

INTEGRITY, a journal published by an independent nonprofit corporation, is basically a ministry of reconciliation which utilizes the varied talents of a large community of believers who seek accurately to reveal God to both the church and the world so that all may become one as he is one.

Integrity

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and difficult government objective: to dilute the power and authority of Cardinal Josef Glempf and his predecessor, Pope John Paul II. Whatever one may think of the Roman Catholic Church in its general and particular manifestations, it is well to remember that Roman Catholicism is the last locus, in Poland after the collapse of Solidarity, of resistance to a repressive regime.

Whenever the Church enters into a treaty with Caesar, there is something to be gained-and something to be lost. In the institution over which Dr. Ganus now presides, which once claimed to be the place "where Christian and American ideals go hand in hand," the identity of the "upper hand" was rarely in doubt. Once, in Poland, Solidarity also enjoyed "official"

recognition. The future of the Polish churches has now been sold into the hands of human beings less than sympathetic to their ultimate purposes, who may crush them even more readily and less reluctantly than they destroyed Solidarity. And, should events now unforeseen return Lech Walesa and his principal ally, the Cardinal, to real political power in Poland, the Churches of Christ may be called upon to explain their collaboration with a corrupt, Communist military dictatorship. The churches may well claim, in that hour, that their motives were entirely charitable and evangelistic, without intended political connotations; one may wonder whether, in the forum of world opinion, their explanations will be believed. Such are the ambiguities of *Realpolitik*, and the ironies of history. □

December, 1983

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Working for Unity

Since early in 1969 I have been devoting a great deal of my time to the publication of this little magazine. One reason is that I have seen it as a useful vehicle for helping our generation to practice the unity which the Spirit inspires, which Jesus prayed for so vigorously in his last hours with his disciples, and which is repeatedly enjoined upon us in the Bible.

But my yearning for unity is due to more than what the Bible says. Had the New Testament been less emphatic, I would still have been impelled by my observation of the widespread misery caused by division to try to eliminate a frequent cause of heartbreak within my subculture. Practically all of the churches I knew as a young preacher had started over trouble between brethren, and I was never allowed to forget the correct answers to the question of whom I should fellowship.

Unfortunately, for many years I did not realize the richness of our heritage. My only acquaintance with the Restoration Movement was through those who, to a great extent, had lost its spirit. Like many of our young ministerial students today, I had not read Thomas Campbell's *Declaration and Address*, partly because none of my teachers encouraged me to do so and I did not even know where to find a copy, and partly because of my own naive conviction that we could just go by the Bible and pay little attention to the ideas of men. Had I read that historic document, I am sure it would have saved me ten years of agonizing over why we were always multiplying by dividing.

Truly great things are happening now. Unfortunately, some who are in a position to benefit most from them are letting them pass by. Of course, there are frustrations, but I believe the Lord is blessing our efforts, and I am determined to labor where he leads, within my own communion and without.

I am very pleased that so many in so many places are taking the quest for unity seriously and are moving toward what I believe is the only basis upon which such unity can be realized. Let us keep working and pray that what we do will not be too little too late.

— HGL

The One Body (3)

W. CARL KETCHERSIDE

St. Louis, Missouri

The body of Christ is not a sect. And no sect is the body of Christ. The ekklesia, by its very definition, embraces all who are called of God in every age, clime and nation. A sect, by its definition, includes only a small part of the saved, and may include many who are not. It is important that, in order to grasp the significance of the one body, we understand of what it is comprised or composed. In our day of multiplied confusion there are those who think of the body as made up of all the sects. The World Council of Churches meeting in Amsterdam, resolved to give its backing to a movement to bring all of the sects under the shade of one umbrella, and thus further an answer to the prayer of Jesus for the unity of all believers.

The movement to accomplish this was known as the ecumenical movement. The word is derived from *oikumene*, the habitable earth, which in turn comes from *oikos*, or habitation. It is used in the sense of universal. It was adopted in the place of catholic, which also means universal, because of the possibility of misunderstanding due to the adoption of the term by the Roman Church. The word catholic comes from *kata*, throughout, and *holos*, the whole. It thus means throughout the whole earth or creation. The Greek catholicos referred to a medicine which was a panacea, a universal cure for all diseases. The term "catholic" was first applied to the whole community of faith by Ignatius, in his letter to Smyrna. It was soon picked up and given general usage.

Actually the Catholic Church is not catholic at all and never was. It is Roman. The only catholic body on earth is the one

body, which includes all of the saved. The ecumenical movement which began with so much fanfare and with such high hopes has fallen upon hard times, as well it might. After reams of paper had been written about it it was finally reduced to searching out the least common denominator of agreement. Many of those who wrote and worked diligently for ecumenicity were good men, theologians of note. But they were working for an unattainable ideal.

Uniting all of the sects will not produce the one body. No amalgamation or federation of sects can do that. All that will be done by such an action will be to create one large sect out of a group of smaller ones. And while that might be desirable from a tactical standpoint the danger is intensified. Sects are opposed to the will of the absent King. They exist as rebels to his rule. They are works of the flesh, created by the party spirit, and instead of contriving means of binding them together, we should be thinking of how to influence their adherents to repent of their formation, confess their wrong in so doing and abandoning them.

The party spirit is a dangerous and malevolent thing. Every sect that has ever existed was spawned by it. To ignore it while uniting the parties it has begotten will be of no ultimate avail. Other sects will result. It must be removed and this can only be done by radical surgery. But first there must be an inner revulsion against the virus. So long as we think that the body of Christ may somehow be brought to light by uniting all of the sects we will do little to rid ourselves of the party spirit. The body of Christ exists at the same time as do the sects. It is obscured and inhibited by them

all. The only thing we can do is to rid ourselves of the parasites which have attached themselves to the body and are sucking the life from it. They are barnacles on the Ship of Zion.

The body does not consist of congregations, all practicing the same routine, parroting the same words or observing the same ritual. Congregations are like those who compose them. They are all unique. They have different problems. The seven congregations in Asia Minor were not alike. Had they been one letter would have served them all. The Greek congregations were not like the Jewish. If we got all of the congregations in the world into the same pattern, responding like robots, and all on the same computer list, we still would not have the one body. Abject conformity is not necessarily uniformity of purpose.

The record says, "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." That is both reassuring and frightening. It is comforting because regardless of how a congregation behaves they will not affect my standing provided I remain true and continue to function in the way I am gifted to do. This is contrary to what a lot of people think but it is eminently scriptural. Even in Pergamum where some held the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitans, hidden manna and a new name were promised to those who conquered. At Thyatira where Jezebel was allowed to teach the fornication and eating of meats offered to idols was approved, those who conquered were promised the morning star. Nothing is said about leaving the congregation to start a "loyal" one. All of the seven congregations in Asia Minor started out as faithful. It could be that the quickest way to fill the world with "unfaithful" churches is to go out and begin to start a bunch of "faithful" ones. It still remains that not one word is ever said about leaving a congregation into which false teaching has crept.

Apparently this was not a part of the divine strategy for coping with error. The idea of running from it might gratify our sense of what to do in an emergency, but it

never occurred to the Lord or to his apostles. The proliferation of congregations by the "pull out" method is neither good, honest or just. We still have them to contend with. It is the easiest way out to run from trouble, but we should never forget that it leaves trouble in charge. Surely the members of the congregation at Corinth had ample justification, for pulling up stakes, and moving on down the road, but it never occurred to Paul to recommend it. Instead he said he wanted to come and spend the winter with them.

No one is ever held accountable for what he disavows. No one is charged with spotting his garments so long as they are clean. Even to Sardis Jesus had John write, "You still have a few names in Sardis, people who have not soiled their garments, and they shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy." Yet Sardis was at the point of death spiritually, and was summoned to repentance. But we are individually members of the body.

The frightening part of this is found when we realize that we are responsible for our own actions. We cannot hide among the other sheep, nor conceal ourselves among the other members of the group. Whatever I do will affect the body in one way or another. "If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together." Thus far, one of the most difficult things has been to cultivate that degree of interest. All of us tend to be selfish, all of us tend to think only of our concerns. Surely it is a goal at which to aim.

Perhaps we should say a word about the term "members" as used in the scriptures. It never refers, as it does today, to someone who is merely attached to an institution or organization. We speak of men being members of associations, lodges or boards of directors. By this we mean they have paid an admission fee or have been elected. The Greeks had no word for such an arrangement. To them a member was a functioning part of an organism, as an arm, a hand or a foot. A member was one who sustained a vital, living relationship to the

whole, contributing his part to the life and functioning of the body.

There was no such thing in the original ekklesia as people who just attended to observe a ritual. Everyone felt a vital interest in the growth and health of the body. All were alert to the deepest need for Christ

of every individual whom they met. The reason for doing good was not be acclaimed, but that others seeing them, might glorify the Father in heaven. Now, too often, our religion is manipulated by the clock rather than by our heart. It will take some doing to get back on the track again.

That the Bored May Believe

ROBERT RUSSELL

La Habra, California

I'm growing tired of going to church. I'm also growing tired of trying to persuade people to go to church. I don't want to be blamed for inflicting holy boredom upon sincere people. I'd much rather help a few people find true life and true happiness in Christ than to see the whole world go to church every Sunday. I'll take sincerity before religious observance any day.

The sincere people may not be the ones who, on the surface, seem to be the committed faithful. The sincere people may be the first ones to fall away. They may choose to endure a life of sincere hypocrisy rather than endure the irony of association with people who are Christian in name only. They may choose to be genuinely insincere rather than to become insincerely genuine. At least they have honestly chosen to be cold rather than lukewarm.

People who leave the church have more character than those who visibly remain yet have left their hearts elsewhere. Jesus said, "These people honor me with their lips but their heart is far from me." Their lips talk love, but their hearts feel hatred. Their lips speak joy, yet their hearts feel gloom. Their lips proclaim salvation, yet their hearts are filled with fear and uncertainty. What painful duty! What tedious monotony for the face to manufacture happiness while the heart is drugged with boredom. These people are not committed! They are

obligated! They are obligated to do the least amount possible and still be pleasing to those "in charge." Usually one visible appearance a week will suffice. Some gather the stamina to endure two or three meetings a week. You can count on some to be there every time until they are asked to enjoy being there.

I'll opt for a life of worldliness before I'll settle into a religious routine that will drain me of joy. However, there is no joy of the flesh that can hold one's attention like the ever-increasing hope one can find in the resurrection. Paul said that without the resurrection all we do is futile, vain, worthless, foolish, and we are to be pitied.

The resurrection is not merely a fact, it is life, and it is a way of life. Dead hearts cannot speak life! Dead lips cannot proclaim the resurrection, much less experience resurrected life! Listen! Believers, we are not waiting for the resurrection! It is here now! We were raised with Jesus in baptism! We are raised with him into heavenly realms now! We shall be raised imperishable in the future. Let this good news break out during the Sunday morning assembly and see what happens! I doubt if we will have to twist many arms to get people to attend! Some, for sure, will want to chain it up. Some will doubt. Most will do anything to claim it as their own! The new wine is being poured. Are there any new wine skins? □

Where Are We Any Way?

I suppose it is because I live in Arkansas, and because I am on the Lord's side, and care but little what my brethren think or say about me, that I have received near fifty letters during last year, asking me to come back to Texas at some selected place and go in with a gang of preachers and sit in judgment on some more preachers and condemn their conduct and expose them to "our brethren."

As I lived in Texas long enough to know that no preacher lives in Texas without doing wrong, and as my Saviour said for the guiltless to cast the first stone, I feel like I am disqualified by my own conduct, to sit in judgment on these preachers.

I also notice that "turning preachers out of the church" (whatever that is) has become a fad in Texas.

As some preachers are better off out of some congregations than in, and as some congregations are better off with their preachers out than in, I don't feel like stopping or interfering with the good work.

I can call to memory five different occasions where preachers have gone in and tried to assume authority over some local congregation, without Bible authority, and always made bad matters worse, till I feel like it is not the thing to do.

On two occasions preachers have come together and tried me, and became judge, jury, and witness, and decided that in some things I had acted "indiscreetly," and as that word can include everything in the catalogue of crime, and at the same time can mean nothing, I would much rather they would accuse me of drunkenness, adultery, or stealing, than to say I am "indiscreet."

At both times when I was tried, convicted, and condemned by an outfit of jealous preachers, without being permitted to speak for myself, like the heathen allowed Paul to do, I was hundreds of miles away from the trial, preaching the Gospel of the Son of God.

If certain preachers have done wrong, I am sure if their brethren (other preachers) will go and show them their wrong, and they will not correct it, then let the preachers make the charges to the congregation where said preacher belongs. If the congregation turns him out he can find good company with other preachers on the outside. But, if said congregation will not turn him out then I think it safe to leave said preacher in the hands of God who doeth all things well.

I know some few good things and lots of mean things on some of our able preachers in Texas but with all their meanness most of them are gospel preachers, and as the gospel is God's power, if they preach the gospel and men and women obey the gospel and live it, their converts will go to heaven, even if they are tried and go to hell.

Then as I am trying to get people to go to heaven if I know one of those preachers going off for a meeting and I can encourage him to preach the gospel and he converts fifty men and women and they all go to heaven then I should rejoice and give God the glory.

But if I write over to the place where he is going and tell how mean he is, and kill his influence by half, and he converts only twenty-five people, and I by my work keep him from reaching the other twenty-five, and they go to hell, it seems to me that I with all my goodness am working for the devil, and he with his meanness is working for God.

So I don't have time to go to Texas to help turn out some more preachers, and hope the brethren can attend to such matters without my help.

—**J.D. Tant**, *Firm Foundation*
(March 2, 1920).

About Your Diet

LAQUITA HIGGS

Dearborn, Michigan

Have you ever been eating a lot of rich food, maybe during Christmas, and felt the desire for something more simple? At those times, merely a piece of good bread can nourish and satisfy, and you wonder why you ever got so excited about those fancy dishes. Jesus' teaching is like that—it is simple but yet profoundly nourishing and satisfying. Jesus, in John 6, used the most basic and one of the simplest of human foods, bread, to teach one of his hardest lessons—hard to understand and even harder to practice, unless we follow exactly his recipe. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall never be hungry and whoever believes in me shall never be thirsty. . . I am the bread of life. . . that living bread which has come down from heaven; if anyone eats this bread he shall live forever."¹ Let us examine this teaching of Jesus on the bread of life, putting it in the context of Jesus' ministry and then looking at what this bread means to us. Through Jesus' teaching on bread, he was calling his followers to greater commitment, and many, unwilling to go higher with him, abandoned him.

Jesus had been performing marvelous signs and wonders, and great crowds were pursuing him. There was even talk of their seizing Jesus and proclaiming him king, and it was about that time that Jesus' ministry changed. The change seems to have been triggered by the death of John, the Baptist; with John's death the herald was gone, and Jesus knew that the culmination of his ministry, in his own death, was closer than ever. Jesus, deeply affected by news of John's death, "withdrew privately by boat to a lonely place." The crowds, however,

followed him, and "his heart went out to them, and he cured those. . . who were sick." He even fed them, all five thousand and more. Then he sent them all away, including his apostles, with the sounds in his ears of the talk of the people to seize him and make him king, and he withdrew to the hills to pray all alone. From that time of prayer there was a new intensity in his teaching, and even some of his experiences began to transcend the earthly in a new way. That very night his disciples were caught in a storm on the Sea of Galilee, and Jesus came walking on the water. Mark tells us that they were terrified, thinking they were seeing a ghost. After Peter tried to walk on the water and had to be rescued, Jesus and Peter climbed into the boat, and the disciples fell at the feet of Jesus, exclaiming, "Truly you are the Son of God." It was the following day that Jesus gave his discourse on the bread of life, and it was only days afterward when he was strangely transfigured on the mountain, when he started talking of his coming death, and when he called his followers to take up their cross and follow him. It was a "weeding out" time. Wanting only the truly committed, Jesus talked more intensely of the cost of discipleship, and, leaving Galilee for the last time, he headed for Jerusalem.

Jesus begins his talk on the bread of life by telling the crowd that he knows why they have come—yesterday they ate the loaves of bread and the fishes which he miraculously supplied, and "your hunger was satisfied." He strongly warns them, however, that "you must work, not for this perishable food, but for the food that lasts, the food of eternal life." Quite naturally, they ask

how, and Jesus replies very simply: “Believe in the one whom [God] has sent.” The people ask for a sign, for clarification, taking off on the analogy of food and citing the manna from heaven that their ancestors had eaten in the desert. Jesus reminds them that it is the Father who gives the real bread from heaven, which “brings life to the world.” The people immediately request, “Sir, give us this bread now and always.” Jesus then makes the startling statement, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall never be hungry, and whoever believes in me shall never be thirsty. . . . I am my Father’s will that everyone who looks upon the Son and puts his faith in him shall possess eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day.”

At this the Jews begin murmuring disapprovingly, clearly exemplifying those whom Jesus had said do not believe although they have seen. Undeterred, Jesus goes on to explain what the bread is. “I am the bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert and they are dead. . . . I am that living bread which has come down from heaven; if anyone eats this bread he shall live forever. . . . the bread which I will give is my own flesh; I give it for the life of the world.” The bread, then, is the flesh of Jesus, the death of Jesus, and the sacrifice of Jesus, not only for sins, but for the *life* of the world.

This led to a fierce dispute among the Jews, but Jesus, unafraid, puts it even more plainly, and radically, as he explains how the eating of the bread will affect the eater. “Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you can have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood possesses eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. . . . Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood dwells continually in me and I dwell in him. . . . whoever eats this bread shall live forever.”

Such radical talk of the eating of flesh and the drinking of blood was repulsive to many; it sounded rather like cannibalism to them. “This is more than we can stomach,” they said. After all, the eating of certain

flesh and the drinking of blood had been prohibited to the Jews, and, sadly, they were unwilling to go beyond their law and tradition to the words spoken by Jesus, which he said were “both spirit and life.” Many disciples left Jesus at that time, and Jesus ties their rejection to his first comment, when he had been asked how they could eat of the food that lasts. He had told them then to simply believe, and now he says that their rejection is because they have “no faith.” The nourishment of God either transforms us, or we find it disgusting and unworthy of our trust; there is no middle ground. Certainly it was not an easy teaching, for it was very much in the category of “Take up your cross and follow me.” The call was to sacrifice and to the death of self, but it was also a call to joy and to life unending. Jesus asked the Twelve if they too wanted to leave him, and Peter answered for us all, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Your words are words of eternal life.”

To attain life, Jesus teaches us that we must eat of his flesh and drink of his blood; then we eat of his sacrifice and in turn become living sacrifices. This includes the symbolic eating of the flesh and blood in our communion service, but, as lovely and and meaningful as our communion is, Jesus is speaking of far more. As Jesus said, “My flesh is real food; my blood is real drink.” It is the spiritual, where God is, that is reality. Jesus, in this teaching of the bread and of eating, is getting to the heart of commitment, to the life completely transformed by the Spirit of love, moving toward the one goal of doing the will of the Father.

Our transformation begins when we yield to Jesus as our Lord and are baptized into him. As Paul tells us, we have then been crucified with Christ, and the life that we now live is not our life, but the life which Christ lives in us. To effect complete transformation, though, we must continually eat of his sacrifice, as living sacrifices for him, so that we can dwell in

him and he in us. If we totally changed our physical diet, it would take time for that to affect us, but over a period our body cells would be completely replaced, with our bodies and our health reflecting that new food that we have eaten. In the same way, if we eat of him, he will change us over a period of time into the image that he has in his mind of what he wants each of us to be. Our eating must be a daily process, too; just as we need to eat physical food daily, so we must re-commit ourselves to him daily so that we may daily live in his strength and not in our own.

A warning, though: our eating must be as complete as possible, for he dwells in us only in the proportion to which we will eat of him, in the proportion to which we become living sacrifices for him. If there are certain areas of our life in which we will not eat, which we will not give completely to him, then we remain weak in those areas and eventually that weakness will undermine even our strength. But if we proceed in con-

tinually eating of him and dwelling in him, the re-formed person will begin to take shape. No doubt we will come under discipline from him in the process, for he knows of areas in our lives in which we may think we are strong, when in reality we are not eating enough for real transformation. Precious jewels do not emerge quickly nor easily, and neither do remade creatures.

As hard as a life of sacrifice sounds, though, it is not hard after all, for there is joy and life in being re-formed in his image. That life and that joy are there for us now in this life, and there for us forever. If we have eaten of him, the living bread, Jesus promises us that, on that last day, when everyone, good and bad alike, are kneeling before him, he will take us by the hand and will raise us up and will claim us for his own. Our transformation is then complete. We shall live forever! □

¹Scriptures used: John 6, NEB; Matt. 14:1-36; Mark 6:14-56; Luke 9:7-17; Gal. 2:20.

“A Temporary Phase of Guilt”?

ELMER PROUT

Roseville, California

Sales-pitch blurbs don’t usually hold my attention but this one did: “This book shows how the advantages of a simpler life come only to those who are willing to think through the process, not just act on impulse during a temporary phase of guilt.”

It’s that last line that puts a finger on the nerve, isn’t it? How often our life as Christians is little more than an “impulse during a temporary phase of guilt.”

What is the alternative? We want to be responsible believers — changed from conformists into people who are redemptively different. We want to be like Jesus instead

of the world. How can we get away from guilt to assurance?

One step is to make the message of the book Hebrews an active part of our life with Jesus. Hebrews frankly recognizes the believer’s humanity and need. “Held in slavery by fear. . . we are being tempted. . . we have weaknesses and times of need” (see Heb. 2:15,18; 4:15,16).

There is plenty of reason for feelings of guilt under the weight of that judgment. And when we go on to read about our “feeble arms and weak knees” (Heb. 12:12,13), it is enough to send us off in a frantic effort

of impulsive goodness. We have been down the impulsive road with the guilt pack firmly in place before, but what alternative is there?

We can be saved from the yo-yo life by accepting the constant intercession of the High Priest, Jesus Christ. Every statement of human weakness is matched by a firm declaration of the active priestly work of Jesus. Jesus is alive, not retired, but working for his people.

“He is able to help those who are being tempted. . .so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. . .Jesus lives forever. . .therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them” (see Heb. 2:18; 4:16; 7:24,25).

Because of Jesus we can act, not on the impulse of guilt, but in the assurance of forgiveness. □

Barriers Created by Value Judgments

MONA GRIFFIN

Troy, Michigan

Cultural distancing occurs in congregational life because of the value judgments which are communicated verbally and nonverbally. The greater the differences in the backgrounds of the people involved in a local church, the greater the likelihood that barriers created by value judgments will arise. For instance, a congregation that serves in an area such as Detroit, which has been called a melting pot of the world, is highly vulnerable to a feeling of alienation among its members. By “value judgments” I mean subjective evaluation of a person’s worth, quality, and comparative goodness.

We are accustomed to thinking about some of these barriers in terms of prejudices related to race, ethnic background, or sex. These are three large, broad areas that I do not believe can be adequately addressed within congregational life until we address the more primary problem of basing our evaluation of another human on our own worldview. We need to become intimately aware of the different perspectives on life experienced by the person from the southwest and the one from the northeast, the person who has always had plenty in a material sense and the person who has had times when he did not know where the next

meal was coming from, or between those who understand the cultural significance of the theatre and those who appreciate the cultural experience in the world of sports.

Our understanding of scripture is so influenced by the congregation we were raised in or the one we first came to know the Lord in, that even if we come from the same community and have similar backgrounds, we may have difficulty in communicating with each other about the meaning of scripture. This problem is much more complicated if the background of one party is Oriental, Middle European, Scandinavian, African, or South American, to name just a few more remote possibilities.

There is an insidious force within each of us that leads us to measure others against ourselves. J. Ridley Stroop asserts that this is man’s most dangerous practice.¹ Paul (in 2 Cor.10-12) states that it is not wise for man to measure or compare himself with himself. How much more important is it that man not attempt to compare or measure others with himself. There is only one measuring stick that is acceptable for a Christian, that being Christ, and it is to be used to measure ourselves. It is not our

place to evaluate another by comparing him to Christ. W. Carl Ketcherside expressed it by saying:

We are called upon to receive one another as God received us. We have no more right to make a man’s ignorance a test of our reception of him than God made our ignorance a test of His reception of us.²

When we are in the process of attempting to understand how, when, and with what intent we or others are using the measuring stick, we can open the doors of fellowship to the point of experiencing brotherhood in all of its richness within the melting-pot congregation. It is easier to explain and respond to an action or attitude in a judgmental way than it is to invest the time and emotional energy necessary to understand it.

Attempting to communicate effectively with another person is to start on a road that may cost a lot and demand much but is the surest way to success. We may study written materials about the individual’s background, but the key to understanding is communication. Walter J. Kine states that

Communication is an event, not a content. It is more than a matter of transferring information. It is better symbolized by a handshake than a telephone... Communication is not just a matter of dropping the anchor of content into the sea. You must plunge into the sea yourself.³

In order to take the communication plunge, we need to be sensitive about those to whom we are relating. While there are communication skills we will discuss later, J. Grant Howard reminds us that the primary source for using these skills is insight from God:

Paul requested prayer for the ability to “make it clear in the way I ought to speak” 4:40. Paul was in prison. His concern was not one of the assembling and audience; the guards changed every eight hours. *His concern was his ability to adapt his message to the many different persons and needs with which he came in contact*⁴ [Emphasis mine].

Christ was rather specific about our not placing value judgments on people without having all of the information. According to *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, the word “judge” as used in Matthew 7:1-2 means to speak or think of, to decide, to judge. When Luke repeats this portion of the Sermon on the Mount,

Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back” (Luke 6:37-38),

he precedes it with, “Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.” *Krino*, here translated judge, is a form of *krima* which has to do with human value judgments. *Krino* adds the aspect of assessment to the value judgments that are to be made. In other words, it seems to me that in Matt. 7:1, Luke 6:37, Rom. 14:3, and 1 Cor. 4:5 that we are being told that we are not to assess the value judgments of other people; but that in Acts 4:19; 15:19, and 1 Cor. 10:15 we are being told to assess our own value judgments. Paul carries this one step further in Col. 2:16 by stating:

Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath.

We have the responsibility of assessing continually our own value judgments, but we are denied the responsibility of making the same assessment of another’s value judgments. We are also told not to accept another’s value judgments having to do with such cultural things as eating, drinking, festivals, and times. *Prokima* is another form of the same word that literally means “without prejudice” as it is used in 1 Tim. 5:21 regarding the relationship of elders with the other members of the congregation.

Watts concisely discusses the effect of

barriers created by a critical attitude and says:

There is nothing more discouraging than to constantly be judged by fellow Christians. This is a hindrance at which multitudes have fallen, never to stand again. There evidently have always been those who set themselves up as judges over matters on which God has not specifically spoken. They either condemn those who are more restrictive than themselves, i.e., the abstainers, or they will renounce those who are more permissive than themselves, i.e., the liberals. Judgment in either manner is destructive and a cause of offense. To this Paul says, "Then let us no more pass judgment on one another, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother" (14:13).⁶

Robert Rohland discusses the need for communication skills when we are desirous of creating an accepting atmosphere for another and states:

Somehow it seems that being known, understood and fully accepted by another person requires more communication skill than does our relationship with the all-knowing God who always understands us. . . The exercise of good communication skills on a human level is of critical importance.⁷

In order to effectively communicate, according to Darrell I. Whitman, the communicator

. . . must be aware of the receptor's worldview and culture in which he is embedded.

He goes on to state that:

For what is intended by the communicator and what is understood by the receptor are often not identical, *even when communication takes place between members of the same culture who hold similar values, similar worldviews and similar norms of behavior* [emphasis mine].

One of the least threatening ways to learn about the cultural background of an individual is to read about his history,

cultural patterns, and contributions made to society by his culture. It is also helpful to read some of the same magazines or books that he has read. However, it is only through communicating on a one-to-one basis that we can learn to understand and appreciate the specific worldview of a specific individual.

The most important communication skill in this situation, if not in most situations, is the skill of active listening. Active listening is much more than allowing others to speak and then acknowledging that they have spoken. Active listening includes the processes of mentally paraphrasing, questioning, and interpreting as you are listening in order to keep your mind focused on the speaker. We can think faster than we can speak; therefore, it is necessary that we keep our minds actively involved in what is being said in order to keep them from wandering. If we rely on passive listening, we are also choosing to allow what we hear to be a matter of chance and to perhaps be out of context because we have lost the key part of the communication when we allowed our minds to wander. Passive listening also leads to inappropriate responses simply because we did not listen actively enough to really be involved in what the speaker was saying.

We need to deliberately prepare ourselves to be a listener. This includes being aware of our posture, the distance between us and the speaker, and the establishment of a position where appropriate eye contact can be maintained. Even these decisions will be affected by the cultural backgrounds of the individuals involved. Some people will communicate more at a distance of about 18 inches while those of another culture, such as the Arabs,¹⁰ may prefer to have physical contact while communicating. Still others, such as the Orientals, may not want their personal space violated and would prefer to communicate at a distance of at least 2 to 4 feet.

Eye contact means different things to different people. Looking a person in the eye to some means that the communication is

honest. Not looking a person in the eye to some is a sign of respect, as is true with some Spanish people.

One of the difficulties in a personal conversation, as opposed to a structured situation such as a classroom, is that the role of speaker and listener switches back and forth. If we are not careful, we will switch instead of maintaining the position of actively listening to the speaker. This particular problem manifests itself when two people appear to be communicating but really are parallel talking, neither one responding to what the other has said. This problem of having two speakers and no listeners is often used in comedy routines. But it is not funny in a situation where one person is attempting to communicate to another, only to find that no one is listening.

When we talked about active listening we mentioned paraphrasing as one of the tools to use. Paraphrasing is used for making certain that what we heard is what was intended to be said. Words such as "near," "soon," "couple of days," and other nonspecific terms are easily misinterpreted, depending on the worldview of the individuals involved. Role expectations such as parent-child, husband-wife, employer-employee, can be spoken of but be totally misunderstood unless there is an attempt to let the speaker know what the listener understands to have been said. Lengthy conversations and disagreements can be carried on over the misunderstanding of how a specific word is being used in a discussion. Long-range plans can be implemented and agreed upon only to discover that the role expectations of each person in the plan were not clearly understood and, as a result, the plan can be sabotaged.

Questioning is almost an obvious skill and yet it is one of the easiest to neglect. We have a tendency to feel awkward about asking, "What do you mean by 'many'?" "How do you expect a mother to respond when her child does well at playing the

piano?" Since we are confident that we know the meaning of these words, we are hesitant to ask about them until we become aware of a problem. Nevertheless, it is only in questioning that we are going to be able to get a more complete picture of what has been said. Unless we do question, the speaker will assume that we understand what was said as he meant it. If both parties become aware that there is a difference in interpretation, then they have something to do in developing their relationship. If this understanding does not occur, the speaker may feel rejected because the listener did not respond as he expected.

Another important way we have of communicating is nonverbally. We do this through facial expressions, movement of hands, type of eye contact, sounds that are not actually words, handling of time, appearance, and perception of space. We are accustomed to being aware to a limited degree of what is being said by body movements, and perhaps a little aware of the effects of appearance on communication. We need to recognize that these things are perceived differently in different cultures. A wave of the hand that is simply a greeting to most of us may mean, "I need help quickly," if one is from Brazil. Black is a color for mourning in many cultures but is a color for festivals, especially marriages, in other cultures. We also need to be aware that how we organize our time and space communicates to others who we are, and that we will place a value judgment on how others use their time and space, if we are not careful. It is in the area of nonverbal communication that perception is of utmost importance.

Perception checking assumes that the listener has been paying close enough attention to the speaker to be able to see behaviors and it also assumes that he is aware of his own interpretation of these behaviors. Perception checking does not necessarily include stating what you have observed or how you have interpreted the action; however, it does mean that you verbally respond to the nonverbal behavior

with the objective of clarifying what the nonverbal behavior meant to you the listener.

There are several communication problems that one should avoid as a listener, but I will only address two of them: interrupting and defensiveness. The interruption of a speaker implies that the listener (now speaking) is superior to the speaker. In some cultures, such as with my Korean neighbors, one must not only wait until the person has stopped speaking, but also must wait until he has finished his thought.

Interrupting is usually a habit and can be difficult to stop, but another habit, defensiveness, can be more difficult to cope with because it is a behavior rooted in our own negative feelings. There are a few things that we can do to minimize the effect of the feelings of defensiveness by controlling our responses. They are:

1. Describe what we see and hear instead of placing a value judgment on it.

2. We need to focus on the problem being discussed and not attempt to take control of the communication in order to ameliorate our own vulnerabilities.

3. It is natural to either retreat or attack in the face of danger; however, when we are listeners and the goal is to reach an understanding, we must avoid planning or putting into effect a defense.

4. Be empathic rather than neutral.

5. Be equal rather than superior.

6. Make provisional statements that allow for more than one opinion to be acceptable rather than be dogmatic.

I have primarily concentrated on the skills of listening and the responsibility of actively listening in order to start the process of breaking down the barriers within congregations caused by subjective judging. As the communicators in this interchange we need to be willing to give information about ourselves to others. We need to state beliefs as our beliefs, not as facts. We need to word our ideas in a way that will permit other ideas to have validity. We need to be able to appreciatively receive feedback that allows us to understand better how our own

behavior and attitudes affect another person. Since, ideally, this type of feedback should only be given when it is asked for, it behooves us to request this information with the knowledge that we may not enjoy what we hear.

The subjective judging of others may be a reflection of our understanding of our relationship with God. C.S. Lewis talks of pride or self-conceit being the greatest sin. Our pride may be the driving force that causes us to perceive our worldview as being superior to that of another. Until we can get our internal attitudes in the right place, our communication, regardless of how skillful, will still produce barriers. In speaking of God as a measuring stick, Lewis states:

In God you come up against something which is in every respect immeasurably superior to yourself. Unless you know God as that-and, therefore, know yourself as nothing in comparison-you do not know God at all. As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.¹¹ □

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the signs of the times

don haymes

Caesar and Christ

When we, Constantine and Licinius, Emperors, met at Milan in conference concerning the welfare and security of the realm, we decided that the things that are of profit to all mankind, the worship of God ought rightly to be our first and chiefest care, and that it was right that Christians and all others should have freedom to follow the kind of religion they favored; so that the God who dwells in heaven might be propitious to us and to all under our rule.

—from *The Edict of Milan*
March, 313 CE

With this document Christianity became a recognized religion of the Roman Empire, free from official persecution and able to control property. We all know what happened after that.

I had reason to recall the *Edict* recently, while visiting an Alabama church in the company of friends. All adult Bible classes of the church were brought together to see a videotape produced by the government of Poland and circulated by a Louisiana church. The program, made originally to be shown on Polish television, celebrated the impressive diplomatic ceremony which had made the Churches of Christ an "official" religious body in Poland and documented the extraordinary acts of benevolence which followed. Churches of Christ in the West—chiefly, it seemed, in the United States—had raised \$2 million for food, clothing, and medicine, which were transported throughout the economically prostrate country in a fleet of 50 rented trucks, driven by volunteers from the West. The supplies

were distributed through congregations of the church in Poland to all who had need.

Hans Nowak, converted in Germany by missionaries 35 years ago and educated in America, had conducted the delicate negotiations with the Polish regime and had engineered the massive fund-raising campaign for Polish relief. Nowak is a soft-spoken idealist whose heartfelt concerns are tempered by a calculated *Realpolitik*. After he had shown the videotape, Nowak told moving stories of physical and spiritual suffering in the Eastern bloc, of having smuggled aspirin, Band-Aids, and clothing to churches in Poland and Rumania, of having given his shoes to a financially destitute Polish surgeon who was caring for one of the Polish preachers. Now the charity—and the gospel—of the Churches of Christ in Poland had at last been catapulted above-ground. Leaders of the churches, who had always been harrassed and often jailed in other times, were now shown shopping for real estate on which to build meeting-houses. Polish church members are now free to travel throughout Eastern Europe, even into the Soviet Union, into areas where Western missions cannot go.

It was truly a magnificent performance, carefully orchestrated. How strange to see Clifton L. Ganus, Jr., perhaps America's leading academic anti-communist, praising the Polish government for Polish television! Clearly, the generals of Poland had something to gain from making the Churches of Christ "official": "the welfare and security of the realm." The connection of these churches with others in the West creates a new conduit for economic assistance for an impoverished population. But there is—it seems to me—a more subtle