the church building.") If the church fails to press these decisions, because of preoccupation with lesser matters, will the really "vital decisions that affect our lives" be made at all?

City Hall cannot perform the church's mission. And only if the church performs its own primary mission first, can it have any effect for good on what City Hall does. And if the church does fulfill its mission, it will not matter ultimately what City Hall does.

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## The Spirit of Procrustes

BILLY J. HENRY

*Riverside, California*

*As for the man who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not for disputes over opinions. . . . Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls (Rom. 14:1,4).*

Procrustes was a cruel robber who lived in legendary Greece. He kept a wayside inn which was famous for its one bed. Naturally one bed did not fit all the travelers who stopped at his inn, so Procrustes *made them* fit! If they were too tall, he cut off their feet. If they were too short, he stretched them. It could be said without a doubt that Procrustes insisted on conformity!

It is a sad fact, but nevertheless true, that Procrustes—or at least his spirit—still lives among us today. Especially is this true within the Church, despite what the apostle Paul has written in the above passage. So damaging is the spirit of Procrustes that whole congregations have been divided (and are being divided) and an entire brotherhood fractured into warring camps—each one having nothing to do with the others.

This attitude says that unless you view everything 100% as I do, I can have nothing to do with you, despite the fact of the oneness and common faith experienced in the Lord Jesus Christ. A person possessed by such a spirit and seeing a brother or sister walking on the same side of the street will cross to the other side in order to keep from speaking to, let alone fellowshiping, the other person, though they both share a rich heritage in the Lord.

It is high time for us to begin binding up the wounds and hurts of past generations and not create new ones! It is long overdue that we come again to the Scriptures and see that our *oneness* lies not in *my views* or *my opinions*, but in the *Lord Jesus Christ*. Therefore, my brothers and sisters, I want to say to you and a fractured brotherhood: we can do without the spirit of Procrustes! □

## LETTERS

### Correction Unnecessary

You have received a letter from George DeHoff complaining that my reference to a Murfreesboro church in my "Models" article was totally untrue and injurious to him. The fact that I made no reference by name to him or to the church where he preaches, but merely referred to the city in which he lives, indicates my intention to avoid personalities. My sole purpose was to show in this congregational conflict an example of the proposition that in most Churches of Christ the membership are not in control, and when issues arise they have only the choice to "go" or to "stay."

Indeed, George is officially on record denying that the members have the right to control the affairs of the church. When commenting on the withdrawal of the suit against him in chancery court, he declared, "Apparently the principle that Churches of Christ are governed by elders has now been vindicated."

I promised him, when he claimed that I had heard only one side of the conflict, to review all of the public evidence again and to correct any misstatement that I may have made in the "Models" article. The newspaper accounts were rather full and gave full coverage to both sides. Also the depositions made in connection with the case were available. After reviewing this material, I am persuaded that my paragraph on the affair is reasonable and fair, and I see nothing to correct.

NORMAN L. PARKS  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

### Small Word of Thanks

This small word of thanks for making and keeping *Integrity* a reality is years overdue. Your diligence, scholarship, perception and physical expense will only receive its rightful expression of reward when you depart this earthly world.

I am personally and profoundly grateful for this year's issues and articles dealing with church leadership or the eldership. Only God-given insight and courage provided by the Holy Spirit allows such things to come from the minds and pens of Joseph F. Jones, J. Harold Thomas, and Norman L. Parks. I must admit that a great deal of my satisfaction stems from sharing these same conclusions for over ten years. I once read, "We are never so certain about that which we know the least about!" I might add, those elders who subscribe to the authoritarian philosophy should not let go unnoticed the existence of many Christians in their congregations who have not "submitted themselves to the eldership" for one reason or another. The problem is not that the Christians have strayed; rather the eldership has stumbled and fallen or never really existed as a true eldership.

Thank God and *Integrity* for allowing W. Carl Ketcherside to share God's filling of himself with us. His understanding of the vastness

### PLEASE NOTE

Since we always print just one issue for January and February, the next two will be about six weeks apart.

of God's love is so refreshing. Truly, he allows us to see "as clearly as if I were looking through a clean windowpane."

One last observation, I have concluded that your staff of writers and editors are unique in their thinking and talent because God has allowed them to be subjected to the criticisms and threats of their Christian brothers. I know of the personal trials of some of these men, and marvel at the noble men of God they have become.

HAROLD L. HAYS  
Fairview Park, Ohio

### Pathetic Experience

Please remove me from your mailing list. The articles are not edifying to me or my family. The sophistication and viewpoint of all I've read quenches the Spirit. Jesus alone is to be lifted up. He is all in all. We don't find Him in fancy intellectual excursions or dozens and dozens of esoteric articles. May God shatter all our little boxes we build to contain Him. May we cease watering down his Word to the level of our pathetic experience, and let Him raise our experience to the fullness of His Word.

NAME WITHHELD

## REVIEW

by HERBERT A. MARLOWE, JR.

### WORK AND THE HEALTHY INDIVIDUAL

*Working* by Studs Terkel. New York: Avon, 1974. 762 pages, \$2.25, paper.

While there may be differences on emphasis or method, there is general agreement that one of the responsibilities of the church is to minister to the world. This ministry must be real and useful, and to meet those requirements it must be directed at the realities of life—life as it is, not as we would wish it to be.

One of life's realities is that most of us spend more of our waking hours in work, on the job, than in any other single activity. It would be foolhardy to contend that work is not formative of our life style and influential in determining our psychological health. We frequently even define ourselves in terms of our work: "I am a psychologist, a plumber, a preacher." College students speak in terms of becoming chemists, biologists, or teachers. In this society our work greatly determines who we are, as exemplified in the feminist struggle to obtain an equal share in the workplace.

Because this significance of work is a reality, the church must minister to the world of work in which we all live and move. It must do so on two fronts: one, a theological role, and the second, a pastoral role.

Theologically, the church needs to develop a theory of work upon which it can ground its pastoral role in work. The church needs to develop models of what is humane work so that it can assist in reshaping the workplace. An understanding of the actualization and fulfillment available through meaningful work needs to be developed and expressed as an aspect of becoming Christlike. The church needs

a theology of work which challenges current society by viewing any type of honest work as good, needed, and dignified. The church must not value its doctors above its dime store clerks. A theology of work which values the meaningfulness and inherent dignity of work and at the same time sees work as participating in the continuing creation of God is needed.

Pastorally, the church must speak its "word" about work to the whole spectrum of church members: the pre-working youth, the working adult, the retired person. It must help them place the appropriate value on their work identity, neither becoming workaholics or apathetic laborers. It must help them decide how they, through their work, do the work of Christ. It must help them deal with the wide variety of emotions and needs associated with work.

An excellent resource for this task is Studs Terkel's *Working*. *Working* is a compilation of interviews conducted by Terkel with American workers of all types and stations. The interviews form a fascinating glimpse into how the American people think and feel about their work. It is just this human expression which is so critical to the church as it responds to the world of work.

Such a work is beyond brief summarization. Instead one can best follow Terkel's lead and let people speak for themselves.

In *Working* one finds gems of wisdom which will be helpful to the church in formulating a theology of work. One such gem is this statement by a carpenter:

You go into Riverside Church in New York and there's no space between the pews to kneel. (Laughs.) If you try to kneel down in that church you break your nose on the