

Integrity

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INTEGRITY, a journal published by an independent nonprofit corporation, is intended to be 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.

Readers' Response

Thank you *Integrity* for your informing and challenging articles. Keep up the good work.

Helen Berg
Port Arthur, Texas

We are glad to give our little bit to help out with your effort to spread the "Good News."

Homer and Elva Matson
Jefferson, Oregon

. . . A donation to help ensure your continuing publication of *Integrity*. It seems to be unique in the issues it consistently probes.

I appreciate your effort to help us with the spiritual needs.

Myrtle Clark
New Braunfels, Texas

Enclosed is my contribution for this year to *Integrity*. I have enjoyed and profited from the magazine.

Ernest E. Lyon
Louisville, Kentucky

Please accept this small gift toward your ministry. We appreciate the truth and grace reflected in your publication.

Kevin and Suzanne Bowling
Lansing, Michigan

Thank you for your efforts in the kingdom and may you be continually enabled to seek the Lord with your whole heart.

Dave and Peggy Fitzpatrick
Fenton, Michigan

January/February 1988

Integrity

Editorial: Greetings!

Arrogance
Hoy Ledbetter

Gracious Living
Beverly Choate Dowdy

Dives' Brother (Luke 16:27-31)
Elton D. Higgs

On Feeling God and Feeling Good
Don Crawford

What Should We Do?
Curtis D. Lloyd

Intercepted Correspondence

Readers' Response

Jan.-Feb. 1988
Vol. 18, No. 1

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GREETINGS!

Greetings to *Integrity* Readers!

Your notes and letters sent over the holiday months have been very encouraging to all of us on the *Integrity* Board. Many of you have written that you appreciate our effort to print open discussion on a variety of concerns and that you consider the tone of the magazine to be encouraging. Thank you and praise God!

If you ever wonder how we determine topics for publication, the answer comes in two steps. First, we ask God to lead us. Then, through group discussion at our board meetings, we ask each other: what we are studying, teaching, learning, and experiencing individually and within our respective churches. We often talk about what we have heard preached, or what we have read, or what conversations have influenced us. Through these discussions the Spirit regularly gives us direction and concrete ideas. Then Board members themselves may offer to do some writing. Often we solicit articles from suggested writers who are known to have been enlightening on a given topic. Sometimes we (gratefully!) receive ideas and even unsolicited articles from readers who have been moved to write us.

Publishing *Integrity* is a great joy to us (except for the deadlines!) and as long as it seems to fill a need for you, then we shall enthusiastically "hang in there."

In this issue we have an article by Hoy Ledbetter from his study in I Corinthians. Hoy writes clearly, to the point, with gentleness and humor, and this article is no exception. We think you will enjoy a new writer to *Integrity*: Beverly Dowdy, whose very first paragraph pulls you right into her thoughts and teachings on living a life of grace. Curtis Lloyd challenges us with a 20th century opportunity for further unity among believers. Don Crawford offers a fresh perspective of Jim and Tammi Bakker's influence that is worth thinking about. Elton Higgs' poem probingly illustrates Christ's parable of the rich man and Lazarus.

With this issue we begin a new type of article (for us) that we think will become a regular feature of *Integrity* that you won't

(Continued on page 3)

HOY LEDBETTER

Once upon a time a man came to my door and asked if he might talk with me about some religious questions which he thought were important. Judging from the literature in his hand that he was affiliated with a group noted for its sectarian attitude, I was reluctant to invite him in. But he seemed to be gentle and sincere, and the fact that I thought he had an honest face only proved how wrong we can be in judging by appearances. I told him I would love to talk with him on one condition: "If you will show me I am wrong, I will change. Will you make me the same proposition?"

"Oh, no, I will never change," he answered. "If you cut my throat, I will not change."

"You will not change even if you find out you are wrong?"

"No, not then, not ever, will I change!"

Now open minded dialogue is so important to the maintenance of fellowship that I have always tried to keep it going even under the cloud of impending failure. But once in a while I lose heart in continuing the conversation. This was one of those times. Since my visitor had no real interest in truth, the only basis upon which we might have come together was his own sectarian terms, and I was not interested in joining a party.

(Continued from page 2)

want to miss. We hope you find "Intercepted Correspondence" not only humorous, but thought provoking and helpful to your Christian walk.

Next month Dean Smith returns with the second of his series studying Galatians 3:28. We also look forward to a response from Ron Fisher

On another occasion a young man took it upon himself to show me and some friends how we could become "spiritual." Bearing with his frequent misuse of Scripture and his implications that even though we were respected spiritual leaders and teachers, we were not really Christians, we listened patiently for a good while. When I finally challenged his misrepresentation of Paul's view of women, he brought a quick end to our debate by saying, "You cannot possibly understand this passage — as I do — because you have not been baptized in the Holy Spirit." My astonished request for clarification yielded this conclusion: since I was not a tongues-speaker, I could not understand the Scriptures; but since he was, he always understood perfectly. At that point it became clear to me that we had nothing to talk about.

Too Exclusionistic

The basis upon which that man claimed superiority was only incidental; it could have been any one of innumerable distinctions by which professing Christians have set themselves apart from their brothers and sisters. But such arrogance (let us not mince words, for that is

to the article entitled: Freedom for Men & Women written in Jan/Feb 1987.

Let us hear from you. And please keep us in your prayers!

Diane and Bruce Kilmer
Co-Editors

what we are talking about) is extremely dangerous. In this case—as it always does—its denied to me and my friends the right to have our own standing under the lordship of Jesus, since he sought to dictate the terms of our faith.

It is said that some people get credit for being cheerful when they are actually just proud of their teeth. So the pride that parades as piety — notwithstanding its lofty pretensions and, perhaps, general acceptance — is a denial of the very first evidence of spirituality, which is love. For, as Paul told the Corinthians, “Love is not arrogant” (1 Cor. 13:4). This point deserves to be stressed: if it is arrogant, it is not love, and if it is love, it is not arrogant.

But why did Paul choose for this universally beloved text the word “arrogant”? The Greek word, but for one exception, is used exclusively in the New Testament in reference to the Corinthian Christians. This fact suggests that arrogance was deeply involved in the Corinthian sectarianism, and an examination of the individual passages will not only yield a good commentary on the statement “love is not arrogant,” but will also help us to diagnose spiritual illness among ourselves.

In 1 Corinthians 4:6, Paul said he had written as he did “in order that no one of you might become arrogant on behalf of one against the other.” Their need for this preventive instruction is illustrated by the choosing of sides around the party slogans mentioned in chapter 1: “I am of Paul, “I of Apollos,” “I of Cephas,” and “I of Christ.” To all such factious posturing there is a dangerous negative side, for schismatics not only line up “*in behalf of one,*” but they do so “*against the other.*”

That “arrogant” is the proper word to denote this divisiveness is shown by the questions which follow in 4:7. “For who regards you as superior?” The probable answer is, “Nobody but yourself, for you have no right to assume superiority.”

“And what do you have that you did not receive?” Any special endowment — whether speech, insight, or charisma — is only a gift, and therefore in no way indicates superiority of the possessor.

“But if you did receive it, why do you boast

as if you have not received it?” Such boasting might sometimes escape discovery under the guise of “glorifying God for his blessings” or “claiming the power of the Holy Spirit,” but Paul’s blunt word for it is arrogance.

Claiming Power

The arrogant person is, by definition, “one who demands more power or consideration than is rightly his.” He arrogates, which means “to claim, take, or assume without right.” The power assumed by the Corinthian schismatics was not authentic; it was something they had seized by taking advantage of other people, and it did not rightly belong to them. Such usurpers might strut and “let off esteem” in the apostle’s absence, but they could never stand up against real power, as Paul suggested in saying, “Now some have become arrogant, as though I were not coming to you.” When he came, he went on to say, he would “find out, not the words of those who are arrogant, but their power. For the kingdom of God does not consist in words, but in power” (1 Cor. 4:18-20). So their coveted eloquence meant nothing. “An ass,” as George Eliot put it, “may bray a good while before he shakes the stars down.”

Paul’s power, on the other hand, was authentic — power which he was commissioned to use for building up, but not for tearing down, and which restrained him from “lording it over” the faith of others. Arrogance is always destructive and devious, whereas legitimate power is constructive and unifying.

Too Inclusionistic

But exclusionism was not the only effect of arrogance at Corinth; they were also guilty of an inclusive arrogance that was equally reprehensible. In addressing the well-known case of the fornicator who had his father’s wife, Paul asserted, “You have become arrogant, and have not mourned instead, in order that the one who had done this deed might be removed from your midst” (1 Cor. 5:2).

We can only guess at the exact cause of the Corinthians becoming arrogant in the face of

a situation that called for weeping. Perhaps it was an exaggerated view of freedom which led them to soar above old rules which they regarded as obsolete. Or maybe they were just too caught up in their own spiritual experience to be bothered by such things. But whatever it was, they made a deadly blunder. As C.K. Barrett has noted, “any community inculcating moral standards is bound to recognize a degree beyond which transgression of its code becomes intolerable, because it is destructive of the foundations on which the community itself rests, so that exclusion becomes necessary.”

Such extreme inclusiveness is still a problem in some churches, and often for reasons we find understandable if not acceptable. Those who have escaped from a religious life measured by rules and regulations which seemed to say that man was made for the sabbath and not the sabbath for man, may find it hard to enforce any regulations at all. In fleeing from legalism they have thrown themselves into the arms of antinomianism. This is one reason why some so-called progressive churches have perished. Because nobody was willing or able to draw the boundaries, they became exhausted in an all-consuming pursuit of their own identity. People cannot give a cross-bearing commitment to something when they really do not know what it is.

Another problem is discipline. Many of us have seen the Biblical procedures of excommunication used exclusively to rid the church of dissenters, and often innocuous ones at that, without any apparent concern for the spiritual well-being of the object of such action. We are, of course, right in repudiating a discipline which is merely punitive (and therefore in effect a form of persecution) and not rather remedial, but a church which has trouble defining and detecting sin among its own members and never feels any need to stand aloof from moral offenders has no foundation for real community.

There are, of course, reasons other than pride for excessive tolerance, but the history of the church reflects such proneness to this sin that we would be wise to subject ourselves to some serious self-examination, which is not easy for the arrogant to do. It is not too hard to find people who proudly repudiate the arrogance of their past, when in fact they have not changed at all; they have just become arrogant about different things.

Knowledge and Arrogance

Another instructive reference to Corinthian arrogance is in 1 Corinthians 8:1, where Paul said, “Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies.” I can personally testify how easy it is to resist this statement. I grew up in an at-

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Also available:

“Woman’s Place in Church Activity” by Norman L. Parks, \$2.00 each, \$1.50 each in lots of ten or more.

Audio tapes of the seminar, “Biblical Interception and the Restoration Plea for Unity,” held in Fenton, Michigan, in October 1986 are available. They feature Dr. Leroy Garrett, Dr. Walter Zorn and Dr. J. Harold Thomas. The cost for the six, 90-minute tapes is \$20 and includes a storage case and shipping charges for the set.

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mosphere where love usually had to take a back seat to knowledge. "Is this the loving thing to do?" was not a question we often asked. But we were well instructed in our peculiar system of interpretation, which we constantly used to win arguments and confound our numerous enemies. We took pride in having the truth when no one else did, and we thought our extreme dogmatism was merely "speaking the truth in love" (thus giving lip-service to "love" but always emphasizing "truth" when we said it), but others thought we were arrogant and bigoted as we refused to have any fellowship with those who lacked our knowledge.

That is the sort of mentality Paul deals with in 1 Corinthians 8. To us as well as to the gnostic-happy saints at Corinth, Paul points out that no matter how much a person knows, it is still not enough; that is to say, "he has not yet known as he ought to know" (8:2). Besides, the important question is not what you know, but who knows you, and "if any one loves God, he is known by him" (8:3). Since our knowledge is at best relative, it is a very shaky foundation upon which to take our stand.

Furthermore, Paul says our knowledge may be severely limited, even in basic theology, without endangering our identity as Christians. The arrogant group of Christians knew "that there is no God but one," that "there is no such thing as an idol," but it was also a fact that "not all men have this knowledge" (8:4, 7). It has come as quite a blow to some of us to suppose that someone who actually thought there might be something to a pagan god might have a better standing than we did, if he loved God and was therefore known by him.

We know what we know because we have been taught. And those who have had good teachers, who have left them with exceptional knowledge, are richly blessed. But still that happy circumstance is not a measure of one's acceptance in heaven. When Paul speaks in this chapter of "your knowledge" and "this liberty of yours," he makes it clear that the possessive pronouns refer to man only and are not binding upon God. This is not to say that in the kingdom of heaven "ignorance is bliss," but poverty of knowledge is not quite as damaging as some of us thought. In any church, love that edifies is better than knowledge which makes arrogant.

These passages highlight the context in which Paul wrote that "love is not arrogant." These, and the single occurrence of the Greek verb "be arrogant" outside 1 Corinthians (in Colossians 2:18, where the reference is to one who takes his stand on visions he has seen), show that arrogance is a sin to which Christians may be prone, and one to which those who have special gifts may be very prone. The one New Testament instance of the noun form is also in the Corinthian correspondence, when Paul later expressed his fear that when he returned to Corinth he would find "arrogance" there. Paul knew, as we ought, that this is no easy sin to overcome. But it must be overcome. It cannot coexist with vital love, for "love is not arrogant."

Hoy, founding editor and Editor-in-Chief of *Integrity* for 15 years, presently serves First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Albany, Georgia with his wife Jary and daughter Priscilla.

Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful. — Samuel Johnson

And in your teaching show integrity, gravity, and sound speech that cannot be censured. Tit. 2:7-8

Is not your fear of God your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope? Job 4:6

Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness and according to the integrity that is in me. Ps. 7:8

He is a shield to those who walk in integrity. Prov. 2:7

But thou hast upheld me because of my integrity, and set me in thy presence for ever. Ps. 41:12

The wicked is overthrown through his evil-doing, but the righteous finds refuge through his integrity. Prov. 14:32

He who walks in integrity walks securely. Prov. 10:9

Gracious Living

BEVERLY CHOATE DOWDY

I'm knee deep in Lego's, He-Man figures and stuffed animals; my right hand is stir-frying and my left hand is wiping a dripping nose. I hear a Sesame Street tape singing, "I want a soft-boiled cookie with a glass of cookie juice on the side. . ." Suddenly, the washing machine goes out of balance, sounding off with a penetrating buzzer, while the portable phone is ringing somewhere under the pile of freshly dried towels. As I dig for the phone, breathless from running to turn off the washer, I hear a scream upstairs. Trevor has just dismembered the Lego robot Christopher has painstakingly been building since early morning. The voice on the other end of the line says, "Mrs. Dowdy, have you had a chance to subscribe to *Southern Living*? It is full of home decorating and gardening ideas, gourmet recipes and many interesting articles on tourism in the South. It is the essence of gracious living. . ."

Gracious living? What is it? Is it the state of uncluttered formal ambience of the decorating magazine dining rooms? Is it those candlelight buffets, complete with duck and raspberry sauce? Is it entertaining on the deck on summer evenings with the Brie and Chablis set? Perhaps these scenarios could capture moments from an elegant lifestyle, but gracious living must be something more. Truly gracious living, I believe, is life that responds to God's gift of grace to us expressed in Christ Jesus by obeying him and reflecting his generosity and forgiveness to others.

Family Grace

I was thinking about the idea of reflecting God's grace in our home recently when I came across a book of essays by a man named Jay Kessler. Kessler apparently is a leader in Youth for Christ, a parachurch organization with evangelical roots. The little volume, *Growing*

Places, mentioned a study done by Merton Strommen's Youth Research Center in Minneapolis. Strommen randomly selected a thousand high-school youths from across the nation who belonged to an evangelical denomination. Each youth answered a survey of 200 questions on family life while his parents were in another room answering the same questions as they thought their teenager would answer them. Strommen supposed that if the parent and child answered similarly, it would indicate a certain closeness and good understanding between parent and teenager. If there was a wide divergence in the parent's and the youth's answers they could be strangers to each other. Strommen's data and follow-up interviews bore out his expectations.

Of all the findings in this study the one that was the most interesting was the effect the parents' religious faith had on the relationship with their teenager. As he examined the 150-parent-teenager groupings with the highest number of similar answers compared to the 150 groupings with the lowest number of similar answers, he found that the low-correlating parents tended to view Christianity as a religion of works — something one did. The high-correlating parents tended to view Christianity as a religion of grace—something one accepts as a gift. Strommen concluded, "A committed, intrinsic Christian faith is best communicated by adults who are not only accurate in their empathic relationships, but also gospel oriented in their faith." Kessler poses it this way, "Could it be that teenagers are rejecting their parents' faith because it is based on works and not on grace?"

I began to ask myself some questions. What do my children perceive about my faith in God? Is my religion an achievement of some sort? Is it a checklist of duties, performances and

results, or is it a response to tremendous love and sacrifice on the part of God toward all of us? Is it a relationship or a project? Is it a list of do's and don'ts? Is it something I use to control behaviors I find unpleasant or is it a call to great kindness in response to great kindness?

Reflecting His Grace

As these questions came to mind so did this rendering of Romans 3:27-28 by J.B. Phillips:

What happens now to human pride of achievement? There is no more room for it. Why, because failure to keep the Law has killed it? Not at all, but because the whole matter is now on a different plane—believing instead of achieving. We see now that a man is justified before God by the fact of his faith in God's appointed Savior and not by what he has managed to achieve under the Law.

In order to partake in the gracious living God has made possible for me, I must believe that God's appointed Savior has expressed to me specifically that I am loved and that there is atonement for my sins. The cross tells me unequivocally that these truths are not based on my merits but on the loving kindness of God. He has acted first and now wants me to respond. Gracious living for me will mean joyfully obeying God's commands. However, I am not obeying in order to earn God's love and to gain atonement for my sins. I am obedient because He has already done these for me.

Believing this way sets me free. It sets me free to say I am not perfect. I am weak. I can confess to a trusted believer that even though I hold very high ideals (so does my Christian community) and follow a perfect Lord, I am struggling. I can and must find a way to get my "empathic relationships accurate." I am free to go to someone and confess, "I am having difficulty staying faithful to my spouse—or maintaining high ethics in my business—or handling some compulsive behaviors—or loving and disciplining my children appropriately. . ." I can be vulnerable enough to seek counsel and help, because His grace is sufficient for my weakness.

Empowered by the Spirit

Gracious living for me is empowered not by my own steam or my own nature, but by the Holy Spirit. This Spirit within me will help me with my weakness, aid my communication with God, convict me of sin, lead me to truth, give me boldness to share my faith, as well as provide power, love and self-control. This is just the beginning! I do not want to oversimplify or limit the possibilities of how the Spirit of God works, but I am certain of this: The Spirit does work through the Word. Perhaps the single most practical thing I can do to continue to grow in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ is to let the Word remind me of His redemptive work. I recently heard a sister say that it is very hard for the Holy Spirit to help us with scripture we do not read.

As I consider the prospects of gracious living in my home, I know it is not dependent on the material things that I have to show or consume. It is bound up in what God has done for me and is demonstrated in how I give to others. God has loved me and forgiven me when I was living way below his standards and expectations. Now, he wants me to do this for others. He wants me to do this for my immediate family and my extended family as well. Isn't this where the rubber meets the road? Husband forgets an anniversary. Babies spit up on you the moment you arrive somewhere in your "dry-clean-only" clothes. Our natural affection for these creatures can warm the fires after these minor fiascos but what sustains us through the years? Our remembrance of how much we have been forgiven and accepted at a time when we were powerless and full of sin can help us model that forgiveness to our husbands, children, parents and "in-laws." In everything from the petty irritations to true hurts and disappointments we can reflect the grace of God to those with whom we live and work.

Teach the Children

Our example of forgiveness and generosity is helpful and important in relating gracious living to our children. Yet, we know that this will not quite get the total picture across because of

our weaknesses. We must teach our children God's Word to truly round out the picture. I think it is very important to do more than just read them stories from the Bible. Along with that, why not give them some theological perspective? For example, what thoughtful ten-year-old can find anything really wonderful about the story of Jacob, Esau, Rebecca and their escapades? The little moral about how rotten it is for parents to show favoritism may have some importance, but why not take this as a chance to begin teaching of the nature of God's grace working redemptively in history? Jacob (Israel) received the blessing not because he deserved it, earned it, or inherited it by natural birthright. He received it because God let him have it. God worked even in bad circumstances to bless Israel. Teaching this way may provoke many more questions about God, but scripture can stand up to questions and our children are often quite ready to deal with some. Let's not sell them short.

We can also communicate gracious living to our children through scripture by taking advantage of those teachable moments when they come home from school truly maligned by some other child. What a great time to share with them what Jesus said about loving those who mistreat us and to teach them to pray by name for the person that has wronged them. How about those times when they know they have missed the mark? We can tell them about David, the man after God's own heart, who messed up, too. We can teach our children about repentance and forgiveness and that even great men in the Bible have been in their shoes.

Work Graciously

One final area I would like to consider in the context of gracious living in our homes is our attitude about the works that we do for others in the body of Christ and in the community. Paul said that the grace of God in him was not without effect but that he worked harder than anyone. I doubt, though, that he could ever have been quoted as saying that he "prayed as if everything depended on God and worked as if it all depended on him." I do not think he would

have kept the faith or finished the course so well. Paul knew that it does all depend on God. Even good works have been created beforehand that we might walk in them. When we work for the brothers and sisters or for our neighbors motivated by God's generosity rather than a desire to justify ourselves, to work off some guilt or to please people, wonderful things happen to us. We can actually offer hospitality without grumbling or secretly wishing we did not have to do so. We can go beyond the world's social standards and make our homes places where hospitality is offered across social class lines and is extended to those who cannot repay.

Barclay mentions in a commentary on Romans 12 that there is a type of giving that comes from a "grim sense of duty instead of a radiant sense of joy." He says Christian giving and sharing is "*haplotes*," which he translates as a combination of simplicity and generosity. We can give and share in our church fellowship and in our community with joy when we are using our gifts from God and when we believe in our hearts that we are all recipients of the Great Gift.

Now, I could strive for some of that uncluttered elegance of the magazines, but praise God! I can be a partaker of gracious living long before the Legos are picked up and the laundry is folded.

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Beverly, presently a full time homemaker, received a social science degree from Harding University and has taught at both high school and college levels. Beverly, her husband Ken, and their two small sons worship with the Chisholm Hills Church of Christ in Florence, Alabama.

Dives' Brother

(Luke 16:27-31)

How gaunt the face
That stares at him from beggar's rags —
So like a face that used to haunt his
brother's gate,
And caught the crumbs of excess food
That dropped from sated hands and mouths
Of those who ate but were not filled.

And as he stops, the ghostly lips intone:
"Your suffering brother sends you word
That feasting here will have an end,
And you will envy what I now endure,
As over there you pay for hardened heart
And wasted life, embracing all he left."

The living brother blinks
At dead mens' words and briefly thinks
Of Moses' laws about compassion for
the poor;
But much too long have unrepentant ears
Refused the word of God.
He shrugs his shoulders, walks away,
Puts Lazarus out of mind.

— Elton D. Higgs

Elton, a long time member of the *Integrity* board, is a regular contributing writer. He and his wife Laquita reside in Dearborn, Michigan.

On Feeling God And Feeling Good

DON CRAWFORD

Well, how about the Jim and Tammi Bakker fiasco and the media attack on the media evangelists attacking one another? As I watch all of the daily developments on the networks and hear the comments of callers to radio talk

shows, I keep thinking of the title of a Tony Campolo book, "We've Met The Enemy And They Are Partly Right." If what is presented in these "Christian" broadcasts and in the extensive empires of their leaders is Christianity,

then sadly our secular society's negative critique of our faith seems apropos.

Lessons to Learn

There are many lessons to be learned from this episode. One is the inherent dangers of alienating a culture by presenting a commercialized Christianity. Another is the perceived hypocrisy of using the message of Christ as a means of manipulating gullible people for personal gain. Still another is the precarious nature of any ministry which focuses upon a particular human personality rather than upon Jesus Christ. All of these have been pointed out often in the recent media barage.

But the thing I haven't mentioned is the most alarming of all the factors in this situation. It is the factor which not only is true of Bakker, but true of a great deal of his audience as well. It is also the factor which makes it almost predictable that one's feelings and passions will get him into trouble of some sort. That factor? The belief that it is through one's inner feelings that truth is found, that one comes to know God, and that one finds out where God is leading him. Just last night, another media evangelist was proclaiming in the midst of this media blitz on TV evangelists that we need to let God's Spirit bear witness with our spirit to know the truth. Of course, she explained, by this she meant that His spirit would do so through the medium of our internal feelings and impulses.

Following Feelings

This mentality, which unfortunately is rampant on the contemporary evangelical scene, sets one up to follow one's passions wherever they lead, believing that one is in tune with God. One only has to turn the corner from "You will know the truth by looking inside your heart" to get to "How can it be wrong when it feels so right?" One day you are paying attention to your inner feelings to confirm that God is real and is alive in your life. The next day every feeling within you is crying out with great might that you should enter into an adulterous relationship. Everything *in* you is responding to the appeal of it. It feels so good, so wholesome,

so right. Upon what basis do you accept the feelings you felt yesterday which confirmed God in your life and reject the feelings today which tell you this temptation is all right?

This is exactly the concern expressed by Martin Luther to Thomas Mincer in their debate over the leading of the spirit almost 500 years ago. Luther had no doubt *some* spirit would lead Mincer via Mincer's inner impulses. He just questioned *which* spirit! This question still seems relevant both for Jim Bakker and for us. A self-validating religion is not far off from a religion which validates what is in the self.

There is, on the other hand, a great chasm between a god who is known to be alive because "he lives in my heart" and a God who is known to be alive because in history He got up from the dead and lives again, regardless of whether anyone ever knows it. And there is a great difference between appealing for people to believe in Christianity because it will make you feel better and appealing for people to believe in Christianity because it is true.

Is this to say that our experience of God is not important? Of course not. But it does say that it is not nearly as important as is our faith in Him, whether or not we feel Him. Our experience of Him has some value not because in it we somehow validate His existence, but because in it He validates us. The Greek stoics came to understand by their own reasoning, "In Him we live and move and have our being," and not vice versa. Or as Paul by revelation from God says, "the man who loves God is **known by God.**" (I Cor. 8:3, NIV) Yes, the Spirit does bear witness with our spirit. But when He does so, it is not to affirm truth about God. It is to confirm within us the truth about us which God has already given us: we are His children! (Rom. 8:15-17) If only Jim Bakker had understood this, if only He had not oriented his life so much around his inner feelings, then he might not have held the Lord up to ridicule and his own life to self-destruction.

Don, Gloria, and their three children reside in Austin, Texas, where Don is minister to the Campus Community Church of Christ at the University of Texas. He also hosts a weekly call-in program on KLBB radio.

What Should We Do?

CURTIS D. LLOYD

The history of the Restoration Movement has been built on the idea of all Christians working together and coming to a common ground based on the Scriptures. Wherever a person or a group has insisted on some authority other than the Bible, frustration and division has been the outcome. I am convinced that the Restoration Movement has a greater opportunity today than ever before. I refuse to relegate these vital principles to the past alone and, hence, will not use the phrase many are using, "Restoration Heritage." Such brethren are suggesting no present vitality or future vigor! The scene is not always as promising as it should be, and if we don't step through open doors when they are presented, such negative views may well represent reality in our diverse brotherhood.

Such an open door may be **CONGRESS 88**, a national gathering of 15,000 church leaders and members committed to reaching out to the 90 million unchurched Americans. CONGRESS 88 will be held at the Rosemont/Horizon Convention Center near Chicago August 4 to August 8, 1988. The stated goals of the gathering are:

1. To celebrate Jesus Christ as Savior and Sovereign for America and for the world.
2. To challenge churches to demonstrate God's love by responding to the needs of society today.

3. To demonstrate American churches' unity of purpose to reach the 90 million unchurched persons in the USA.
4. To provide inspiration, instruction, and motivation for American churches to gather the harvest for God's kingdom in the USA.

I will not draw many conclusions about the point of bringing together the major Christian denominations to focus on evangelism in America until I see some of the outcomes. However, I was able to attend a plenary session this past summer, and I found the expressed attitudes of cooperation heartwarming. Many were suggesting that denominationalism has not worked and, hence, is a chapter of the past. Change must take place if significant progress is to be made. Wow! I was pleased that nearly 15% of those in attendance were brethren of the Restoration Movement. What should they do about such an open door? Will you walk through the door of opportunity? Do you think that Campbell, Scott, Stone or others would have perked up at such an idea of unity?

Curtis, a member of the *Integrity* board, brings a background of experience that includes 11 years of full time church ministry and 18 years of service to Great Lakes Bible College. He and his wife Carole reside in Grand Ledge, Michigan.

For further information write:

CONGRESS 88
P.O. Box 17093
Washington, DC 22041

Did you ever read C.S. Lewis' book: *The Screwtape Letters*? His imaginary correspondence between a senior devil and his charge revealed an entirely unusual point of view for us — Satan's. In those letters the two devils would discuss deliberate plans for the subversion of the church. They would always refer to Jesus as "the Enemy," and would speak fearfully and obediently of Lucifer. Perhaps the most shocking effect Lewis' letters had on the reader was for the reader to often

recognize him or herself "the mark" — ignorantly and cooperatively slipping right into the devils' plans.

The concept of "intercepted correspondence" has been tantalizing folks on the *Integrity* Board. For it seems to us that publishing similar "letters" could still serve as distinctly positive purpose: to see ourselves as Satan sees us — and to move us to mend our ways. The setting is imaginary, but the resemblance to ourselves is purposeful.

Intercepted Correspondence

Dear *Integrity* Readers,

It seems that everything these days is somehow related to computers. Thinking that I had resisted the computer age too long, I signed up for a computer class offered by a local community college. Little did I realize how much of this age I would discover!

While practicing in the school computer lab late one night, I accidentally found some strange correspondence saved in my computer's memory. At first I thought it was some kind of joke. But as I read the correspondence and the additions that appeared as time went on, I realized I had stumbled upon plans more evil, more subtle, more destructive than I could have imagined possible! The correspondence appeared to be between some type of person or

spirit or being who was training and directing another "someone" to infiltrate and destroy a Christian community from within.

Because I cannot be sure who this tempter really is, or if there are more like him or her living in your communities, I have decided to copy these horrible messages and publish them here as a warning to us all. Should these messages or this magazine suddenly cease, you will know I have been found out! Circulate this intercepted correspondence carefully!

With love and fearful concern,

Bruce

Dear Ichabod,

Since the recent termination of the services of your cousin Wormwood, I have been much at pains to select a successor who is capable of and willing to take up the valiant struggle against our common Enemy and his all-too-numerous tribe.

Your name has been submitted to me, and I must say that I am giving serious considera-

tion to your appointment.

Before making such a significant move, however, I shall require incontrovertible evidence both that you are capable and worthy of such a vital role in our warfare. To qualify, you will be required to complete a successful internship whose duration is at the moment indeterminate and under rigid scrutiny at all

times. You will not know your observer. I should like to set forth some absolute guidelines to which you must conform, since you will be acting as my immediate emissary, and your successes or failures will have a significant—I should even say a vital—effect upon our entire work.

You will be assigned to a location of some importance, where you are to observe carefully and analyze for possible courses of action, then submit your 'game plan' for approval before beginning any significant activities whatsoever. You will not question the veto of any portion, or all of the submitted plan.

Your primary objective at all times (sometimes ultimate, sometimes immediate) will be to disrupt, divide, and frustrate the Enemy's camp.

You must fully and unhesitatingly carry out to completion any task to which you may be assigned. An incomplete or reluctant performance cannot be tolerated. You are to use every means available to enforce your plans. However, you must know that our Enemy will not permit you to visit his followers with death. Bestowing life and death lies solely within his power.

You may assume any pose or disguise deemed most appropriate to the task at hand. You will be required to take the role of one of the Enemy's own citizens, and, through this means, work to the fullest destructive ends of his kingdom.

You are never to reveal yourself in your true identity. You may, of course, capitalize upon your objects' foibles, prejudices, ignorance, presumptions and character flaws without hesitation. Turning one of the Enemy's citizens upon another will be an essential aspect of your labors, using any means whatsoever, provided only that they prove beneficial to our cause.

You must not engage in demeaning, open debate. Let your effectiveness be realized through subtlety in which you do not deny, but question; you do not contradict, but imply possible errors or alternatives in the Enemy's program.

You are to become thoroughly familiar with the Enemy's book of authority, the "Holy Bi-

ble," to the degree of quoting suitable extracts—for your purposes—to fit various circumstances. Always speak of the book in reverential tones, and, when the occasion arises, defend opinionated views of its teachings with tenacity and convincing argument. You need not believe it; you *must* not!

Finally, and most important of all, you will be expected to appear to be duplicating the lives, beliefs and practices of the Enemy's followers. All influences, counsels and messages must be designed and presented in a manner you have found to flow naturally from them.

Now I should like two things of you. You must vow unreservedly to observe the above stipulations; and, I should like from you as soon as possible and in specific detail a feasible plan for your first attack: those toward whom the attack is aimed, the method to be employed in carrying out your plan, contingencies in the event of failure of any of the details of the plan, and the primary objective in mind when the attack is launched.

Your mission, should you be willing to accept it, will relocate you to reside at 666 Broad Way, Topeka, KS, 66699 under the name of Ichabod Wiley. You will immediately become a member of the Broad Way Church of Christ. This places you in a prestigious congregation in a sizeable city on the western fringe of the "Bible Belt"—an ideal place for your introduction to your career. You are to observe the conduct, then duplicate the talk, dress, social habits, worship habits and traditions. *Attend all their worship services without fail.* You are to participate to whatever degree you may be asked, precisely in the manner observed as tradition. You are to volunteer beyond this for social, charitable deeds, abstaining from any activities which are inharmonious with these guidelines.

May I hear from you at the earliest possible moment, from your present address if you are unable or unwilling to accept the assignment, or from 666 Broad Way if you will.

Your affectionate uncle,

Apollyon Lucifer Pitts

Ichabod Wiley
666 Broad Way
Topeka, KA 66699

The Most Reprobate Apollyon Pitts
Undercover Coordinator
c/o Special Assignments Division

Dear Uncle Apollyon,

I am now ensconced in the residence you provided for me, and I have identified myself with the congregation of the Enemy's people that you designated. I must say that the smugness with which many of them embrace their "Christian" way of life makes my job much easier. I feel quite at home with such people, except that it is rather amazing to see how absolutely oblivious they are to the real power of the Enemy. Having lived so long in the shadow of the Enemy's relentless intention to bring us into His judgment, I find it strange to be surrounded by people who are quite deadened with material comforts. I know that the idea of a self-contained material world is one of our most effective deceits, but it's one thing to peddle it in the abstract and quite another to experience it in a human context. I don't know how they can be so blithe as to ignore the spiritual dimension of reality, especially when they still profess to believe in it! But who am I to look a gift horse in the mouth, as they say.

I have, however, encountered some of the "resolute" Christians that you referred to, and I am learning, as you anticipated, the need to develop a more subtle approach. I have found that these people often have weak spots in the very places where they think they are strong. For example, I heard a leader in the congregation say just the other day that he was proud that the order of the Sunday morning service had not been changed in fifteen years, and that people no doubt appreciated the stability represented in that fact. I was quick to reinforce him, since in my observation most people de-

pend on the familiarity of the order of service to make them feel good, regardless of how unsettling and re-directive the substance of the service might be if they really paid attention to it. I think I can stir up a bit of a stink by being equally supportive of some people who for years have agitated to introduce some variety into the services. Since either party is equally susceptible to wanting a good thing for the wrong reasons, there should be no difficulty in bringing them into open conflict over this matter, particularly if each side can be persuaded that it has a corner on spiritual maturity. Perhaps I can get appointed to the worship committee.

Another opportunity that seems ripe is the frantic schedule of some of the most active people in the congregation. In their zeal to do the Enemy's work, they have become involved in more activities than they can handle effectively, and their frustration and fatigue not only interfere with keeping in touch with the Enemy, but generate self-righteous feelings of being alone in wanting to do the "work of the church." That last concept has marvelous mis-directive possibilities: I have been surprised at how easily ambitious church programs can become a distraction from what the Enemy really wants to accomplish.

As to reading the "Holy Bible": I have found it really tough going. The Spirit of the Enemy keeps tugging at my common sense, urging me to believe that He really cares for and suffers with His creation. It is a powerful and seductive Book. One of my chief objectives from now on will be not to make people disbelieve it, but rather to make them neglect it; or to make them assume that they have already gotten out of it all they need to, and that rereading it would just be a waste of time. It is a dangerous Book, and I have taken it too lightly up until now.

Yours in the cause of Lucifer,

Ichabod