

# Integrity

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January/February 1987

# Integrity

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### The King is Among Us

Why did God bother to come to earth? If eternity is ultimately most important, how much should we be concerned over earthly problems? What do matters of this world mean in the scheme of eternity? On one hand Paul told us in II Cor. 4:18: "We look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal."

Yet the Incarnation is God dealing with this earth, the people of this planet, and the problems that beset us. God the Son thought equality with God the Father was not something to which he should cling. He came and lived among the human race. He taught, fed, and healed us. His gospel broke the barriers that had arisen among people. The apostle Paul also emphasized that the difference the gospel made was seen in human historical actions.

Walt Zorn's articles have required us to probe more deeply into the question "What does it mean for me to be saved?" When we discussed this question at a recent *Integrity* board meeting, the variety of responses led to two main thoughts: When we are saved we change internally and we change the world outside ourselves.

It sounds simple until we consider how complex is the Holy Spirit's work. He changes us one by one, developing "the mind of Christ" in each of us. Then He collects these individual changes (with each one's own time frame for growth and receptivity) and orchestrates them in such a way that the whole world becomes affected and is changed. Thus the Kingdom of God is extended further and deeper into each generation.

How we live is related to the eternal. The Scriptures relate God to us in terms of history, in terms of the way we love and have relationships now. The application of the gospel is for now, for this moment for each of us in the year 1987 A.D.

The articles in this issue expose us to some of the possibilities of what it can mean to be saved by Jesus. May we allow Christ to reign in us! May we participate in God's plans for bringing about His Kingdom in this generation!

Your servants,  
Bruce and Diane Kilmer

## The "Faith of Jesus" and Our Salvation

(Part Two)

WALTER D. ZORN

Grand Ledge, Michigan

In Part One we established the strong possibility that the phrases in Rom. 3:21 and 26, "faith in Jesus," should be translated "faith of Jesus." Greek grammarians call the former, "objective genitive," and the latter, "subjective genitive." If the "subjective genitive" interpretation is correct, then the phrase in Rom. 1:17, *ek pisteōs eis pistin* ("from faith unto faith"), should be understood to mean "from Christ's faith unto our faith." It also means the Hab. 2:4 passage, "The righteous shall live by faith," was understood as "messianic" by Paul. Christ's faithfulness brought about the possibility for every obedient believer to be "righteous" (Rom. 5:18, 19). If this exegesis of Romans is faithful to Paul's original presentation of the gospel, then the following points must be made.

### Other Texts Affected

Besides Rom. 3:21 and 26 there are six other occurrences for the possibility of the "subjective genitive" interpretation. I will leave the phrases affected untranslated so you may evaluate for yourself.

Gal. 2:16 (twice): "we . . . knowing that a man is not justified from works of law but only through *pisteōs Iēsou Christou*, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified from *pistēos Christou* and not from works of law."

Gal. 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I that live, but Christ lives in me, and that life I now live in the flesh I live by *pistei* which is of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me."

Gal. 3:22: "but the scripture shut up everything under sin so that the promise from

*pisteōs Iēsou Christou* might be given to those who believe.

Phil. 3:9: "that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having my own righteousness which is from law, but that which is through *pisteōs Christou*, the righteousness of God on the ground of (that) *pistei*."

Eph. 3:11, 12: "according to the eternal purpose which he determined in Christ Jesus our Lord, in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through the *pisteos autou* (*autou* is the genitive of a personal pronoun referring to Christ, usually translated "his" or "of him")."

If each of the above texts are interpreted using the "subjective genitive," then a man is justified by Christ's faith and faithfulness (Gal. 2:16). Christ's faith is what the believer lives by (Gal. 2:20). The promise of God's Spirit to believers comes by way of Christ's faith (Gal. 3:22). God's righteousness is manifested by Christ's faithfulness and this is for all who believe (Rom. 3:22b; Phil. 3:9). All Christians can have boldness and assurance of salvation because of Christ's faithfulness (Eph. 3:12).

Other texts are affected.<sup>1</sup> Gal. 3:26 reads: "For all are sons of God through the faith in Christ Jesus." This should be understood as "the faith" which Christ uniquely had and brought to earth. Note how Paul speaks of faith: "Before faith came," (Gal. 3:23a) "until faith should be revealed" (Gal. 3:23c), "now that faith has come" (Gal. 3:25a). Compare these to Gal. 3:19b: "until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come." To speak of Jesus, the Seed, having come, is to say that faith has come because Jesus demonstrated perfect faith

in his life and ministry on earth.

Eph. 3:14 now makes more sense in light of the above: "until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature attaining the full measure of perfection found in Christ" (NIV). The "faith" and "knowledge" belong to the Son of God. Christians are to grow in maturity becoming like Christ in terms of His "faith" and "knowledge!" On this subject G.H. Parke-Taylor has stated:

Christ was not only the example to Gentile Christians of the perfect obedience which springs from perfect faith, but also the source of power whereby obedience to God can be realized in their own lives.<sup>2</sup>

The phrase, *dia tēs pisteōs* ("through the faith"), in Col. 2:12 could be understood as "God's faithfulness" and not "your faith" as NIV translates. "You" is not in the Greek text although it could be implied in the "objective genitive" interpretation.

II Tim. 3:15 similarly has *dia pisteōs tēs en Christō Iēsou* ("through faith the one in Christ Jesus"). In other words, it is the faith which resides in Christ Jesus that is the source of our salvation.

Mk. 11:22, *echete pistin theou*, could easily be translated, "Reckon upon God's faithfulness!" rather than the usual "Have faith in God" of most translations. In the same way, Jas. 2:1 offers the same alternative: "hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ" from *echete tēn pistin tou kuriou hēmōn Iēsou Christou*. This accords with the Greek text better than the NIV's rendering, "as believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ."

Rev. 2:13 suggests in the phrase, *tēn pistin mou* ("the faith of me"), Christ's faithfulness. NIV has "your faith in me" but "your" is not in the Greek text. It is supplied because the translators opted for the objective genitive.

Heb. 12:2 offers a strong case for understanding the above texts as "subjective genitives." The NIV renders it: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Pioneer and Perfector of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." The "our"

before "faith" is not in the Greek text. Again, the "objective genitive" is presupposed by its use in the NIV. A better translation would be: "Looking unto Jesus, the Originator and Completer of the faith. . ." In other words, Jesus is the "first Man" who blazed a trail of faith for us and he perfected or brought it to completion. This he did by enduring the cross, having scorned its shame! The sequence of faith, suffering, death, exaltation, and vindication of faith is similar to Rom. 3:21-26, Phil. 2:5-11, Heb. 5:7-10, and Rom. 5:12-19.

The structure of the Greek text facilitates our comprehension. The following two examples demonstrate a parallel structure which mitigates against the objective genitive.

The Greek text of Rev. 14:12 reads: *hoi tērountes tas entolas tou theou kai tēn pistin Iēsou*. Note the structure. After the present participle, *hoi tērountes* ("the ones who keep"), are two direct objects followed by genitive phrases. There is no doubt that the first phrase should be, "the commandments of God," and the structure suggests that the second phrase should be understood in the same manner, "the faith of Jesus." Indeed, the RSV shifted to the "subjective genitive" by the compulsion of its structure. However, the NIV consistently, and I may add, doggedly keeps the "objective genitive" interpretation by rendering the phrase: "who keep God's commandments and remain faithful to Jesus." This strains the parallel structure of the direct objects: God's commandments and Christ's faith.

The second and final text to be considered is I Pet. 1:2. The KJV translates the verse: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." The RSV renders it: "chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood." The NIV is similar: "who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood." But the RSV and NIV translations are an awkward rendering of the Greek text which has three balanced prepositional phrases dependent upon

the adjective "elect." In visual form the text should be:

"elect ones. . .

*kata* (according to) foreknowledge of God the Father,

*en* (by) sanctification of the Spirit

*eis* (unto, because of) obedience and sprinkling of blood of Jesus Christ."

"The *eis* phrase (1:2c) is brought into perfect parallelism with the *kata* phrase 1:2a) and the *en* phrase (1:2b) where the 'activity' involved is clearly ascribed to Father and Spirit. All that benefits the elect sojourners is attributed to the 'trinitarian' subjects of the triadic formula."<sup>3</sup> Thus, it is Jesus' obedience and sprinkling of his blood that has brought salvation to mankind in concert with the Spirit's sanctifying work and God's foreknowledge; i.e., redemption's plan.

## Plea For More Accurate Translations

Good exegesis demands attention to grammar, syntax, and word meanings-in-context. Unfortunately one's presuppositions about Christ and salvation can interfere with good exegesis. If Christ is thought of as more a "divine man" who needs no faith (the Gnostic Christ!), then "the faith of Christ" will sound like heresy. If salvation is simply based on a person's feelings of faith, then to say that one is justified by Christ's faith is nonsense.

## Proper Emphasis in the Gospel

In a strong way I am arguing for a proper emphasis in the Gospel. God's faithfulness (Rom. 3:3) far outshines any faithfulness on man's part. How can it be possible that God's righteousness is manifested by man's faith? *It isn't!* The faithfulness of Christ has manifested the righteousness of God (Rom 3:22). That is the emphasis! To be sure, man's response is important but the emphasis isn't there in the apostolic preaching of the Gospel. Compare this with our preaching.

Walter Scott of the Stone-Campbell Movement would ride into a new community in the afternoon, and, attracting a group of children going home from school, he would

engage them in conversation. Having a way with children, he would have them count the five steps off on their fingers: faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>4</sup>

Interestingly, this "plan of salvation" has been modified today to be: hear, believe, repent, confess, be baptized - all man's part! A careful study of the speeches in Acts could produce a "new five finger exercise": (1) This is that which was spoken by the prophet - Acts 2:16, (2) Jesus is Lord and Christ, (3) Repent and be immersed, (4) Accept the forgiveness of sin, and (5) Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The proper emphasis in gospel preaching is God's faithfulness to his promises and Jesus Christ's faithfulness to the Father.

## The Plan Still Stands

But the above emphasis by no means minimizes man's proper response to God's grace; i.e. *faith!* When you read Rom. 10:5-17 in light of these two essays and their interpretation of "faith" (i.e., a faith which consists in obedience, Rom. 1:5; 16:26), then man's proper response to God's grace becomes evident: "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ" (Rom. 10:17 RSV).

I am convinced that Rom. 5-8 describes the salvation process: first, Christ's faith and obedience in contrast to Adam's lack of faith and disobedience (5:12-21); and second, our obedient faith as it begins with baptism (6:1-4) and its consequences, forgiveness of sin (chps. 6-7) and the gift of the Holy Spirit (chp. 8, cp. Acts 2:38).

## Conclusion

One of the saddest experiences I have had in our churches is to witness the lack of boldness our members have concerning their salvation. In a Bible School class of forty *Christians*, I asked: "How many of you have the assurance of your salvation." Only ten responded positively. When people judge their status before God on the basis of their own feelings of salvation, assurance is shaky! But salvation is based on God's faithfulness to His covenant

promises to the fathers (Rom. 3:3, 15:8-9a). God promised to bless the entire world through Abraham's seed (Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Gal. 3:8, 16), and this He did through a faithful Messiah (Rom. 3:22-26). To believe in Messiah Jesus is to share His faith, for He is the "Originator and Perfecter" of faith (Heb. 12:2). To believe is to completely transform one's life by the renewal of the mind (Rom. 12:2). Subsequently, to do anything not "out of faith" is sin (Rom. 14:23b). The "faith of Jesus" and our salvation can now be understood if one will read Rom. 1:16, 17 with the following added insights:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is God's power unto salvation to all who believe (continually), to the Jew first and also the Greek.

For God's righteousness is (continually) being revealed in it (the gospel) out of (Christ's) faith unto (mankind's) faith, just as it is written, "But the Righteous One (Jesus and those who believe in Him!) shall live out of faith.

## A Blessing Missed

JOHN VAN HORN

Clawson, Michigan

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Matt. 5:8

It is in Matthew's account of the Sermon on the Mount that we find this special blessing. It is a blessing that comes to one whose life is characterized by genuine commitment to the Lord. It is possible that the life of purity escapes those who profess to be Christian. If that be true, what are some of the factors that cause a Christian to miss this special blessing offered by Christ?

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Acts 3:16 and II Thess. 2:13 should be added to these texts considered but their particular exegetical problems are beyond the scope of this brief essay.

<sup>2</sup>G.H. Parke-Taylor, "A Note on *Eis Uttakohv Ttiotews* in Romans 1:5 and 16:26," *The Expository Times* 55 (1943-44), p. 306.

<sup>3</sup>Francis H. Agnew, "I Peter 1:2 - An Alternative Translation," *CBQ* 45 (1983) p. 70.

<sup>4</sup>Leroy Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement* (College Press, 1981), p. 219.

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A factor that may cause confusion when one considers a life of purity is the restriction of the term to areas of behavior or outward appearance. If one limits his perception of a pure life to that which can be seen or heard, then much is missed in the context of Christ's sermon. We need to expand our thinking and consider what Jesus meant when he used the word "heart."

No doubt Jesus was using the term "heart" with its Hebrew meaning. The Hebrew understanding of "heart" would consider man as a whole being from which the heart would

give direction to the entirety of man. The Hebrews then placed the physical alongside the spiritual to demonstrate how the "heart" had control over all actions and thinking.

In today's terms, man's whole being is separated into such parts as emotional, mental, physical, behavioral, and spiritual. The result of such separation is to isolate physical from spiritual, mental from emotional, and so forth, thus giving different meaning to the term "heart." If we put aside our present-day view of man, in all his complexity, we will find a depth of meaning in the term "purity of heart."

We can begin by thinking of God's primary requirement of Israel. "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." Deut. 6: 4-5

## God is the Center

The Israelites were to put God and His commands at the center of their life. He would guide them, He would defend them from their surrounding enemies, and He would also be their provider. Their response to all that He would do for them was to give Him their entire devotion. There would no longer be a need for any other god.

We are faced, then, with the same charge of making God central in all our activities and pursuits as was Israel. We may need, as individuals and families, to think of ways to develop greater awareness of God at work in us and our activities. We do need, on occasion, to assess our activities, our attitudes, and perhaps our goals to see if they are in keeping with God's will. Out of these times of soul searching questions may come answers as to how we can find a deeper relationship with God.

What can we do to develop a clean heart? We can begin by looking within ourselves to see what may be hindering us from having a pure heart. A place to start is in questioning ourselves to see if there are sins covered over in our hearts that need to be confessed.

King David wrote of the horrible effect sin had in his body because he had not sought forgiveness from God for the sins he had com-

mitted (Ps. 38). King David is an example of how unconfessed sin will, in time, pollute the vision and mission of the heart, rendering it ineffective and unproductive.

We must fight against the desire to cover up or deny our sins. We also need to be careful, at the same time, not to overly condemn ourselves. Our introspection, led by the Spirit of God, will achieve the needed balance of convicted sin versus condemnation.

The Psalmist in Psalm 24 wrote of another hinderance to having a pure heart, that of allowing falsehood to reside in our relationships. Some examples of relationships which have falsehood connected to them are: a business deal entered upon false pretense; a marital relationship characterized by distrust; a church that is infected by gossip and rumor. In the area of family life, falsehood can become the wedge that is driven between two persons. Statements which are not true are made against the other in an effort to hurt the person. Unless the presence of falsehood in the relationship is resolved, further damage is imminent. Relationships where falsehood exists, whether in the home, outside the home, or in the church body, can cause grievous damage to our hearts. We must take steps to resolve these tensions that exist between us.

The way to bring healing to our broken relationships is through confession of sin and the offer of forgiveness. We need to be loving enough, when hurt by another, to show them unconditional love and acceptance. We need to hold up before one another the picture of Christ mediating for us as one able to understand our weakness.

"We have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the son of God. Let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of Grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." Hebrews 4: 14-16.

In coming to grips with past sins and failings,

we need to experience the gracious help which comes from God. It is within our reach. By so doing, we will be of ready heart to receive the blessing mentioned by Christ, the ability to see God.

By having a pure heart, our lives are lived in the commission of God's will. We find a new set of priorities in place of the old selfish ones. By having a pure heart, we find a confidence and comfort in the word of God.

The blessing of a pure heart issues forth into

## Instruments of Peace

GARY FIELDS MITCHELL

Rochester, Michigan

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the sons of God." Matt. 5:9

Recently, it was my privilege to attend a seminar that had as one of its themes, "The Restoration Plea for Unity." The seminar was what has become known as a "Unity Conference." I have often thought that "Peace Conference" might be a good subtitle for one of these conferences simply because anytime you point to the "Restoration Plea for Unity" you are really placing yourself in the role of a peacemaker — even if that was not really the role you had in mind.

The morning after the first meeting of the seminar, I had a breakfast meeting with a fellow brother in the Lord regarding a business matter. I shared with him concerning the seminar of the previous evening. The brother was not at all pleased to hear my report, so instead of being concerned about what to order for breakfast, I found myself preoccupied with defusing a rather tense situation.

If you are a middle aged reader of this journal and raised in a church in the Restoration Tradition, you probably have seen or read of more church disputes and church splits than you care to remember. (If you are from a different

all the areas of life. As Jesus described in his Sermon on the Mount, the pure heart is like a "light that is set upon a lampstand, it gives to all in the room." (Matt. 5:16)

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church background, you may have been witness to the same phenomenon.) Go into almost any area of the country and you will find an alarming number of congregations that came into existence by splitting off from other congregations. Expansion through division! What a sad witness to the Glory and work of God in people's lives. The church has often pointed to the world, and especially to families that do not know Christ, as examples of the turmoil that can exist without Christ at the center of one's life. Yet within families of our own church bodies, turmoil and severe fractures of relationships exist. These conditions are often exacerbated to the point that consultation with professional counsel is necessary. While we can be thankful that people can avail themselves of professional help, I often wonder how many times situations could be resolved by taking seriously, as children of God, our role as peacemakers.

At a time when violence in our society is rising and emotional and psychological abuse is on an increase, even among families of our own church bodies, more thought and instruction needs to be given to our roles as instruments of peace.

But isn't the ability to be a peacemaker a gift or natural talent? No, peacemaking is an abili-

ty that is acquired by the application of Biblical principles to our lives. In considering our roles as peacemakers there are four basic points from God's word that we must keep in mind.

1. Peacemakers must first learn to be alone with God.

I heard someone say not long ago that the biggest status symbol in this country was travel, and that travel has been replaced by a new symbol — busyness. Our lives are crowded with activities from the time we get up until we flop into bed at night. Every free hour in our calendar is seen by ourselves, or other people, as an opportunity to schedule other events.

If we are to let God use us as instruments of peace, we first must learn to spend time alone with Him. This is basic to the art of peacemaking. ("Be still, and know that I am God." — Ps. 46:10) Unless we are willing to "Be still," to learn the value of prayer and solitude before God, our efforts at peacemaking will be doomed.

2. Peacemakers are led by the Spirit of God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God." Matt. 5:9. "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God." — Rom. 8:14. God the Father is the author of true peace. It is only by His Spirit that we can be made true instruments of His peace. Also, our willingness to be used as an instrument of peace is one of the signs that we truly are the "sons of God." Without the Lord's leading, our efforts will lack both wisdom and a creative force and thus will be shallow in scope.

3. Peacemakers must seek the wisdom of God.

As children of God we have His Spirit living within us. This does not mean that we automatically have wisdom. Wisdom must be sought before the face of God. And I believe that it is in our time alone before God that we will most clearly see the wisdom we seek.

4. The "Golden Rule" is the underlying principle of all peacemaking efforts. "In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets" — Matt. 7:12.

When this principle is employed in our peacemaking efforts, we will find that it is the best defense against thoughts of revenge and the delivery of quick "put downs."

There is one other important point that must be made on the subject of becoming an "Instrument of Peace."

Peacemaking must be done with long range results in mind. Often our attempts to be instruments of peace will show immediate results, but this is usually not the way things happen. Historically, peacemakers have not fared well. Many in the short run have been more successful at spreading acrimony than tapping a sea of tranquility. The peacemaker must always keep in mind that he is an instrument of peace and that God can take our efforts and use them for His long-term purposes.

A little over eight hundred years ago, St. Francis of Assisi wrote a simple prayer that expresses so eloquently what it means to be an instrument of peace:

"Lord make me an instrument of Thy peace,  
where there is hatred let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.  
O Divine Master, grant that I may  
not so much seek to be consoled as  
to console; to be understood, as to  
understand; to be loved, as to love;  
for it is in giving that we receive, it  
is pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal  
life."

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." Gal. 5:22 & 23

The fruit of peacemaking is the fruit of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit is peace.

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(All Biblical references are from NIV.)

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# Freedom for Men and Women

J. BRUCE KILMER

Lansing, Michigan

"No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments." I Tim. 5:23

"For, everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved." Rom. 10:13

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven. . . ." Matt. 7:21

"Greet all the brethren with a holy kiss." I Thess. 5:26

"Baptism; which corresponds to this, now saves you. . . ." I Pet. 3:21

"For those whom he foreknew he also predestined. . . ." Rom. 8:29

". . . you also ought to wash one another's feet." John 13:14

Most of us would agree that at least one, if not all of these passages, needs to be interpreted for today, or in light of the context in which it was written, or in relation to the rest of Scripture. A few simple principles of interpretation, such as those mentioned above, can go a long way toward finding truth.

At the recent *Integrity* Seminar in October, Dr. Leroy Garrett gave seven principles of interpretation as taught by Alexander Campbell and added five of his own. These principles are listed in the report on the seminar by Bob Girdwood in this issue of *Integrity*. I believe that nowhere have these principles been more violated than in the interpretation of passages dealing with the role of women in the church.

It is important when looking at the role of women and men to look at the Scriptures as a

whole and not to just focus on the passages in I Cor. 14 & I Tim. 2 dealing with specific problems. These passages must be taken into account, but not in isolation.

It is also important to realize that few if any of us take these problem passages literally. Even the most literal interpreter among us does not teach that women be completely silent as I Cor. 14 seems to literally direct, or to wear a veil as I Cor. 11 seems to require. We allow culture to influence our interpretation. We have done this with many Scriptures where a literal interpretation would be socially unacceptable or even wrong. Examples can be seen in passages dealing with foot washing, the holy kiss, order of widows, one cup; and on and on we could list passages we have not interpreted literally, but have interpreted in light of where and when we live.

In looking at the New Testament passages dealing with problems involving women, it is helpful to compare the passages dealing with slavery, to get some understanding to how the apostles dealt with a social relationship that we know is wrong. (See Eph. 5 & 6; Tit. 2; I Pet. 2 & 3, and Col. 3.)

## Man and Woman at Creation

Gen. 1-3 provides the framework of the man/woman relationship and the breakdown in that relationship as the result of sin. Genesis 1:27 says that God created human beings as male and female. God's image is reflected in the creation of people as male and female. That is, we see God's character in the male/female relationship. God has relationship within the Trinity and that image is seen in the relationship of males and females. Together men and women are to have authority over the creation. (Genesis 1:28-30)

In Gen. 2, we see that woman is a helpmate.

The Hebrew words "neged" and "ezer" translated "helpmate" are not words of subordination. "Ezer" is used in other places in the Old Testament to refer to God and his relationship to us. (See Ps. 46:11; 146:3,5; 121:1-2.) A better translation of the words would be: "suitable helper," or "a helper corresponding to." The connotation is a person adequate to meet all man's needs for physical, intellectual, and social communion. The Hebrew word "ezer" translated "help" is found 21 times in the Old Testament. Sixteen times the reference is to a *superordinate* helper and never to a subordinate helper.<sup>1</sup> Adam recognized the equality of woman when he stated in Gen. 2:23:

"This at last is bone from my bones, and flesh from my flesh! This is to be called woman for this was taken from man."

Genesis provides us with the basic framework for the male/female relationship. Man and woman were created equal, with equal authority over creation and with a relationship that reflects God's image. It is only *after* sin enters the picture that we see an inequality. (Gen. 3:16) This inequality is the result of sin. God tells the woman that because of her sin, her husband will rule over her and she will have pain in childbearing. Also, God tells the man and woman that because of their sin, the ground is cursed. Several broken relationships result from their sin. They are sent from the garden, showing the breakdown in their relationship with God. There is a breakdown in the human relationship with the creation, the environment. And finally, there is a breakdown between human beings. First we see the man-woman breakdown, later the brother-brother, then later races, rich-poor, slave-free, etc. God's plan is to heal these breakdowns through the coming of His Son. Just as the "first Adam" caused the breakdowns, the "second Adam" came to heal the broken relationships. (See Rom. 5:12-19; I Cor. 15:22.)

## Breaking the Barriers

In Eph. 2, Paul writes of the barrier that had existed between Jew and Greek and that in Christ the barrier is broken down. The barrier

between Jew and Greek was the result of sin, just as the barrier between man and woman is the result of sin. Jesus came that the barrier between men and women could also be broken down. The direct result of the gospel is the breaking down of barriers so that there would be no barrier between Jew/Greek, slave/free, and male/female. (Gal. 3:28) The original plan is being restored. Just as we try to relieve pain in childbearing or use weed killer on the earth, we should try to reduce the curse of man ruling over woman.

God allows His people to choose and exercise freedom within a sinful world. Therefore, we see in the Old Testament such things as war, polygamy, and a male-dominated society. This does not mean He approved of these things. The hope is always for the Messiah and His Kingdom. We are part of the coming of this Kingdom. When we hold on to war, male dominance, and racial hatred we are hindering the coming of the Kingdom.

Jesus ushered in a new age but he did so amidst a society where women had been so suppressed that neither they nor society were ready for women assuming an equal role in leadership. He made great strides which were at times scandalous. He had women followers—some of whom financially supported him. He spoke to the woman at the well. A woman was the first witness to the resurrection. It is reasonable to assume that he chose only male apostles because the women were not ready to lead, given the centuries of discrimination; but he opened the way to a day when they could lead.

With the coming of the New Testament Church that day begins to come. We find women praying in public, I Cor. 11; prophesying, Acts 21:9; working side-by-side with Paul, Eph. 4:3 and Rom. 16; teaching men, Acts 18:24-26 (Priscilla does this with her husband. Some Bible scholars note, however, that throughout the New Testament she is usually mentioned first, indicating she was the leader of the couple); having a church in their home, Col. 4:15, Acts 16:40; serving as a deacon, Rom. 16:1; and possibly referred to as an apostle (in the same sense that Barnabas was called an apostle in Acts 14:14), Rom. 16:7 (Junias

is feminine and the translation could be referring to her as an apostle, though male-dominated translation committees have been reluctant to translate it in this way).

The qualifications for elders are given in terms of men, but do not necessarily exclude women. These are guidelines. The function of elder was to be generally exercised as a partnership, thus the qualifications for wives. The deacon passage in I Tim. 3:11 could refer to the wives of the deacons but more likely refers to women deacons. Again, as with the twelve apostles, it makes sense that the elders would at first be men because they were prepared to assume the role of leadership. The women were not ready because of the role they had been forced to assume in society.

The passages of I Tim. 2 and I Cor. 14 must be seen in the context of the first century societal position of men and women. As with slavery,

Paul does not directly attack the institution but provides the framework where it will pass away. The barrier has been broken between male and female. (Gal. 3:28) Woman does not relate to God through a man or her husband. She relates to God through the man Jesus Christ. That is why Paul could say in I Cor. 7 a woman need not marry. This teaching goes against the theory that: A woman relates to God through her husband and that the husband is responsible for the wife and children, without a reciprocal responsibility of wife for husband.

The women at Corinth and Ephesus had been freed by the gospel, and it is reasonable to assume that in the exercise of their freedom, problems arose because they were not yet ready for the complete exercise of their freedom. More maturity was needed and a change in their attitude, as well as a change in the attitude of society. It was the same for slavery. Society was

not ready for the freeing of the slaves. But Christianity provided the basis for the eventual destruction of the institution of slavery. It also has provided the basis for the destruction of male domination which unfortunately, as in slavery, many of the world are recognizing ahead of the church.

### Isn't It Time?

The church should not take its lead from the world regarding women's role. However, because the world has recognized a basic universal truth, that is, the equality of men and women, is no reason for us to reject it as worldly. Many in the world recognized the error of slavery before the church did. Perhaps this was simply an example of God's Spirit moving and speaking among whomever would listen.

God created man and woman equal. He is a fair God. Would he forever hold women down because he created man first or because woman sinned first? This may have something to do with male domination, but it does not make it right. The I Tim. 2:13-14 reference to created first and sinned first and saved through childbearing is difficult to understand. But we should not take such a difficult passage and make it the norm when there are so many Scriptures and principles that are clear regarding equality.

In the new age the Spirit has been poured out upon both males and females. (See Acts 2:18) We see today women with all the same spiritual gifts as men. We must not quench their use as we have in ages past.

We (Christians) have accepted the equality of women in the workplace. We have women teachers, vice-presidents, mayors, etc. If Christian women can lead men (Christian or non-Christian) in the workplace, then they can lead in the church. If a Christian woman can teach English in a Christian college, surely she can teach the most important subject, the Bible, at church. We must remember "at church" is a cultural term. We worship God on Sunday in the church building and everyday with our lives at work, at home, at school, and in the neighborhood. Everything we do any day should be our spiritual worship to the Lord. (Rom. 12:1)

Even those who believe women should not hold a position of authority in the church could have room to allow women to at least participate more in the corporate worship. Leading a prayer, serving communion, or even teaching an adult Sunday School class is not exercising authority over men, especially if done under the authority of male elders. Women were praying and prophesying aloud in the corporate worship at Corinth. (I Cor. 11:2-16) We somehow manage to ignore or explain away this passage, along with the one describing Phillip's daughters who prophesied. (Acts 21:9) Yet we emphasize I Cor. 14:34, though we are not willing to interpret the word "silence" in the passage literally. The "silence" becomes "silence" sometimes in some ways. For example: singing is ok; Sunday School comments are ok; prayer requests maybe; and a Sunday night missions report questionable unless the "final Amen" has been said before the report. On and on we go with our inconsistencies, because we know it is ridiculous to keep women silent, but we are afraid for them to be really equal.

Although the participation of women in the public worship is not specifically addressed in Eph. 5, this passage is often used to bolster the male dominance argument. We must remember that Paul's words in Eph. 5 are spoken in a context of male domination prevalent throughout the society at that time. To this he speaks words of mutual submission and mutual responsibility. "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." (Eph. 5:21) In the context of male domination or in the context of slavery, Paul tells the slaves and the women that with their new freedoms learned in Christ, this is how you ought to behave.

As Paul learned from Jesus, his emphasis is always on submission and service. As followers of the one who did not think equality with God something to which he should cling, we also must exercise our rights and equalities in an attitude of servanthood. This is sometimes a double bind for women who have been taught that they should submit because they are women and not because they are followers of Christ. Since in most churches it is the men who are in posi-

## The Potter's Wheel

A church leader, deeply concerned about the erosion of the Christian family, expressed his wish that every youngster learn Matthew 19:9 by heart. I certainly share this brother's concern for the sanctity of marriage and his alarm over the breakdown in family life. I do not, however, believe that a single verse, "learned" without its context, will provide a satisfactory, lasting answer for many of our children. The religious world has enough ideas—some good, some bad, some conflicting with others—all supported with proof texts consisting of one verse or less.

We must give serious attention to the learning process before any real progress can be made. For all too often, that which was once "learned" somehow becomes unlearned or perhaps forgotten when convictions come in conflict with desire. And all that is left is the familiar lament, "I can't understand it. . .he

always knew better than that."

Perhaps Prov. 22:6 would be a good beginning point. Let each parent become dedicated to training up their children, in the Biblical context of the Christian home, family life, parental responsibility, and the Lordship of Jesus. This approach requires time, dedication, and sacrifice—much more effort than memorizing a proof text. But it will, I believe, impart learning that will stand up for a life time, even when convictions come in conflict with desire.

— Gene Cowie

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With his Master's degree in engineering, Gene has worked as an educator and a businessman. He and his wife, Mary Alice, reside in Madison Heights. Gene has served as an elder to the Troy Church of Christ for more than 10 years. Their daughter, Diane, is a Wycliff translator in Central America.

tions of leadership, it is the men who must see that women are given an atmosphere in which they can exercise their gifts. Together, we must learn mutual submission.

The emphasis on the wives' submission would be expected where Christian women had been given freedoms unheard of in their culture. But this emphasis in no way limits Paul's initial instruction concerning mutual submission. In I Cor. 11, Paul is equalizing the responsibilities that are culturally askew and that would be culturally askew for centuries.

"Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman." I Cor. 11:11

". . . let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband." Eph. 5:33

These are the instructions one would expect where the dominator and the dominated have recently come to see their responsibilities and their freedoms. The norm is mutual submission and leadership depending on the two people and the issue involved.

### Mutual Submission Applied

People often ask me: "How do you and your wife make a final decision when you disagree?" The question has an underlying cultural prejudice that we need a boss, a final decision-maker. In Christ, with the Holy Spirit, when two are united as one, this is not needed. It is contrary to the nature of our relationship. Each of us prays and offers our opinion. We reach agreement. If we do not, one or the other submits depending on the issue and our particular gift in that area. The idea of a final authority between the two of us, other than God, is repulsive to our relationship as husband and wife. The idea that I am spiritually responsible for my wife beyond our mutual responsibility for one another verges on heresy. It is the beginning of women not taking responsibility for themselves before God. It leads to women getting their identity through their husband instead of in Christ. It leads to over-burdened husbands at best, and at worst, to tyrants.

The hierarchical model might provide relative calm when men are not tyrants, but it does not

fulfill the great plan of God's whole church being one, nor the plan for individuals exercising their gifts for the good of the whole. We have yet to see what God's church would be like, if we truly let men and women work together equally and fully with the Spirit of God in control.

The claim that men and women are equal but with different roles has been used to define the male roles as having authority and the female roles as being in submission. Any differentiation in roles where the male (just because he is male) is always in authority, always the leader, and always in control regardless of gifts and abilities is inequality. Calling it "different roles but equal" does not make it equal. The original relationship at creation, the pouring out of the Spirit at Pentecost, the evidence we can see each day in our dealings with men and women, all point to equality. Teachers and leaders come in all sizes, shapes, colors, and sexes. The gifts of the Spirit are not differentiated by sex. As we read the New Testament there is nothing that indicates men get these gifts and women get these other gifts. They were working side by side. The almost casual mention of women teaching, doing missionary work, prophesying, etc. shows that this was the norm, no explanation was needed. However, when women were limited in certain cultural contexts and places, elaborate arguments and explanations seemed necessary.

### Responding to Christ's Work

Gal. 3:28 states the norm for the healing of the separations that have resulted from sin. In Christ these separations, the brokenness, and the inequalities are healed. Gal. 3:28 is not just telling us that Greeks, slaves, and women can be saved. This was never in doubt. The God-fearing Greeks, slave or not, and the women were a part of the Jewish temple and synagogue. Though not equal, it was not doubted that they could have a relationship with God and that they could be a part of His way. Paul wasn't telling the Galatian church that women and Greeks could be saved, as well as Jewish men. The Galatians knew this. It is only because of our limited concept of the gospel that we could give

this passage such limited interpretation.

Most evangelical and fundamental teaching on salvation emphasizes the individual, personal aspect of salvation. Baptists often tend to emphasize a personal relationship with Jesus and equate this with the New Testament concept of salvation and conversion. The Church of Christ has often emphasized correctly understanding and responding to the plan as being the essence of conversion and salvation. The New Testament, though leaving room for an individual response and relationship, emphasizes the historical results of a response to the gospel. That is, salvation and conversion are demonstrated by the results seen in human relationships. For example: Jews and Greeks are one. (See Eph. 2.) The way we live, spend our money, share, love and serve are the results of the gospel. The solely personal, psychological emphasis of many evangelical and fundamental groups is foreign to the New Testament. One of the mysteries of the gospel is the unity of Jews and Greeks. (Eph. 3:4) It is historical. The gospel does more than give the believer a head-trip — it changes his/her relationship to others. This is what Paul was saying in Gal. 3:28. In Christ, not only is our relationship with God healed, but the barriers between human beings have been taken down. In Christ we have become part of the new creation. There is a whole new world with a whole new point of reference. (See II Cor. 5:16-17.)

From our cradles, we have been indoctrinated with the idea of male superiority in subtle and not so subtle ways. Women have been outrightly discriminated against, abused, and made to be sexual objects. From advertisements, to role models, to opening doors for them, we have been slowly and thoroughly taught that men are superior. We may deny this and say we are equal with different roles, but the fact remains that what it means to be male or female has often been taught to us by a sinful and distorted culture rather than by the Scriptures. This same sinful and distorted culture is described in Scriptures, but the description does not necessarily mean that the practices being described are approved. For example: war, a patriarchal society, and slavery are practices described in the

Bible which were a part of God's chosen nation, but not necessarily practices which are a part of His way. Furthermore, it is a sinful and distorted culture which has translated and interpreted the Scriptures throughout the centuries. We should not be surprised to find the prejudices of the men who translated Scripture in their translations. This does not mean that all translations and interpretations cannot be relied on. It does mean that we should always be on guard to how our prejudices and culture can influence our thinking. This includes not only the centuries of prejudice against women's equality but also the prejudices of the 20th century's women's liberation movement.

It is very difficult to get out of our cultural conditioning, because we do not even realize the extent of our conditioning or from which side it has come. Much of what we are, what we *think* it is to be male or female, is a part of us, and to lose the false notions, to die to them, is a long and difficult struggle. To discover and understand the true nature of male and femaleness and our differences is a glorious adventure where Jesus has set the course for us.

Jesus has offered us the freedom to be what we were intended to be — to be the men and women in relationship with Him, with each other, with our brothers and sisters, and with creation. Life is a journey, a struggle to bring about the Lord's Kingdom as much as possible on this earth. We look forward to the day when we can participate fully and wholly in His Way for eternity where power-plays, physical strength, domination, manipulation and pain will end.

Free us, Lord, to be truly male and female in You.

### ENDNOTE

<sup>1</sup>Letha Scanzoni and Mary Hardesty, *All We're Meant to Be* (Waco, Texas), p. 26.

Bruce has been a member of churches in the Stone-Campbell movement since childhood. He received a B.S.Ed. in Communications from Abilene Christian University and a law degree from Wayne State University in Detroit. Bruce and his wife Diane have served on the *Integrity* board for several years. They and their two children reside in Lansing, Michigan.



# Hermeneutics and Unity

ROBERT L. GIRDWOOD

Fenton, Michigan

*Integrity's* "Fall Seminar" met October 16-18, 1986, at Fenton, Michigan to probe the theme "Biblical Interpretation and the Restoration Plea for Unity."

Three scholars presented the main messages: Dr. Leroy Garrett of Denton, Texas, editor of *Restoration Review*; Dr. Walter Zorn, professor at Great Lakes Bible College, Lansing, Michigan; and Dr. J. Harold Thomas of Conway, Arkansas.

The Seminar met in the lovely new building of the Church of Christ at Fenton, Michigan. This congregation is a unique model of Restoration unity in that in 1982, three small congregations merged, two a cappella and one instrumental. Worship services include singing which is half accompanied and half a cappella.

## Garrett Sets the Theme

Dr. Garrett's opening message was "Clarifying and Reassessing our Traditional Hermeneutic." He noted that even Harvard professors are identifying the issue for Christianity in our time as hermeneutics. The question is "How will Biblical content be applied to our generation?"

We were shown that the silence of Scripture has been a problem for the church universal through the years. But within the Restoration Movement, more than anywhere else, a body of doctrine has been built around that silence. In fact, we have predicated fellowship on the Bible alone, or more specifically, on the Bible as we interpret it.

A part of that interpretive problem centers in the widely held "patternistic theory" which tends to see the Bible as a rule book detailing every aspect of the church and its body-life. Garrett, in contrast, placed great emphasis on the Bible as a book of principles, comparable to the U.S. constitution. The constitution has

survived and served our nation so well because of its ambiguity. Likewise, the Bible survives because its principles are ambiguous enough to serve every life situation in every culture and age.

Garrett outlined Alexander Campbell's principles of interpretation:

(1) Consider the historical circumstances (order, title, author, date, place, occasion).

(2) Consider who is speaking and under what dispensation (who, what, why, when, where) and who is being addressed.

(3) The same laws applying to language in other books need to be applied to the language of the Bible. (Any book means what it says. We do not find out what it means by what it does not say.)

(4) Ascertain the meaning of words from the scope and content of the passage and from parallel passages.

(5) Where figurative language is used we must ascertain the point of resemblance. Campbell began from Luther's "golden rule of interpretation" that "A word always means the same" and modified it with "except when it must be figurative."

(6) Do not press figurative language beyond the point being made.

(7) We must come within understanding distance if we will understand the Bible.

Garrett added these footnotes as his further guidelines:

(1) Interpret Scriptures in references to the spirit of Christ and NOT the other way around.

(2) Do not place too much emphasis on a single passage and thus lose the proper Biblical perspective. (A Biblically balanced emphasis rather than a "proof text" approach).

(3) Do not misjudge the nature of the documents that make up the Bible and thus make it a book it was not intended to be (allow

it to be a book of principles, not a rigid patternistic rulebook).

(4) Seek truth, not only in Scripture, but also in the Spirit of Scriptures or "beyond the sacred page."

(5) If we really want to understand, we can understand. (We need to fix our "want to.") (See John 7:17.)

## Zorn's New Hermeneutic

On Friday evening Zorn began his message "The Need for a New Hermeneutic" with a statement by Dr. R. A. Carson of Trinity Divinity School: "Every debate in the history of the church is conditioned in part by hermeneutical considerations."

Zorn saw instrumental congregations as needing a hermeneutic broader than that being used in the current discussions regarding the infallibility of Scripture (re: Myron Taylor and Jack Cottrell at the 1986 North American Christian Convention). He also noted conflicting hermeneutical vocabulary used by Fred Norris of Emmanuel School of Religion and S. Scott Bartchy on one hand and Roger Chambers, professor at Florida Christian College (who relies heavily on Gerhard Maier's *The End of the Historical Critical Method*) on the other hand.

He suggested that terminology and attitude may be the greater problems since the men on both sides of both discussions seem to refer to the same authorities and citations as their "touchstone." Dr. Donald A. Carson (unaware of Chambers) says evangelical writers have attempted to designate the grammatical historical method of exegesis power against the historical critical method. But Carson proposes that if "critical" means that "any interpretation of Scripture must have adequate justification," and that "the grounds for the interpretation must be made explicit, whether these grounds are lexical, historical, grammatical, theological, geographical, or whatever" then the term "critical" should be used in our hermeneutical description. Zorn agreed.

To illustrate the confusion of terminology, it was noted that Campbell's method of interpretation was referred to by Chambers as "historical Biblical" or "historical gram-

matical" ("like modern evangelical scholars" Chambers says). Dr. Garrett spoke of Campbell's method as "historical grammatical." Norris calls it "historical critical." Zorn proposed that Norris, Chambers, Garrett and he agree that Campbell was simply seeking to avoid private interpretation.

When Chambers says that if the "historical critical" must mean that very subjective approach so that we get anything out of it or can put anything into it that we want (which some scholars do) then it is unacceptable, Zorn agrees. He noted that Norris also questions the use of the historical critical method since widely varying conclusions come from its use.

In his conclusion, Zorn carefully separated his hermeneutic as NOT the modern "new hermeneutic" espoused by Gadamer, Fuchs, and Eberling which stresses the distance between text and interpreter. They say the true meaning of the text is really subjective and they have abandoned all recourse to objective knowledge from the Bible. . .there is no proper interpretation. . .it is only what you get out of it.

The hermeneutic presented in *Biblical Interpretation*. . ., edited by Kearley, Myers and Hadley (with the exception of the chapter by J. D. Thomas) Zorn noted as very helpful in developing his thinking. He did suggest that although higher critical methods have gone down a bankrupt road, we have often confused this bad use and bad conclusions with the tools. We have then at times thrown out good tools because of bad and improper usage.

A recent paper presented by Dr. Lewis Foster at Lincoln Christian Seminary on "A New Hermeneutic" was reviewed. He speaks of "factual criticism" (or *realgeschichte*) and suggests three principles: (1) Find the very similitude — e.g., those things that fit the context in time, history and culture; those things that flow with it; that which suggests "this is real," presenting facts to us; (2) Then find the unexpected, something that might jar us or go against the grain; (3) Then look for the key message. Zorn said this is simplistic but good and identifies with Foster.

Zorn called his new hermeneutic "Historical, Critical, Grammatical, and Biblical" and ex-

plained: (1) Historical — including the transcendent which will allow the miraculous; (2) Critical — using the same approach and methods as in understanding any literature; (3) Grammatical — words in context; (4) Biblical — or contextual.

### Application of “New Hermeneutic”

On Friday between the lessons cited above, applications were discussed regarding: baptism, music, the Holy Spirit, and women's role in the church:

(1) **Baptism:** Is baptism by immersion, understood for remission of sins, essential for Christian unity and fellowship? Garrett spoke first and referred to the “balance found in Scripture” as emphasizing fellowship based on being “disciples” rather than on “being baptized.” He spoke of our needing to love others who also love the Lord and His Book, but do not yet see the need for immersion. He said we need to be loving enough that the broader circles of fellowship will enable discussion and explanation of God's Word for their lives, including immersion.

It was pointed out by Zorn that fellowship with disciples who have been sprinkled (not knowing of immersion) is an area of silence since Biblical times only knew Biblical baptism. Again the issue is how our hermeneutic handles Biblical silence. Thomas found a problem in requiring a “perfect” baptism when we allow

wide variance in the perfection of initial faith and repentance.

(2) **Music:** Is the use of instrumental music or non-use Biblically decisive for Christian unity and fellowship? Zorn spoke first suggesting (both panelists agreeing) we have an attitude of “willingness to divide” where we need an attitude of willingness to love. Garrett noted that younger members of a cappella congregations have a broader loving attitude today than ever before. All three speakers called for “new hermeneutics” which will allow silence to be neutral, neither pro or con. The idea that the Civil War socio-economic issues had divided us was quickly put to rest by Garrett who pointed out that it was northerners vs northerners, and also that music was an issue in Canada and Australia apart from the War. The Restoration Movement's hermeneutic which legalistically compartmentalizes approved precedents and necessary practices in faith and worship was seen as the real problem.

(3) **Holy Spirit:** Is belief in the nature and work of the Holy Spirit essential to unity and fellowship? Thomas suggested the question is probably “Is the Holy Spirit still around?” He wondered whether a person can be a Christian without some concept of the Holy Spirit's role. Zorn questioned the Holy Spirit being involved in lives where instruction is required in the mechanics of “spiritual” exercises and where division and divisive attitudes are created. It was noted that when the Holy Spirit is shut out the

result is cold, dead worship where people are not fed spiritually. This often causes people to seek something live, warm and dynamic and the Holy Spirit is certainly responsive to that need. Garrett illustrated this by the story of his long time friends, Pat Boone and Boone's parents.

(4) **Women:** Is unanimity of belief about the nature of women's involvement in the life of the church essential to unity and fellowship? Thomas' opening remarks here accented Paul's Galatian reference to “neither male nor female” being recognized in the church. He also noted the possibility of a widows' role in the early church as being a ministry status. Our ease in sidestepping veils, long and covered hair, and adornment by identifying them as cultural was contrasted with the difficulty we have in relating women's role in New Testament times to their cultural suppression. A special emphasis was made on the exercising

of women's Holy Spirit-given gifts where suppression would be opposing God's Spirit. The question was raised as to whether this issue was only a matter of opinion or as to it having divine mandate in light of New Testament teaching regarding the exercising of gifts.

Thomas closed the seminar by reemphasizing our need to: (1) Interpret Scripture by the Spirit of Scripture rather than by the letter; (2) Remember our “law of liberty” in Christ; and (3) Emphasize the first part of Paul's statement (as much as we have the last part) “All things are lawful, but not all things are expedient.”

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During the last 20 years Bob has been instrumental in helping to establish more than 15 Christian Church/Churches of Christ throughout Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Colorado. Bob has been an *Integrity* reader since 1969. He and his wife Midge presently minister to the church in Fenton, Michigan.

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## Readers' Response

Dear Brethren,

Enclosed is a small contribution that we hope will help continue the fine work you are doing and also continue my subscription. We always enjoy the articles you publish. Keep up the good work and God bless your efforts.

Sincerely,  
Ken and Ramona Brown  
Napa, California

Thank you for *Integrity*!

Baulah Ashburn  
Garden City, Kansas

Keep up the good work!

M. Wood  
Trent, Texas

We continue to enjoy and be edified by the articles in *Integrity*. We look forward to your future issues.

In His Love,  
Joann Weidner  
Towson, Maryland

Enjoy reading *Integrity*. Keep up the good work.

Peggy Schakelford  
Pollock Pines, California

We enjoy your publication very much and want to continue receiving it. May the Lord bless your efforts this coming year.

Yours in Christ,  
Albert and Jean Versic  
Lodi, California

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