

IS THIS THE LAST ISSUE OF *INTEGRITY*?

Dear Integrity reader,

If you are one of the 85% of our readership who did not respond to our recent annual appeal letter, please read on:

After this issue of *Integrity* journal is mailed to you, our funds will be depleted.

For 30 years the publication of *Integrity* has depended upon the generosity of its readers. Some have advised us to charge subscriptions. We've resisted that route over the years for several reasons, but the main reason is this:

We prefer to interpret your financial response or the lack of response as God's leading regarding whether or not to continue *Integrity's* ministry as a truth-exploring journal, speaking of our fellowship in knowing God, serving Christ, and being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Some of you cannot afford to make a donation, we know.

But those of you who wish to see *Integrity* continue and are able to send a financial contribution, **please do so now.** Your four annual issues will cost about \$16 this year to publish. Of course, if we continue to send the magazine to all who request it, some of whom cannot afford to contribute this much, we will need some larger donations to compensate for the shortfall.

Our readership has doubled in the last five years.

Please turn this paper over and read on . . .



(Continued from the front)
Our Board is experiencing renewed enthusiasm under the fresh editorial leadership and resources of Curtis McClane and Noreen Bryant. And with their guidance we have given the journal a new, creative format. Board discussions and prayers about the future issues are filled with a sense of eager anticipation.

Consequently, we on the Board have no sense that *Integrity's* ministry is at an end, except for this empty bank account, which is a welcome reminder that, all along, God has always been the Sustainer of this ministry through you.

But we want to test our perception by setting the matter before our readers. We trust that the Lord is going to use your response to determine whether the next issue of *Integrity*—and succeeding issues—ought to be published. We await His direction and hope to hear from you soon.

On behalf of the Board of Directors,

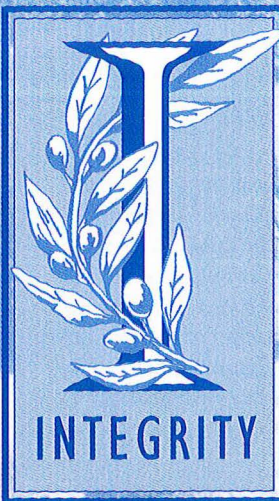
Diane G. H. Kilmer

P.S.—If you would like to contribute to continue *Integrity*, please send a check TODAY to our treasurer, Jan Van Horn, at 4860 Livernois, Troy, MI 48098. Please excuse the lack of a reply envelope. We just didn't have the funds to print and send them.



5393 Crooks Road
PMB 44
Troy, MI 48098
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ROYAL OAK, MI
PERMIT NO. 696



INTEGRITY

WINTER 1999/2000

VOLUME 30

NUMBER 4

IMMERSED IN LIVING STREAMS

*Learning from
Other Believers*



ALL ABOUT INTEGRITY

Integrity is a quarterly journal dedicated to stimulating personal and public thought, prayer, and discussion about living the Christian life. Its roots are in Restoration Movement Christianity, encompassing Churches of Christ, Churches of Christ/Christian Churches, and the Disciples of Christ, but Integrity strives for unity among all Christians. Published by a nonprofit corporation, Integrity is intended to be a ministry of reconciliation which utilizes the varied talents of a large community of believers. These believers, united in faith but divergent in opinions, seek to accurately reveal God to both the church and the world so that all may become one as He is one. Accordingly, it should not be assumed that the views expressed by individual authors necessarily represent the opinions of either the editors or of the Board as a whole.

Winter 1999/2000
Vol. 30, Number 4

Editor-in-Chief
Curtis McClane

Managing Editor
Noreen Bryant

Board of Directors

Bruce Bryant
Noreen Bryant
Dan Cameron
Donna Cameron
Elton D. Higgs
Laquita Higgs
Kay Kendall
Diane G. H. Kilmer
J. Bruce Kilmer
Curtis Lloyd
Carole Lloyd
Curtis McClane
Nancy McClane
Henrietta C. Palmer
William Palmer
Keith Price
Deborah Shepherd
Don Shepherd
Kelly Sprague
Steve Sprague
Jan Van Horn
John Van Horn

Board Member Emeritus

Amos Ponder
Editorial Advisors
Hoy Ledbetter
Joseph F. Jones
Diane G. H. Kilmer
J. Bruce Kilmer

Many volunteers work together to bring you this journal. If you have questions or needs, please check the directory below for the person who can best serve you:

Editorial Address
Curtis McClane
800 Trombley
Troy, MI 48083
diakonos5@juno.com

We welcome your letters, comments, and suggestions. We also welcome submissions of articles, narratives, poetry, artwork, meditations, and the like. For submissions, please send a hard copy, along with a diskette in text-only format, to Curtis McClane. You can also append your article text to an e-mail message to diakonos5@juno.com. The editors reserve the right to edit materials for length, grammar, and clarity.

Web Site
<http://www.integrityjournal.org>
(Yes! We have a new address! Put us on your "bookmarks list")

E-mail Subscriptions
Bruce Bryant
bruce@integrityjournal.org

Please include your full name, postal address, and e-mail address. You will receive the entire issue via e-mail in plain text format.

Subscriptions, Address Corrections
Steve Sprague
5393 Crooks, PMB 44
Troy, MI 48098

Subscriptions are by written request. There is no subscription charge, but we depend on your contributions, which are tax-deductible. You can reach Steve in the conventional manner, or e-mail him at ksprague@deds.edu.

Donations
Jan Van Horn
4860 Livernois
Troy, MI 48098

Did we mention that your contribution is tax-deductible? When you donate to *Integrity*, you enable us to send this journal to students and those on fixed incomes.

Back Issues
William Palmer
1607 Rockfield
Troy, MI 48098

We have over 25 years' worth of back issues on a wealth of topics. You can also access our web site, which has issues dating back to 1993.



IN THIS ISSUE:

WINTER 1999/2000

| | |
|---|----|
| Editorial: The Convergence of Living Streams | 4 |
| <i>Curtis McClane</i> | |
| What We Have Learned from our Church Odyssey | 8 |
| <i>Elton and Laquita Higgs</i> | |
| If We Think We're Right, Is Everybody Else Wrong? | 12 |
| <i>Keith Brumley</i> | |
| The Power of Rituals | 14 |
| <i>Clay Foster</i> | |
| Tongues of Flame at Pentecost | 20 |
| <i>Clay Foster</i> | |
| All Things to All People | 21 |
| <i>J. Bruce Kilmer</i> | |
| Communion Meditation | 27 |
| <i>Elton Higgs</i> | |
| One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church | 28 |
| <i>Edward Fudge</i> | |
| Meditation in Pen and Ink | 30 |
| <i>Nancy McClane</i> | |
| Christian Sex Education | 32 |
| <i>Laquita Higgs</i> | |
| The Board's Favorites | 37 |
| <i>Noreen Bryant</i> | |
| Bending the Twig | 45 |
| <i>Laquita Higgs</i> | |
| Walking Through the End Times with Jesus | 43 |
| <i>John Alan Turner</i> | |
| Kindred Spirits | 46 |



The Convergence of Living Streams

Curtis D. McClane

In my safe little haven I did not know that my surroundings were murky and full of stench. I was part of a greater whole, content with my place, knowing that the familiar rocks, eddies and whirlpools defined my reality and scripted my identity. I could not see far ahead, only around me. I did not know from whence I came, neither did I know the direction I was headed.

The lazy days of summer and the nostalgic skies of autumn had lulled me into a false sense of security.

Occasionally my world was disturbed. A large mouth bass would explode through the surface of the water and in one fell swoop grab an unsuspecting insect out of the air. Sometimes strong, blustery winds would skip across the surface and jostle me around. Once a stray dog came disrespectfully splashing through, leaving ripples and tides to disturb the place not rightfully his.

Then it happened. We all began moving as one large mass downstream. The further south we traveled, the faster we went. I cried out in agony and fear. My familiar surroundings were disappearing. The banks with their green/brown moss receded and the little eddies turned into massive, churning, writhing waters.

Everything I knew about place, survival, comfort and security no longer applied. I was rudely thrust into other streams. My experience was broadened as I met others who came from their own quiet cesspools of complacency. Imagine my surprise when face to face I found others who thought their quiet pools were the only ones around!

The place of convergence seemed like death. When we met the Ohio, and where the Ohio met the Mississippi, I thought it was all over. But I began to unsuspectingly discover new life. The smell was no longer earthy and pungent.

My vista opened up to a horizon so vast and wide my eyes could no longer take it all in at once. A freedom was experienced that before now was unknown. The familiar was replaced with the wonder of discovery. The lethargy of knowledge was replaced with the spirit of inquiry. The smug assurance of self-security was replaced with intellectual honesty and the willingness to question and learn from others.

Being a water droplet is risky business. My comfortable haven of nook and cranny gave way to the roaring experience of stream and river. For the first time I became aware of my minuscule existence

when compared to the greater whole. It was soon apparent that many droplets such as myself were needed for the greater cause of the river. Together we created an awesome force. The unity of existence and bond of fellowship provided a vast highway for travel and leisure. What one could not do nor provide, millions could.

Thirty-four years ago concern was expressed about the ability of the Stone-Campbell religious movement to learn from other Christians. One writer expressed it this way:

Not only is Christianity far vaster than the particular brotherhood of Christians to which you, or I, belong; it is also vaster historically than our generation, or than the history of America, or than the history of England. We cannot rest comfortably in our sectarian security, untroubled by the divisions which separate us. On the contrary, we must take one another seriously, and take one another's convictions seriously, fervently praying that the Spirit of God will further enlighten us all, and draw us closer together, and in His time reunite us. [Cecil L. Franklin, "Wider Horizons," in *Voices of Concern*. Edited by Robert Meyers. St. Louis, MO: Mission Messenger, 1966; page 183.]

Slowly but surely we are allowing ourselves to experience the convergence of living streams of the Holy Spirit flowing from different religious traditions. Probably the most exciting resource to help all of us in this area

has been the recent material edited and written by Richard Foster. More than any other Christian writer, he has the breadth of ecumenical vision to see the strengths and weaknesses of various religious movements.

The first resource is *Devotional Classics: Selected Readings for Individuals and Groups*. Foster and Smith highlight five traditional streams of Christian thought and writings.

The Prayer-filled Life: this is the contemplative lifestyle centered on prayer.

The Virtuous Life: this is the holiness movement emphasizing character.

The Spirit-Empowered Life: this is the charismatic empowerment.

The Compassionate Life: this is the application of social justice.

The Word-Centered Life: this focuses on the Word of Life.

Each of the five sections has selections from classic writers followed with questions, applications, and opportunities to go further in study and research if so desired by the student.

The second resource is *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*. This book gives the Christological foundation for experiencing the various Christian traditions. In this material, his newest work, Foster has added a sixth living stream. He labels it "The Incarnational Tradition: Discovering the Sacramental Life." It makes visible the realm and reality of the invisible. It testifies to the presence of God in every waking moment of our day.

Following the format of the earlier

work, Foster looks at the biblical model of Jesus representing each tradition. Then he chooses a historical figure and shares how that person represents a model for that particular tradition. In each living stream he points out the characteristics, the weaknesses, the strengths, and the challenges of each separate expression of faith.

What a great model Foster has given us! Every disciple we encounter models his or her own tradition. That disciple has strengths. That disciple has weaknesses. And that disciple has challenges to offer us in our own spiritual journey.

The richness of the Christian tradition: we have only begun to appreciate the convergence of those living streams. I understand the turbulence caused by convergence. The initial impact may cause us to lose our bearings and grope for something to hold onto. Whether we realize it or not, what we can hang onto is our own particular Christian tradition. It gives us stability in choppy waters. When fear and uncertainty threaten to pull us under, we grab for the familiar. What is familiar is healthy when it flows from the character, teachings, and presence of Jesus, our risen Lord.

We have gotten the message wrong about tradition. We either deplore and denounce it (which is a tradition in itself!), or we hold onto it come hell or high water. We forget that tradition functions as an anchor. It enables us to move out into uncertain, uncharted waters without losing our bearings. And, if indeed we are on a spiritual journey, then we cannot keep the

anchor in the water forever. We must pull it up and move on. If we venerate tradition, we become stale. If we ignore tradition, we become lost. If we deny tradition, we rev our motor but stay in the same place.

The theme of this present issue promises to be challenging! Excitement fills our hearts as we look around and see evidence of Jesus' prayer for unity being answered. Time and space do not permit me to provide specifics. Perhaps as a unity movement we have been going about this wrong. Unity is not about agreement, it is about appreciation. Appreciation of Jesus' sacrifice and prayer for religious unity. Appreciation of various religious traditions and how we got to where we are. Appreciation can then move more naturally into mutual respect and love for one another.

Have we moved our circle of experience outward to appreciate the religious traditions of others? Have I attended a Pentecostal healing service? Have I engaged in a contemplative retreat? Do I appreciate holy living and support those whose character is tested in the workplace? Am I involved in a soup kitchen or some other urban ministry? Do I rejoice when the Word is preached from an evangelical perspective other than my own? Have I gone with a friend to mass and experienced a liturgical worship? Do I appreciate the holy days on the Christian calendar and encourage my friends when they share with me those events? Perhaps we have a lot of work yet to do.

One final caveat and I'm done.

Several years ago I taught

Restoration History and Theology in one of our Christian colleges. One serious, astute, and eager student came to the class from a charismatic, Methodist background. On the final test where I asked the students to reflect on what they had learned during the semester, this was his response:

Without difficulty I am able to look back and watch my disposition in this class move from genuine interest to a total indifference. Early on I found the class to be quite inspirational as I heard voices from the past speaking words born in my own heart. It was highly gratifying as well as encouraging to know that others long before me desired Christian unity and total devotion to God's word.

I thoroughly enjoyed exploring the ideals and passions of the founders of the Restoration Movement. However, it was discouraging, almost demoralizing, to see that these ideals were unable to live beyond their pioneers. I quickly became disgusted with the divisions, exclusiveness, and plain arrogance of those who inherited the movement from its founders.

I am an outsider. The Restoration Movement is neither my history (my tradition) nor is it my future. I am still inspired by those pioneers and I hope to carry on their ideals at least

in spirit. I am grateful to have met them, but I have no desire to go beyond them.

Did you feel what I felt? My spirit sank and my heart broke when I read this testimony. Is this what others have seen about us that we have failed to see about ourselves? Does it have to be this way? How could a unity movement fail so miserably?

Perhaps that initial unity movement began with some faulty assumptions. Perhaps one faulty assumption was that unity is based on ideas rather than a relationship. And the most damaging idea of all is that there is only one stream and I am in it. Convergence was envisioned by our early pioneer fathers with language using "unity" and "union" in the same breath. The exhilaration of convergence soon gave way to the bitterness of sectarian rivalry.

But two hundred years later we have come full circle. The time is ripe and the opportunities are now for us to connect with our Christian friends and discover the depth, breadth and width of our living streams together. Are you ready to step into the water with me? Are you ready for the ride of your life?

The living streams of the Holy Spirit converge where thirsty souls come to the fountain of God. Come and drink with me as we ponder the implications of this issue!



Curtis D. McClane
Editor-in-Chief



What We Have Learned from Our Church Odyssey

Elton Higgs

My wife, Laquita, and I have been in working fellowship with congregations from three traditions of Christian fellowship: a conservative Anglican church, a Free Methodist church (the conservative wing of Methodism), and the tradition we grew up in and have now reassociated ourselves with, the Churches of Christ. We did not design this odyssey, but we believe that God has worked through our varied experiences to give us a broader perspective on church polity than we would have otherwise had. A brief history of our congregational experiences may be useful to begin with.

We both grew up in homes with strong Church of Christ (non-instrumental) histories, and we reinforced those ties by attending Abilene Christian College (as it then was called). We did not associate ourselves with any congregation outside the Churches of Christ until we were well into our thirties. At that point we were privileged to spend a year abroad in England, and because of the distance we lived from the closest Church of Christ, we cast about to find an alternative congregation that embodied much of what we

felt to be vital in a Christian fellowship. About the middle of that year we settled on the local Anglican church in our community, which was designated as St. Luke's parish church of Cranham Park. This was a small congregation, but we were struck by the warmth and evangelistic vitality in it, which was in contrast to the usual staid little Anglican churches which normally consisted mostly of older people trying to keep the church alive as a comfortable social center. St. Luke's had a generous number of younger people, and the vicar was a spiritually-minded man who was working to bring people into a meaningful relationship with Christ, challenging both traditional members and those who hardly gave the church a thought to consider the radical call of Christ on their lives. We were privileged to return to this church for two subsequent years (1980-81 and 1986-87), and during those years we were totally absorbed in the life of the congregation, participating significantly in their home groups, their outreach activities, and their worship.

Here in Michigan, we attended the Dearborn Free Methodist Church for several years, and although we did not officially become members there, we

were a functioning part of the work of the congregation, teaching adult classes and leading various outreach activities of the church. In September 1998, we formally placed our membership with the Trenton Church of Christ, and we anticipate a long-term relationship with that congregation.

Learning from other traditions

The point of this article is, of course, what we have gained from these varied experiences with different traditions of Christian fellowship. In a broad way, we have been able better to understand how easily people from different backgrounds assume that their customs and ideas are the norm, and other people's beliefs and practices are aberrations. By the same token, some within every tradition feel unduly restricted by custom and history, and the tensions between generations, between progressives and traditionalists, and between social classes are pretty much universal in all fellowships. Another general lesson to be learned by association with those of different conservative Christian groups is that what we have in common as believers and disciples of Jesus is more important than what differentiates us.

Speaking specifically, however, we can point to some valuable perspectives we gained from each of the two non-Church of Christ groups we have worked with at different times over the past twenty-six years. St. Luke's in England was organizationally in the Anglican tradition, but they had a

blend of formal liturgy and spontaneous and energetic activity in their worship services, and they were evangelistic and theologically conservative in their doctrinal emphasis. We learned from them how to worship enthusiastically, while at the same time using liturgical material (e.g., written prayers and responses) as a profound foundation. We found new meaning in the Lord's Supper because of the meaningful blending of ancient customs and contemporary music. (The Anglican Church and their American cousins, the Episcopalians, are the most prominent of the few Protestant bodies in which the Lord's Supper is celebrated weekly—and at special seasons more often than that.)

This particular congregation of Anglicans was more devoted to prayer and worship in the Spirit than any other group with which we had worshiped. Periodically they devoted a half night, or even a whole night, to prayer in behalf of the congregation. People would sign up for certain times to make sure that several members were there at any given

THE TENSIONS BETWEEN GENERATIONS, BETWEEN PROGRESSIVES AND TRADITIONALISTS, AND BETWEEN SOCIAL CLASSES ARE PRETTY MUCH UNIVERSAL IN ALL FELLOWSHIPS.

hour. And we learned from them a new understanding and appreciation for the work of the Holy Spirit among God's people. There were so-called "charismatic" gifts manifested, but even more profoundly, people were

dependent upon the power of the Holy Spirit for spiritual deliverance, healing, guidance, strength, and effectiveness in spreading the Gospel. We saw how the Spirit could blend together the talents and personalities of very diverse people, as un-churched persons were thrown together with those who had grown up in church and were well versed in Scripture; rough, uneducated people became spiritual partners with highly

THE RESULT WAS AN AMAZING FUSION OF HUMAN BEINGS IN CHRIST WHO WOULD HAVE HAD LITTLE TO DO WITH EACH OTHER UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE WORLD.

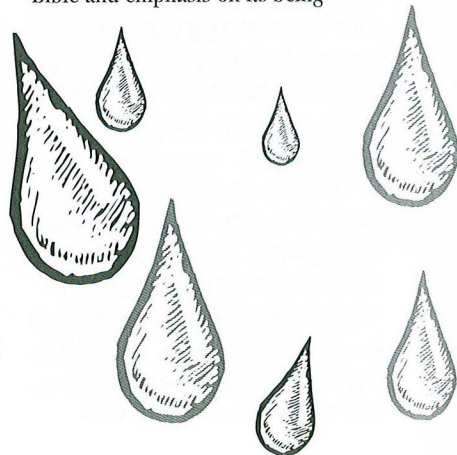
educated and professional people; naturally enthusiastic and emotional people challenged—but were also tempered by—those who were naturally reserved. The result was an amazing fusion of human beings in Christ who would have had little to do with each other under normal circumstances in the world.

Our experience in the Free Methodist Church was less dramatic in its effects, but we learned valuable lessons there, as well. This was a group of Christians who spoke openly and freely of their experience with Christ, with no inhibition against doing so with emotion; and they, too, believed deeply in the necessity and power of prayer. People there were warm and supportive, and they were quick to respond to any needs among members of the congregation, or even outside the congregation. We sang in the choir there, and we were

introduced to many meaningful pieces of Christian expression and worship, and in the context of their emphasis on the use of the fine arts to articulate faith, we participated meaningfully in several dramatic productions with a Christian message. We were even able to present an evening of dramatic readings of Christian poetry; and Laquita and I were often privileged to present joint interpretive readings of Scripture in worship.

A greater appreciation of our own tradition

In spite of the positive impressions made on us by these two congregations, at the same time we came to a greater appreciation of some characteristics of our own tradition in the Churches of Christ. We learned to value more highly the congregational autonomy of the Churches of Christ, with their concomitant emphasis on lay participation and responsibility, and with church leaders being chosen from among the congregation rather than being imposed by a larger organizational authority. We also learned that respect for the text of the Bible and emphasis on its being



known well by every Christian did not come as a natural consequence of being theologically conservative and evangelical. On matters such as the primacy of local elders and deacons in church governance, and the necessity of taking seriously the biblical examples of immediate believers' baptism by immersion as a part of the process of accepting Christ as Lord, there was often no feeling of the need to take the Scriptures as normative, even when it was admitted that what was practiced in the early church was different from what had become customary in a modern denomination. People in churches governed by a hierarchical structure, we found, were often quite willing to depend on the clergy to define correct doctrine and practice for them, rather than taking individual responsibility for searching and understanding the Scriptures themselves.

In regard to the music in the two congregations we have described, although we have no personal scruples against worship which includes instrumental music, we saw how its regular use tends to breed an over-reliance on it and a corresponding disincentive to congregational singing. We were made newly aware of the positive effects of unaccompa-

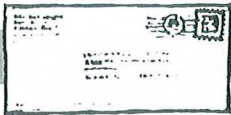
nied congregational singing in worship. On the other hand, in both congregations we learned some wonderful praise songs that were not generally being used at the time in Churches of Christ.

... IT FEELS GOOD TO CHERISH WHAT IS POSITIVE AND TO REALIZE THAT THE IMPERFECTIONS IN THE CHURCHES OF CHRIST ARE NO GREATER (AND SOMETIMES LESS) THAN IN OTHER RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS ...

Now that we are once again affiliated with the Christian tradition in which we grew up and in which we have spent most of our lives, it feels good to cherish what is positive and to realize that the imperfections in the Churches of Christ are no greater (and sometimes less) than in other religious traditions, and that its appeal to biblical soundness and the unity of God's people can still be voiced, albeit with humility and a willingness to learn from others. We believe both that God has instructed us through our spiritual journey and that He has brought us back now to where we need to be and can serve Him best. ❁

Elton Higgs, a Professor of English at the University of Michigan-Dearborn for 34 years, is a Board member and frequent contributor to Integrity. He is an Elder at the Trenton, MI, Church of Christ.





“If We Think We’re Right, Is Everybody Else Wrong?”

Keith Brumley

Our friend Keith Brumley and his wife, Margaret, minister to the Church of Christ in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The growing group of believers there is blessed to have Keith’s wisdom as they, like we, struggle with fundamental questions about our place in Christendom. A couple of years ago, a member of his flock asked him the question which is the headline above. It seemed to us that such a question, and how we answer it, is fundamental to how we think about and live out the concept of Christian unity. He has allowed us to “intercept” his response and share it with you. Hope you find it helpful, as we have. —Managing Editor

Dear Sister Beth,

Great to hear from you and I appreciate what you wrote. I, too, share your struggle with how to “categorize” Christians outside our small fellowship. I have no ready answers for you, but here are some brief comments that may or may not help with the dilemma.

Jesus told the apostles and early church to “make disciples.” A “disciple” is from a Greek word that has the meaning “one who is a learner of another” and, subsequently, “one who follows another.” So when Jesus says he wants all in the world to be His disciples, He is desiring that all become “learner-followers” of Him.

What this distinction has to do with the question at hand is that I readily recognize that there are many sincere, faithful, and intellectually honest learner-followers of Christ outside our fellowship. I try to treat

these fellow disciples of our Lord with respect and as equals in their desire to follow Christ. I advocate what Dr. Leroy Garrett shared at a recent Maritime Christian Fellowship weekend: that all disciples of Christ must respond to the “light” that she or he has been shown.

I read about people in North Africa who are being martyred for their faith daily. These people may have not ever heard of “us” and our teachings on baptism, but they have heard of Christ and have put their faith in Him and have placed their lives on the line for Him. Perhaps the only Christian contact they’ve had was with the Anglican church, and the only baptism they have received was by some other means than immersion. But as they have responded to the light (truth) that they have received, and lived faithfully for

Christ, it is my belief that a good and gracious God will honour this faithfulness. In the final analysis, it is only God who is the “knower of hearts,” and he has appointed his Son to be the final Judge of the living and the dead. I commit it to his capable hands.

On the other hand, does this mean that we should become “tolerant” of every position our fellow-followers of Christ have in our community? If by “tolerant” we mean we grant them the right to hold certain views (erroneous or not) without casting condemnation on them, treating them as infidels, outcasts, etc.—I would agree. But if by “tolerant” we mean approaching all with the attitude of “you do it your way and I’ll do it mine . . . and everyone’s O.K.,” I disagree. I believe we are all on a Faith Journey and no one of us has a monopoly on the Truth. Only God has a monopoly on TRUTH.

I believe that we should become “sojourners” with other learner-followers of Christ with the view to journeying together towards God’s Truth. That means that we should not become so tolerant of erroneous positions that we are afraid to confront with “gentleness and respect.” That means that we shouldn’t surrender deep biblical convictions (for instance, on the necessity of baptism as an integral part of our faith-response to the Gospel) when sojourning with others. It also, of course, means being open to them and finding where *we* have erred—open to learning truths from them.

So, how should we view our fellow learner-followers of Christ? I take the view that:

- 1) we must *never* allow ourselves to become their judges, we must allow God’s appointed agent—CHRIST JESUS—to be the Judge.
- 2) we must treat them with dignity and respect, allowing them the liberty to hold divergent views.
- 3) we must be willing to sojourn with them towards God’s Truth, willing to share bits of light that provide clarity in areas where they have erred, and receive bits of light from them where we have erred.

I believe all that I have said is in line with the earliest leaders of the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement. I believe that in our divisions, we have become exclusive in ways never *dreamed of* by them. But I also believe that we are beginning to turn from this mindset and become again the “Reform Movement” within Christendom which we started out to become. We are seeing that calling all disciples of Jesus back to Christ-centredness, back to the Bible, and towards UNITY is our role within Christendom. We are becoming more and more willing to be a “voice crying in the wilderness” for this reform rather than “hiding our lights under a basket.” May HE bless us as we “re-dream” our Original Dream!

Grace & Peace in HIM,

Keith Brumley



The Power of Rituals

Clay Foster

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I shall be healed.”

These are the words spoken by the congregation before each celebration of the Eucharist in the Roman Catholic church. If you've never said them, imagine repeating these words each time you celebrate communion. Imagine saying them before every communion of every Sunday of every month of every year, for all of your life. Would it become old and meaningless, a rote exercise done without thought? Or would it become what beckons you back each time, Sunday's shores of Jordan where your wounds are bathed and your failures washed away?

Out of the Ordinary

The answer to both questions is yes. The familiarity and constancy of ritual in a changing world can be very comforting. Rituals can be the familiar landmarks that pilot us back home from frantic journeys in the fast lane, safe havens in a world that reinvents itself with each click on a website. Reciting the creed or the Lord's Prayer with other believers can be the fiery, cloudy pillar that guides us through wanderings in the desert.

Yet this repetitiveness can also become reflexive and habitual, the mumblings and motions becoming like flat stones skipping over deep, still waters, heedless of the fathomless grace that lies below the surface.

How do we keep a sacred moment with God from becoming a mundane habit?

For me, it requires constant work. Rituals in worship are a part of our relationship with God, and, like any relationship, continual work and attention is necessary. Without effort, a marriage becomes a series of habitual behaviors, collapsing into two cohabiting piles of self-centeredness. Without care, a friendship deteriorates into neglect and abandonment. Without attention, a ritual becomes a mechanical exercise. It is in the Catholic church that I have learned three things that are helpful to me in keeping rituals fresh and meaningful.

Preparing for Worship

First, an important practice for me is to prepare for worship. In the Catholic church, it is common to kneel and pray after entering the church building. My prayer while kneeling is an acknowledgment to God that a sacred time is beginning,

and I relinquish to God the troubles and anxieties of the past week. When the formal worship time begins, I am prepared to be fully present for the moment.

Second, worship is more meaningful if you participate. Responding “Lord hear our prayer” at the end of the prayers, saying “Amen” when receiving the bread and wine during communion, and even singing songs are all vital parts of participating in the ritual of worship. Celebrating communion in a way that the body and blood of Christ is actively given and received can elevate the ritual to a higher realm of awareness.

A third thing that has been beneficial to me in keeping rituals meaningful is to participate from memory, rather than reading from a written page. A common phrase for being able to recite from memory is that we can “say it by heart.” I believe there is a profound truth to that saying. Speaking words from memory engages our awareness in a way that cannot be achieved by reading from a text. When we say the Lord's prayer during mass, I listen to my words and of those around me merging into one voice. What I hear is a prayer being said “by heart.”

When we sing from memory rather than a printed page, our “by heart” singing can be truly heartfelt.

A Long and Winding Road

The path to becoming aware of how rituals can enrich spiritual life and worship, and of how to keep rituals from becoming stale, has been a long and winding road for me. My

wife and I both grew up in the Church of Christ, but ten years ago we joined the Catholic church after a search for something we felt was missing in our lives. We weren't sure exactly what was absent, we just knew that we needed something different than what we had grown up with.

MY WIFE AND I BOTH GREW UP IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, BUT TEN YEARS AGO WE JOINED THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AFTER A SEARCH FOR SOMETHING WE FELT WAS MISSING IN OUR LIVES.

We eventually realized that what we needed was a style of worship and devotion that goes beyond logic and knowledge. We needed to experience the presence of God in ways that transcend the ability of words to describe the experience, in ways best expressed through art and music, symbols and ceremonies. Not everyone has a need to know God through these means, but it was a good and righteous pursuit for us. My search began with the realization that symbolism and rituals were a part of every aspect of my life except the religious part. Knowing that the Church of Christ would not and should not change just for me, I accepted that I had to find the power of symbols and rituals of worship somewhere else. The decision to leave the Church of Christ was the most difficult one I have ever made. After attending what I knew would be my last Sunday morning at the Church of Christ congregation we had been a part of for sixteen years, I went home and cried the tears of grief over losing a loved one.

In spite of that anguish, I knew it was time to leave. Our attempts to create different practices in the church of our heritage had left us both frustrated, disappointed, and even a little bitter. It's surprising yet to find myself years later still shifting from hand to hand an old beat up suitcase full of hurts and angers, getting bruises from it banging into my legs as I journey onward.

After trying several other churches in town, I finally visited the Catholic church solely on the recommendation from someone that their "folk mass" had very good music. I was delighted to find what an understatement that turned out to be.

When I walked into the building, the first thing I noticed was the smell of candles. There were dozens of small prayer candles on a stand in a corner, left burning by people who had used them as a reminder of the divine light of God's presence as they

OUR ATTEMPTS TO CREATE DIFFERENT PRACTICES IN THE CHURCH OF OUR HERITAGE HAD LEFT US BOTH FRUSTRATED, DISAPPOINTED, AND EVEN A LITTLE BITTER.

prayed. There were two candles on the altar, and an ornate Paschal candle stood nearby. Never before had I associated an aroma with worship. Now it's the first thing I do when I walk into the sanctuary: pause and smell the aroma of prayer candles. I wonder if God does the same thing.

The architecture and the decorations were not a shock. I

appreciated the statues, the stations of the cross, the colors of the altar cloths, vestments, and banners as art work that represented sacred things. What did surprise me was my reaction to the ritual of people kneeling and making the sign of the cross on themselves: There is no scripture that commands, examples, or infers to do that! Bang, bang, bang, went three big suitcases against my knees. I eventually checked that luggage and much more with God, who sent it to the Graveyard of Sincere But Stupid Hermeneutics.

As a Church of Christ boy visiting a Catholic church for the first time, I was surprised by how normal everything and everyone was. There was little evidence that Catholics eat their children, as I had always been taught. The interior of the sanctuary was similar to many Church of Christ buildings I've been in, with big laminated beams that arch from the floor and meet at the peak of the ceiling. It always gives me the feeling of being in an upside down boat. A nostalgia I had felt all my life for a spiritual homeland left me, and was replaced by the sense that this was the ship I was meant to sail in.

My first visit was a Sunday following Easter. I didn't know then that next year I would be celebrating Easter as a Catholic, or that the event would be a gift from God to teach me the power of rituals and ceremonies, sacraments and symbols. I offer the following description of that first Easter not because I believe that where I am now is superior to any other set of doctrines and dogmas, but as an example of what I have

learned from other believers about the function of rituals in worship and in life.

A Close Encounter

The Easter Triduum is Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil. The Triduum is preceded by Lent, which last six weeks. As was the custom then, the statue of Jesus, which hangs on the wall behind the altar, was covered by a purple curtain during Lent.

The Holy Thursday service, which includes a footwashing of church members by the priest and a deacon, concludes with all of the decorations, statues, and images carried out of the church. The Blessed Sacrament, communion bread that is considered to be the body of Christ, is taken out as well to be displayed in a special tabernacle in another building. From now until we celebrate Eucharist again at the Easter Vigil, continuous Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is maintained. This adoration consists of people taking turns sitting with the Blessed Sacrament and praying. The prayer and adoration is ceaseless for two days.

Good Friday service began, as always, with a reading of Isaiah 52, Psalms 30, parts of Hebrews 4 and 5, and John 18:1-19, 42. After a homily and prayers, a wooden cross is carried in by the priest and the deacons, and is laid before the altar.

The service that particular year included a ceremony that was very unorthodox, but was as powerful of a ritual as I have known. Everyone was given a piece of paper and a nail. On the paper we wrote all of our hurts

and sins of the previous year. As the choir sang, we approached the cross in two lines. There were hammers

... THERE WAS LITTLE EVIDENCE THAT CATHOLICS EAT THEIR CHILDREN, AS I HAD ALWAYS BEEN TAUGHT. . . .

there by the cross as it leaned against the altar. With the hammer, we nailed the paper with all of our hurts and wounds and disappointments and failures to the cross. The sound of hammering filled the church, accompanied by songs from the choir. Tears of relief and release made it difficult to see the nail that was to pin my paper to the cross, but the hammer blows were true, and a lifetime of old wounds and failures were crucified that night. The service concluded with a prayer of thanksgiving and we all left the church in silence as the cross was held high before the altar, completely covered in scraps of paper and nails. That cross, bearing all our sins and griefs, was the ugliest, most beautiful thing I have ever seen.

Easter Vigil begins Saturday evening after sunset. We gathered in the cool evening on the lawn in front of the darkened church, and everyone is given a small candle. The papers are used to kindle a small bonfire. A new Paschal candle is lit from the bonfire, and its flame is then passed from candle to candle, until we all share the light. As the priest carries the Paschal candle into the sanctuary, we follow behind, bringing flickering light into the darkness. The pews are

packed cheek to cheek, and people stand two abreast in the side aisles. We hear seven scripture readings, including the entire creation story from Genesis. Between each scripture reading, the choir sings a Psalm. After the last song, Psalm 50, "A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me," all of the candle flames were extinguished, except for the solitary flame of the Paschal candle. We stood in the dark, the excitement of the words beating in our hearts, only one small part of the sanctuary illuminated by a single, flickering courageous light. Then it, too, was extinguished.

WE ALL MAKE THE SIGN OF THE CROSS ON OUR FOREHEAD, ASKING THE LORD TO BLESS OUR MINDS SO THAT WE WILL ALWAYS THINK OF HIM, ON OUR LIPS TO BLESS OUR MOUTHS TO EVER SPEAK OF HIM, AND OVER OUR HEARTS SO THAT WE MAY FEEL HIS LOVE ALL THROUGH.

While in the darkness, the curtain covering the Risen Christ statue was dropped to the floor. Suddenly, a single bright spotlight illuminated the statue of the Risen Christ. The statue appeared to hover in the air, the wounded hands stretched out in a triumphant gesture. Led by a fanfare of trumpets and guitars, human voices and stringed instruments, the congregation bursts forth singing the *Gloria*, which has not been a part of the liturgy during the six weeks of Lent.

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth. Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God

and Father, we worship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory.

Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us; you are seated at the right hand of the Father: receive our prayer.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

The music is bold and powerful. Many people ring bells that they have brought just for this song. Choral bells, little brass bells, big cowbells, sleigh bells, even some Tibetan temple bells rang in glory. The lights of the sanctuary were turned on a section at a time, starting at the front and cascading to the back, bringing light to every part and everyone.

From here, much that follows is like our regular mass. There is a reading from an epistle, and another Psalm is sung. Then the priest stands and carries the book of the Gospels to the lectern, holding it high for everyone to see. The congregation stands and sings:

*Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Glory to the Father and glory to the Son,
Glory to the Holy Spirit,
Glory and honor, wisdom and power forever!*

*Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!*

The priest lays the Gospel book on the lectern and opens it, saying "A reading from the Holy Gospel of Matthew."

We all make the sign of the cross on our forehead, asking the Lord to bless our minds so that we will always think of Him, on our lips to bless our mouths to ever speak of Him, and over our hearts so that we may feel His love all through.

The Gospel reading is the story of the women finding the tomb empty. After a wisely brief homily, the catechumens and candidates, who have been preparing for the previous nine months to join the church, come forward. Those who have never been baptized receive the sacrament of baptism. (The Catholic church acknowledges one baptism for the forgiveness of sin, so our Church of Christ immersion was entirely acceptable.) They are all anointed with oil, signifying their new identity with Christ as priest, prophet, and king, and their enrollment into the fellowship of all God's people. The priest lays his hands on each one, calling the Spirit of God's Holiness down upon them.

We then celebrate Eucharist, with the new members being the first to receive the body and blood of Christ. On this night, as wave after wave of people come before the altar to receive the bread and wine, we sing the prayer of St. Theresa with music by Michael Talbot:

Clay Foster was born in 1954 in Austin, Texas. He is, as he says, "an American by birth and Texan by the grace of God." He and his wife of 25 years, Penny, live near Krum, Texas. Clay is a professional artist; Penny, a nurse. They attend Immaculate Conception Catholic Church in Denton, Texas. This is his first article in Integrity.

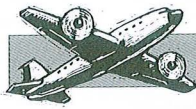
Foster frequently uses his art to the glory of God. On the next page, we are pleased to be able to feature one of his most inspiring (we think) efforts: a Pentecost mobile.

*Christ has no body now but yours.
No hands, no feet on earth but yours.
Yours are the eyes through which he looks
compassion on this world.
Yours are the feet in which he walks to do good.
Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands,
yours are the feet,
yours are the eyes, yours are the body.
Christ has no body now but yours.*

Each of us there becomes the body. Anglos and Mexicans, Viet Nameese and Africans, Filipinos and native Americans, Texans and Yankees. We all become the body of Christ.

Finally, three hours after we first gathered in the dark of night before the church, the Easter Vigil concludes. We are weary and wired at the same time. I felt that night as if I had been in the cleft of the rock with Moses, just catching a glimpse of God, and I will never be the same.

Rituals are a mighty thing. ✿

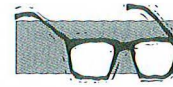


Tongues of Flame at Pentecost

Clay Foster

Editor's Note: The photograph below depicts the work of Clay Foster, author of the article on the preceding pages. He created this mobile at his home congregation, the Immaculate Conception Church in Denton, TX, in celebration of Pentecost Sunday.

He says, "The mobile of tongues of flames moved in slow, seemingly random arcs, occasionally pausing over someone for a moment, before moving on again to appear at an unanticipated location. Pretty much like the Spirit of God's holiness its own self."



All Things to All *People*

J. Bruce Kilmer

"If any *man* come to me . . ." (Luke 14:26; KJV)

"For we would not, *brethren*, have you ignorant . . ." (II Cor. 1:8; KJV)

"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner *man*;" (Eph. 3:16; KJV)

"Finally, my *brothers*, rejoice in the Lord!" (Phil. 3:1; NIV)

"But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the *sons* of God . . ." (John 1:12; KJV)

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the *sons* of God." (Ro. 8:14; KJV)

"God of Our *Fathers* "

"Good Christian *Men* Rejoice"

It is impossible for me to know the full effect on girls and women of a lifetime of hearing masculine nouns and pronouns in contexts and situations that were supposed to include all people and persons. The most I can do is compare it to situations I have experienced when the language used did not apply to me or excluded me—such as in school when I knew I wasn't included in a certain group, or in a foreign country when I knew I was not included in an invitation; or in a gathering of Church of Christ folk when I knew I was no longer accepted as one of the "*real Christians*."

Language does affect our thinking and

our sense of who we are. Because both men and women have been conditioned to accept noninclusive language, as well as even deprecating language, we may be unaware of the effects of a lifetime of such language on our psyche. Noninclusive language can make women feel less responsible so that they leave things up to the men in areas of leadership, discipleship, or even in spiritual matters altogether. Noninclusive language and *actions* can cause a lack of esteem for women, such as the time during communion when a young girl asked her mom: "Why are men better than women?" When the mom asked her daughter what made

her think that, the daughter replied: "Because women are never allowed 'up front' or to serve communion."

At one time it was acceptable English to use "man" and "he" to refer to men and women or people, in general. However, as English has changed, such usage has become outdated, at best, and unacceptable and insensitive, at worst. At one time I Corinthians 13 was accurately translated using the word "charity," but today such a translation does not

AT ONE TIME IT WAS ACCEPTABLE ENGLISH TO USE "MAN" AND "HE" TO REFER TO MEN AND WOMEN OR PEOPLE, IN GENERAL. HOWEVER, AS ENGLISH HAS CHANGED, SUCH USAGE IS OUTDATED, AT BEST, AND UNACCEPTABLE AND INSENSITIVE, AT WORST.

communicate the meaning of the passage. Similarly, today, when both men and women are being referred to, the words "person," "human being," "he and she," and "brothers and sisters" communicate better than the words "man," "he," and "brethren."

Scripture distortion or clearer translations?

In translating, the goal is to find the words that convey the *meaning*, not the *form*, of the passage being translated. Often a literal translation will not convey the meaning. For example, the Spanish expression *Como se llama?* may "literally" be translated "how are you called?" but in most contexts it *means* (in good English) "What is your name?"

Recently, scare tactics, linguistically uninformed pronouncements, and smear campaigns have been used to try to stop people from using inclusive-translations of the Bible. Articles have been written claiming that inclusive-translations are "stealth Bibles" that "tamper with the Word of God."¹

A little history

In 1997 the International Bible Society (IBS) and Zondervan Publishing House planned to publish a gender inclusion version of the New International Version (NIV). Critics of this translation became so alarmed that they put pressure on IBS and Zondervan to cancel their plans to publish the "NIV Inclusive Language Edition" (NIVI). These critics used alarmist articles, letters, and threats to boycott IBS and Zondervan if they went through with their plans. IBS succumbed to the blackmail, and the day before a meeting arranged by James Dobson to increase the pressure, announced it would forgo its plans to publish the NIVI in the United States. Today, the NIVI can only be purchased from England. (It is available by mail order from Christians for Biblical Equality, whose address is on page 23).²

The "Dobson" meeting which included representatives from IBS, the New International Version's Committee on Bible Translation, Zondervan, World magazine, and the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood went on as planned at the Focus on the Family headquarters in Colorado Springs. Later, this meeting was called the "Conference on Gender-

Related Language in Scripture." This group affirmed the decision of IBS and drafted a set of guidelines for translating gender-related language in the Bible.

Ironically, Focus on the Family's *Odyssey* Bible had been using the New Century Version, which contains gender-inclusive language. After the controversy over the NIVI arose, Focus on the Family pulled it from the market.

Mark Strauss of Bethel Seminary in San Diego, who is a complementarian — one who believes that the Bible affirms distinct roles for men and women in the Church and home — has written an article showing how the guidelines issued at the "Dobson" meeting are "linguistically and hermeneutically naive and inaccurate." This article is entitled *Linguistic and Hermeneutical Fallacies in the Guidelines Established at the (so-called) "Conference on Gender-Related Language in Scripture,"* and is available from Christians for Biblical Equality, 122 West Franklin Avenue, Suite 218, Minneapolis, MN 55401-2451, (612) 872-6898, E-Mail: cbe@cbeinternational.org.

Christianity Today, in a much more reasoned response than World magazine, published a two-part article, one on each side of the issue: "Do Inclusive-Language Bibles Distort Scripture?" in its October 27, 1997 issue.

In his part of the article, Wayne Grudem, of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, answered "yes" to the question posed by the title of the *Christianity Today* article. He found

fault with inclusive-language translations that translate some singulars as plurals. For example, John 14:23-24 is translated: "Those who love me will obey my teaching. My father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them." Grudem believes this takes the emphasis off of the individual believer. He also disagrees with translating Genesis 1:27: "So God created *humankind* in his image" instead of "So God created *man* in his image." Grudem said that this changes the "male overtones" of the name God gave humans. Grudem counted the number of times father, son, and brothers are used in the NRSV compared to the RSV and finds a problem with the lesser number in the NRSV. While Grudem acknowledges that many references to both men and women are translated as "man," "he," "brothers," etc. in noninclusive translations such as the NIV and the NASB, he believes that English has not changed enough to warrant the need for change to inclusive-language translations.

In his part of the article in *Christianity Today*, Grant R. Osborne, also of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, responded that inclusive-language Bibles do not distort Scripture, but clarify the meaning of the original intent of the Hebrew and Greek text. When "man" or "he" are used in Greek or Hebrew to refer to both males and females, he believes a more accurate English translation of the *meaning* of the text as opposed to the *form*, is to use inclusive terms such as "person," "he and she," or even "they." Osborne

wrote: “Whenever *man* and *he* refers to a male individual, the term should be retained; whenever the emphasis is on the individual, the singular should be retained. If there is a collective idea inherent in the singular, good exegesis prefers a plural translation.”

Thus, in John 14:23 (quoted above), the question introducing Jesus’ response indicates that Jesus is referring to all disciples. In his article, Osborne pointed out that one way to capture both the individual and the corporate aspect of this passage is to translate it: “Every person who loves me will obey me. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and live with them.”

Osborne believes that “the inclusive ‘he’ is on its way out in modern language, and a basic principle of all translation theory is to express the ancient text in the thoughts and idioms of the receptor language.” Inclusive-language translations will not only convey the original meaning more clearly, Osborne believes, these translations will also not erect unnecessary barriers to the gospel with unbelievers who are offended by the generic *he*.

Though use of gender-inclusive language translations can help Christian men and women in their faith and can be a help in reaching

OSBORNE BELIEVES THAT “THE INCLUSIVE ‘HE’ IS ON ITS WAY OUT IN MODERN LANGUAGE, AND A BASIC PRINCIPLE OF ALL TRANSLATION THEORY IS TO EXPRESS THE ANCIENT TEXT IN THE THOUGHTS AND IDIOMS OF THE RECEPTOR LANGUAGE.”

the unchurched, the issue of whether or not to use inclusive language is one of translation theory and of what conveys the meaning of the original text into current language usage.

Strauss demonstrated, in his article referred to above, how adherence to the “Guidelines” developed at the “Conference on Gender-Related Language in Scripture” imposes a particular translation without consideration of context and “smacks of a social agenda beyond accurate interpretation of Scripture.” Furthermore, he pointed out how “critics like Grudem have tended to find a few examples of poor translation in a particular version (like the NRSV) and to conclude from this that all attempts at inclusive language are inaccurate and inappropriate.”

The King James Version, and other examples of inclusive language

Ironically, both the King James Version and the New International Version have many instances where masculine nouns and pronouns have been changed to inclusive nouns and pronouns.³ In the Scriptures quoted at the beginning of this article, the NIV has always translated the Greek words translated “sons” and “inner man” in the KJV as “children” and “inner being.” The NIV has never been characterized as a “stealth Bible” for these gender-inclusive translations.

“Inclusive translation” does not mean “gender neutral.” If the context of a passage indicates that masculine, male, or a man are being referred to, then a masculine word is chosen for the translation. However, if the

context indicates that both males and females, or people in general, are being referred to, then an “inclusive translation” will choose a word or words that makes that reference clear.

Inclusive-language NIV (NIVI)

The inclusive NIVI uses the masculine pronouns for God. Since 1985 the following translations or major revisions using moderate inclusive language have appeared: the *New Jerusalem Bible* (1985), the *New American Standard* (revised 1988, 1990), the *Revised English Bible* (1989), the *New Revised Standard Version* (1990), the *Good News Bible* (revised 1992), *The Message* (1993), the *Contemporary English Version* (1995), *God’s Word* (1995), *New International Version Inclusive Language Edition* (1995, published only in Great Britain), and the *New Living Translation* (1996). All of these translations use masculine language for God.⁴

The case for inclusive language

New and revised translations which use inclusive language have become necessary for English speaking people because English has changed. Just a few years ago the masculine in English could be used for contexts that included both males and females or people in general. But this is no longer the case. Some may argue that English has not changed and cite current references in print or speeches to show that masculine words are still used to refer to men and women or to people in general.

While some speakers and writers retain this usage, it continues at the risk of offending many people and making them feel excluded.

In a recent article in *Christianity Today*, John Stackhouse muses:

Frankly, when it seems evident that Jesus himself used an Aramaic paraphrase of the Old Testament (*CT*, April 26, 1999, “What Bible Version Did Jesus Read?” by Craig A. Evans, p. 98); when evangelicals enthusiastically support missionary Bible translations all over the world whose versions—because rendered by few people with relatively few linguistic tools at hand—are always much less accurate than the English translations we are privileged to enjoy; and when hundreds of thousands of conservative evangelicals are buying and using such dynamic translations as the *New Living Translation* and such paraphrases as *The Message*—well, it’s difficult to believe that all this sound and fury truly centers on the integrity of Bible translation.⁵

Both Mark Strauss and Donald Carson, another expert in translation who is personally committed to traditional views regarding gender relations, have recently published books which defend gender-inclusive translations: Strauss’s *Distorting Scripture? The Challenge of Bible Translations and Gender Accuracy* (InterVarsity, 1998) and Carson’s *The Inclusive-Language Debate: A Plea for Realism* (Baker, 1998).

Church outreach and inclusive language

Not only is inclusive language more accurate, its use will help the outreach of the church to a world offended by outdated, insensitive, exclusive language. Why should the church take the chance of hurting or excluding those we are trying to reach? Do you think Paul would? Remember his words to the Corinthian church:

For though I am free with respect to all, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became a Jew, in order to win the Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though I myself am not under the law) so that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law

(though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law) so that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

— I Corinthians 9:19-23

To be good news, the gospel must be accepted by an individual in order for that person to be part of the community of the church. If we can accurately translate the Bible so that it is clear in contexts that include both men and women or people in general, if we can choose songs or change words so that all feel included in the references, if we can speak so as to reach all people, why shouldn't we? ❁

- 1 *World* magazine, March 29, 1997.
- 2 In a news release of May 14, 1999, the International Bible Society (IBS) reaffirmed its prior commitment to "continue to publish the 1984 New International Version (NIV) with no changes whatsoever . . ." The Board of IBS went on to state, "at the same time, the IBS continues to explore its options with respect to additional Bible publishing in the English language." According to an FAQ sheet distributed with this news release the IBS stated that this possible future translation would be true to the intent of the original Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic texts in rendering gender, i.e., if both genders were intended in the original language, then the English will say "someone," "everyone," "people," or "they."
- 3 See Isaiah 1:2,4; Isaiah 49:15; Matthew 5:9, 44-45; Luke 6:35; 20:36; Romans 9:26; Galatians 3:26.
- 4 Strauss, p. 2 and 16.
- 5 John G. Stackhouse, Jr., "Current Religious Thought—The Battle for the Inclusive Bible," *Christianity Today*, November 15, 1999, p. 84.

J. Bruce Kilmer, with his wife, Diane, served as co-editor of *Integrity* from 1986-1997. They live in Mount Pleasant, Michigan, and are members of the Mt. Pleasant Community Church, where Bruce serves as an elder. Bruce works for the Michigan Supreme Court as a Regional Court Administrator.



COMMUNION MEDITATION

Here is the next in our new series of meditations on the Lord's Supper by Elton Higgs. A prolific writer, our friend Elton wears many hats. He is a superb Christian thinker; Integrity Board Member; Elder at the Trenton, MI, Church of Christ; Professor of English at the University of Michigan; husband to Laquita; and Papa to Rachel. We hope you are blessed by his thoughts.

In this setting of taking the Lord's Supper, we all too easily forget that it had, and still has, a context. The bread and the wine that Jesus partook of with his disciples was not detached from common experiences as is communion in Christian churches today; it was a part of the Passover feast, a celebration of God's deliverance of his people from slavery in Egypt, and it underlined the identity that God had thus given his people, Israel. In the first-century church, it was evidently so much a part of the church's fellowship with food that it was in danger of degenerating into merely an occasion for overindulgence (I Cor. 11: 20-22). But whether the Lord's Supper is a part of a congregational "love feast" or not, it should arise from and be connected to our ongoing shared experiences as the people of God.

Here are a few of the shared experiences of the Body of Christ that we can meditate on during this celebration of our deliverance in Christ and our identity as his family and fellow-heirs.

First, the bread and the grape juice that we partake of not only

symbolically embody the perfectly sacrificed flesh and blood of our Lord, but the infusion of our fallen humanity with his righteous and redeemed nature; for as we ingest the elements of the Supper, we reaffirm the fact that as God's children, our flawed humanity has been crucified with Jesus, so that we truly live through him, and he lives in us.

THE BREAD AND THE WINE THAT JESUS PARTOOK OF WITH HIS DISCIPLES WAS NOT DETACHED FROM COMMON EXPERIENCES AS IS COMMUNION IN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES TODAY

Secondly, we share a sense of purpose and hope, and it is this sustaining vision of the outcome of our struggles that is also reaffirmed in our coming together around this table. In the symbolic act of taking within us the substance of Jesus' perfect humanity, we appropriate the unshakable confidence in God's sovereign wisdom that enabled him to say, "Not my will, but Yours be done." Nothing in this world's sinful flesh and blood can justify the suffering that we observe and that we sometimes participate in, but in the triumph of

Jesus over death and all of the sickness that anticipates it we have that "steadfast anchor of the soul" that enables us to uplift and encourage one another when our resources are stretched to breaking.

Finally, in realizing our shared unworthiness to receive God's love and Jesus' sacrifice that are represented to us in this Supper, we are enabled to love one another as he has loved us. In the face of his having died for us when we were yet sinners, how can we withhold our love from our brothers and sisters? One well-known

communion service prayer says, "We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table. But you are the same Lord, whose nature is always to have mercy." We stand alike in need of that mercy, and in recognizing our shared need lies the freedom to share love.

So, in the words of the same prayer quoted above, "Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen." ❁



MEDITATION

One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church

Edward Fudge

Although I belong to a local Church of Christ, my soul also requires an occasional dose of Episcopal ceremony and reverence. This last Sunday morning my wife, Sara, happened to be out of town and my son-in-law Michael had to work, so my daughter Melanie and I visited St. John's Episcopal Church in Houston, an evangelical congregation of which I have been an occasional visitor and sometimes guest teacher since 1982. Since all Christian churches pray, sing, read

Scripture, hear preaching, take Communion and give offerings, we reflected afterward about what we found most a blessing in the Episcopal form of worship. We concluded that it was the incarnational nature of the service, involving as it does the whole person and all the senses.

One bows upon entering the sanctuary, kneels for prayer and stands to sing. The choir and clergy wear colored vestments reflecting the rotation of the church calendar (the

altar is decorated according to the same cycle). The service begins with a glorious and triumphant Processional and ends with a Recessional (we all do that for brides—why not for God as well?) The minister walks into the congregation to read the Gospel, to which the people respond, "Glory to you, Lord Christ!" The people also pronounce a vocal and unanimous "Amen" to all prayers. The Communion liturgy is gospel-rich and classically worded. We go to the altar for Communion, where we receive bread and wine from one who pronounces, "The body of Christ" and "The blood of Christ" while placing bread in our hands and the chalice to our lips. We sing, as the Psalms exhort, accompanied by the lush tones of organ, piano and flute. Some Anglican churches also use incense, as mentioned in heaven in Revelation, but St. John's doesn't. That is just as well with me, since I have lost all sense of smell anyway.

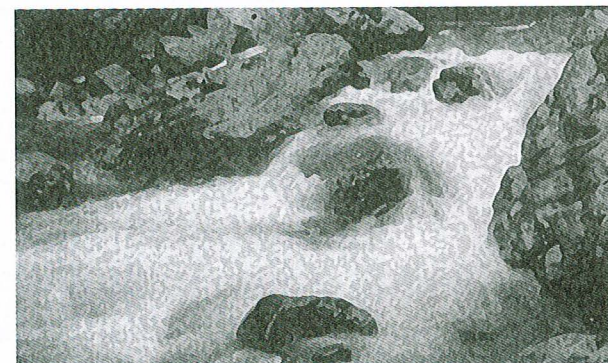
The universal church

Someone might point out that the first-century church had almost none of these externals, and that it more nearly resembled a home-church

fellowship or perhaps even an AA meeting. I realize all that, and appreciate also that end of the spectrum of worship style. Today, I am especially remembering a phrase from the Nicene Creed which we recited this morning. "We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church." This is the truth about God's whole church in all its parts. It is "one," despite appearances and divisions resulting from human weakness and sin. It is "holy," separated from the unbelieving world and dedicated to God's own purpose and glory. It is "catholic," which simply means "universal," including Christ's people in all times and in all places. It is "apostolic," built on the Apostle's testimony about Jesus, called to a lifestyle and morality taught by the Apostles and awaiting the blessed hope of Christ's return which the angels promised to the Apostles as they watched Jesus ascend back to heaven.

I am part of that "one holy catholic and apostolic Church," whether I am worshiping in my regular a cappella Church of Christ or sitting in a pew at The Episcopal Church of Saint John the Divine. That is the truth of the matter, and I praise God that it is so. ❁

Edward Fudge is a private practice attorney in Houston, TX. He distributes an electronic newsletter entitled GracEmail, from which this meditation is borrowed. To subscribe, you may e-mail him at <Edwfudge@aol.com>. Edward and Sara worship with the Bering Drive Church of Christ.





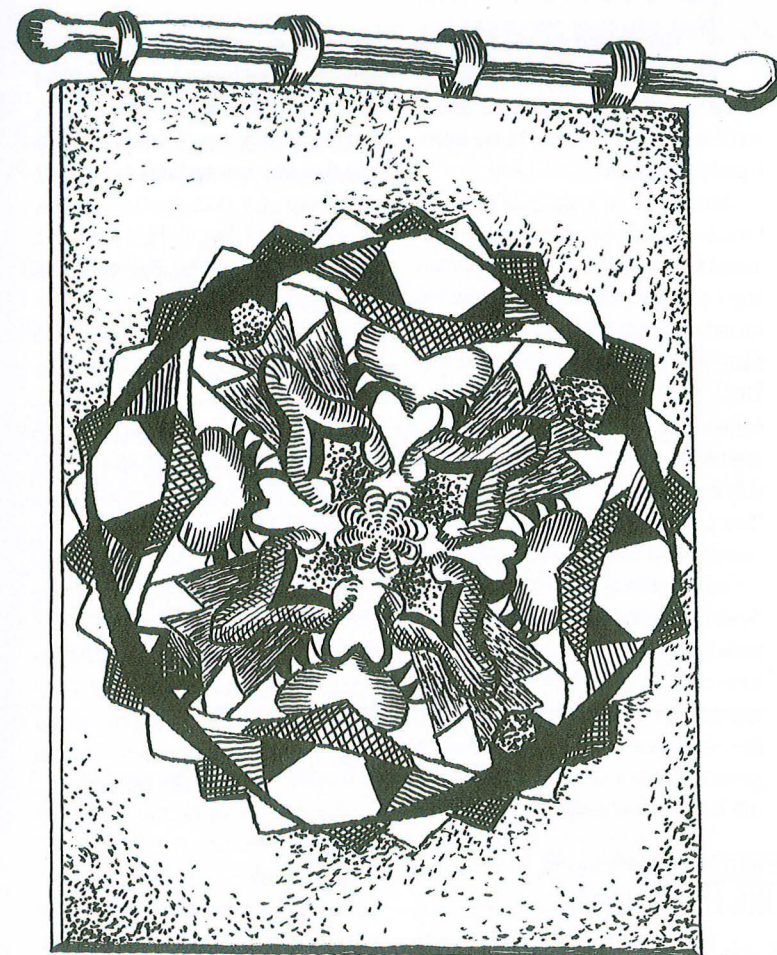
Nancy McClane

The Christian's spiritual life is truly a work of art to God the Father. Our minds can hardly conceive of all the intricacies and beauties of his created world. Would he not allow us to offer him a vast variety of spiritual beauty in our lives? Within the boundaries of his written will, we find a host of spiritual elements from which to choose our palettes.

Just as the lover of fine art looks for certain elements of shape, texture, color, line, balance, and symmetry, so the Father looks for the elements of love, faith, humility, patience, courage, temperance, selflessness, and godliness in a beautiful spiritual life.

The works of art that do not draw from the rich variety of design combinations and elements in the world around them are dull and lifeless, hardly worth a second look.

When we become narrow and simplistic in our spiritual lives, we become dull and lifeless to God as he beholds our faith. Only when we cast off our arrogance and humbly look around us at the beauty of all the different spiritual elements can we be beautiful to the Father.



Nancy McClane is an artist and art teacher in Troy, MI. She and her husband, Curtis, minister to the Troy, MI, Church of Christ.



Christian Sex Education

Laquita Higgs

I have given sex talks now for about 20 years with high school students, and increasingly they tell me, 'I have never heard this before.'"

A sex education specialist? Yes, but from a Christian perspective. Author Marva Dawn continues: "All I tell them is God's good ideas about sexuality, [about] faithfulness and friendship and deep love of many kinds. . . kids need to hear that there's lots of other kinds of love that can satisfy their deep yearnings, but they never hear it. I always ask them, 'You mean you never heard this from your mom or dad, your youth director . . . , or your Sunday School teacher? Never?' And they never have. Well, if the young people see ninety-eight times a day in the media bad ideas about their sexuality, how many times does the church have to give them good ideas for it to sink in?" (Mars Hill Audio Journal, v.38, 1999).

**"JUST AS THE TWIG IS BENT,
THE TREE'S INCLINED."**

-ALEXANDER POPE

In this interview with Marva Dawn, she explains that in past times, when families worked together, it was possible for family members and

neighbors to have frequent conversations. Today, intimacy has decreased significantly, resulting in young people's getting less of a grounding in who they are. Our technology contributes: for example, we e-mail rather than talk face-to-face, or we isolate ourselves with a Walkman. Our fast-paced life with family members going in opposite directions means that many parents have little significant communication with their children; research shows that parents on the average spend only 34 seconds a day in such conversation. With the loss of intimacy in families, young people long for deeper relationships, which is a good and natural desire, but they get the impression from TV and movies that the only way to have intimacy is through sexual intercourse.

A Godly view of sexuality

Parents and the church must work together to present a positive, godly view of sexuality. Dawn says that most teaching either presents the negative (the "don'ts") or the permissive and libertine ("anything goes"). We must teach that yearnings for intimacy are normal, and we must show how to build deep relationships, first through friendships and then in a life partnership. The Ten Commandments

should be seen as a blessing, not a burden—"a recognition of our design and how wonderful it would be if we lived that way." Our sexuality is a beautiful gift from God; we are "created for faithfulness and deep love, but when our culture makes it superficial and tawdry and so public, there's not a sense that there's beauty." You may want to read Dawn's book (1997) about youth ministry, *Is It a Lost Cause? Having the Heart of God for the Church's Children*, or her earlier book, *Sexual Character: Beyond Technique to Intimacy* (1993), both published by Eerdmans.

The same audio journal interviews Wendy Shalit, author of *A Return to Modesty: Discovering the Lost Virtue* (Knopf). Shalit, who decries the loss in our society of female modesty as a virtue, notes that embarrassment is a natural and protective response, but our modern culture indoctrinates young people to think that something is wrong with them if they do not have wide sexual experience. Says Shalit, "The ideal of the adulteress, if you can call it an ideal, has replaced the ideal of the modest woman, and today the virgins are stigmatized instead of promiscuous women." This is a loss for both men and women.

Modesty

Shalit explores some misconceptions about modesty. One myth is that modesty is considered prudery. Quite the opposite, Shalit says; modesty is an erotic virtue that protects sex in an "exciting, mysterious context." It allows for flirtation and for getting to know the person first. Another myth: a woman has little sexual desire if she

wants only one man, and modesty contributes to that restraint of women's desire. On the contrary, Shalit notes, the woman usually has as

"WE SHOULDN'T PRETEND THAT [WOMEN] CAN REACH THEIR LIBERATION BY BEING PROMISCUOUS AND COMPETING WITH MEN ABOUT HOW PROMISCUOUS THEY CAN BE."

much desire, but it is a different kind. "To say that a woman usually wants one man as opposed to a series of men who use her and abandon her is not to say that she has no sex desire but that she wants it in a certain context of obligation, commitment, trust—things that protect her sexual vulnerability." Modesty protects the romantic hope of the young woman for one man, but if there is no social support for modesty, she is vulnerable indeed.

Young girls are more naturally vulnerable than males, asserts Shalit, and we should tell them this. "We shouldn't pretend that [women] can reach their liberation by being promiscuous and competing with men about how promiscuous they can be." That only makes women into victims. Contributing to this is the myth of androgyny, that men and women have the same characteristics, but research shows that young men and women, left to their untamed desires, have different sexual hopes, with males wanting multiple partners and women wanting only one. Research also shows that young girls have early intercourse only when they are insecure. When a young girl has a

good sense of self and her place in God's world, her natural impulse is to wait for the right person.

RESEARCH ALSO SHOWS THAT YOUNG GIRLS HAVE EARLY INTERCOURSE ONLY WHEN THEY ARE INSECURE.

Are we actively teaching our daughters to be modest and to have a good sense of self as a child of God? Are we teaching our children about sexual self-restraint, about commitment to one relationship in marriage, and that a loving, lasting relationship is beautiful and good? We must start early to teach "God's good ideas about sexuality"!

Suggestions for books for teens:

Thirteen-year-old Mandy Finch from Baton Rouge, Louisiana, has given us some suggestions about Bibles and devotional books. Mandy's favorite Bible is *The Adventure N.I.V. Bible* (The NIV Study Bible for Kids), published by Zondervan (Grand Rapids, MI, 1989). It has an attractive, readable format with nice-sized print and many aids: maps; a dictionary-concordance; charts on special colored paper on various subjects, such as "How to Pray" and "Old Testament Prophets"; sections explaining life in Bible times; and suggestions for applying Bible principles to the lives of the readers. Zondervan has now replaced Mandy's version with *The NIV New Adventure Bible* (\$19.99 in softcover), labeled as the perfect "study" Bible for ages 8 to 12.

Mandy often uses the *Holy Bible: Easy-to-Read Version*, because her

youth group at the South Baton Rouge Church of Christ has been given Bibles so they will all be reading the same text. Published in 1987 by the World Bible Translation Center (P.O. Box 820648, Ft. Worth, TX 76182), this Bible was initially prepared for the deaf, who often have limited experience with the language because of their inability to hear oral conversation. In addition to having simpler language, this easy-to-read Bible has frequent definitions of the more difficult words and explanations for biblical names or terms. It also includes maps, an introduction to the Bible, a brief summary of Bible history, and a description of Jewish religious groups.

For Mandy's daily devotions, she is currently using the *1 Minute Bible 4 Students* (with 366 devotions for daily living). Published in Nashville, TN (Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1998, \$12.99), the scripture text is taken from *The New Living Translation*, with commentary by Doug Fields. Each daily devotion has a scripture reading and a commentary, with related texts listed for further study, applications to life, and some suggestions for memory work. The format, though all in black and white, is attractive, with various sizes and types of print. The subjects, which give a survey of "the heart of the Bible," are arranged generally in the same order as the Bible, beginning with the creation in January and ending with Revelation in December, but with other topics occasionally inserted, such as the

names of God or the fruit of the Spirit. The book is designed to be both an introductory tool for the student with no knowledge of the Bible, and a devotional resource for the student who has grown up knowing about Christianity. It can also be used as a teaching tool; a 52-week teaching and small group guide is available for leaders.

One other suggestion from Mandy, who has really enjoyed reading the popular Chicken Soup series, is a compilation of inspirational stories. The version for teenagers, *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul* (Eds. J. Canfield, M. V. Hansen, and K. Kirberger, Deerfield Beach, FL, Health Communications, 1997), has 101

stories of "life, love and learning." A second volume for teenagers was published in 1998. The stories are arranged into themes, such as relationships, friendship, and family.

Good news for younger children! The price for Karyn Henley's excellent new series of *Playsongs* videos and CD's for children aged two to five has been reduced to \$9.99 for videos and \$8.99 for C.D.'s. Audio cassettes continue at \$5.95. The songs and stories teach through lively entertainment. Available by calling 1-888-573-3953 (toll-free); or write to Karyn Henley Resources, P. O. Box 40269, Nashville, TN 37204.

Send your suggestions to us at 9 Adams Lane, Dearborn, MI 48120, or at <Ehiggs@umich.edu>. ❁

Laquita Higgs is a Professor of English at the University of Michigan. A member of the Integrity Board for almost 20 years, she shares her parenting advice with us in this regular column.



SELECTIONS

We can all call to mind movements

which have begun as pure upsurges of fresh spiritual vitality, breaking through and revolting against the hardened structure of the older body, and claiming, in the name of the Spirit, liberty from outward forms and institutions.

And we have seen how rapidly they develop their own forms, their own structures of thought, of language, and of organization. It would surely be a very unbiblical view of human nature and history to think—as we so often, in our pagan way, do—that this is just an example of the tendency of all things to slide down from a golden age to an age of iron, to identify the spiritual with the disembodied, and to regard visible structure as equivalent to sin.

We must rather recognise here a testimony to the fact that Christianity is, in its very heart and essence, not a disembodied spirituality, but life in a visible fellowship, a life which makes such total claim upon us, and so engages our total powers, that nothing less than the closest and most binding association of men and women with one another can serve its purpose.

-Lesslie Newbigin, *The Household of God*
(Quote discovered courtesy of "Christian Quotations of the Day," www.gospelcom.net).



Come to Our Birthday Party!

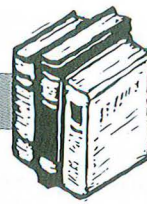
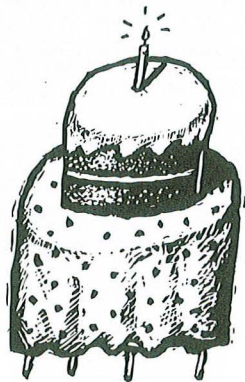
Integrity is turning thirty this year, and we think that's a reason to celebrate!

Join us for our
30th birthday party
August 31 - September 2, 2000,
Troy Church of Christ,
800 Trombley, Troy, Michigan.

The celebration will include a Friday evening banquet and Saturday events and—the best part—a chance for *Integrity* staff, friends, and readers to get together to worship our gracious and awesome Father. We are excited to meet you, and we hope you can join us.

Speakers will include:
Dr. Leroy Garrett
Dr. Joseph Jones
Diane G. H. Kilmer

Mark your calendar now!
See you in September!



The Board's Favorites: Inspiring Reading from Across Christendom

Noreen Bryant

It seems like nobody's safe from marketing these days. Not even God. Have you been in a Christian bookstore lately? If you're like me, you're mystified by what you see spanning the shelves. Often the silliest, most insipid books seem to get the most marketing dollars, the prettiest book jackets, the most attention. (*Teatime with Jesus?* You've got to be kidding me!)

And meanwhile, the profound, Spirit-inspired words of men and women of God from across the ages and across Christendom often languish in their little brown paperback vestments. Can their wise and quiet voices ever be heard above those heavily marketed, candy-colored plastic tomes masquerading as truth?

You can't trust the marketers, that's for sure. And you can't even trust what you read on a book jacket. So how are you supposed to choose worthwhile Christian reading?

(Many of us in Churches of Christ have no idea where to begin looking for quality Christian reading. You see, it's pretty likely that, somewhere along the line in our religious upbringing, we've been taught, implicitly or explicitly, that it's wrong to read

Christian literature by anybody who's not from the Church of Christ. This is shameful, but true. Opponents of the Christian literature produced by everybody but us assert that, since they are "denominational," they are probably full of lies and doctrinal "error." I still sometimes hear this in Bible classes in my own church. Don't get me wrong: I know there are many excellent books out there by men and women of the Restoration Movement churches. However, there is a universe of superb, biblical literature written by—gasp!—people of other Christian denominations. What a phenomenal waste it is for us to ignore the wisdom of the rest of Christendom!)

So I'm back to my original dilemma. How do you find good stuff to read?

Finding the Good Stuff

Fortunately, I happen to have my own personal consulting service, which cuts through the advertising hype, fancy book jackets, and promotional budgets so the gems of Christian literature, past and present, are brought to the fore. I'm pleased to be able to share with you the personal recommendations of this wise bunch

of well-read Christians—the members of the *Integrity* Board of Directors.

Here, then, is a list of some of their recommendations. I hope you're blessed by their choices. Publication information is provided where available. If you can't find one of these books, just write or e-mail us.

Curtis Lloyd

"Rather than reviewing or summarizing the following favorites, I have selected short excerpts, allowing these giants to speak for themselves," says Curtis.

The Cost of Discipleship

Dietrich Bonhoeffer,
Macmillan Publishing Co., 1937

"When a man really gives up trying to make something out of himself—a saint, or a converted sinner, or a churchman (a so-called clerical somebody), a righteous or unrighteous man, . . . when in the fullness of tasks, questions, success or ill-hap, experiences and perplexities, a man throws himself into the arms of God . . . then he wakes with Christ in Gethsemane. That is faith, that is *metanoia* and it is thus that he becomes a man and Christian. How can a man wax arrogant if in a this-sided life he shares the suffering of God?" - *Memoirs*, p. 24 (Bonhoeffer was martyred by the Gestapo on April 9, 1945.)

Life Together

Dietrich Bonhoeffer
HarperCollins Publishing, 1954

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell

together in unity!" (Psalms 133.1)

"It is not simply to be taken for granted that the Christian has the privilege of living among other Christians. Jesus Christ lived in the midst of his enemies. At the end all his disciples deserted him. On the Cross he was utterly alone, surrounded by evildoers and mockers. For this cause he had come, to bring peace to the enemies of God. So the Christian too, belongs not in the seclusion of a cloistered life but in the thick of foes." (p. 17)

"It is true, of course, that what is an unspeakable gift of God for the lonely individual is easily disregarded and trodden under foot by those who have the gift every day. It is easily forgotten that the fellowship of Christian brethren is a gift of grace, a gift of the Kingdom of God that any day may be taken from us, that the time that still separates us from utter loneliness may be brief indeed. . . . It is grace, nothing but grace, that we are allowed to live in community with Christian brethren." (p. 20)

The Imitation of Christ

Thomas Á Kempis
Williams Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1957

"The Kingdom of God is within you, saith our Lord. Turn thyself to the Lord with thy whole heart, forsake this wretched world, and thy soul shall find rest. Learn to despise all outward things, devoting thyself to spiritual things only, and thou wilt perceive the Kingdom of God come unto thee. For the Kingdom of God is peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, that which is not given to the wicked. Christ will come unto thee, and give

thee His consolation, if thou prepare for Him in thy heart a worthy dwelling place. All His glory and beauty are from within, and there He findeth delight. The inward man He often visiteth, sweetly communing with him, and granting unto him gracious comfort, peace, and wonderful friendship." ("Of the Inward Life", p. 83)

Diane Kilmer

The Helper

Catherine Marshall
Chosen Books, distributed by Word Books, 1946.)

The satirical, tongue-in-cheek joke repeated in my teen years by my friends and me was that "one-third of God was dead, or at least retired"—in response, of course, to Church of Christ teaching that the Holy Spirit had nothing else to do with us once the Bible was published. God revealed more of God's self to me by making sure this book got into my hands when I was about 19 or 20. Marshall's introduction to the Holy Spirit was foundational for my current prayer life and relationship with God.

Celebration of Discipline, The Path to Spiritual Growth

Richard J. Foster
Harper San Francisco, 1978.
Get the new revised edition.

I remember thinking in my late twenties that my faith hadn't really grown much since high school; I couldn't see change for the good or bad in my spiritual life. Soon after, our church studied this book in small groups, and my life was never the

same. Foster shows how certain spiritual practices, such as meditation, prayer, fasting, study, simplified living, confession, celebration, and

"THE INWARD MAN (GOD) OFTEN VISITETH, SWEETLY COMMUNING WITH HIM, AND GRANTING UNTO HIM GRACIOUS COMFORT, PEACE, AND WONDERFUL FRIENDSHIP." -THOMAS Á KEMPIS

others, have been used by God's people for centuries to open the doors of our lives and allow God to come in. Foster's first-hand Quaker experiences are offered as humble evidence of how these classic disciplines can be helpful to spiritual growth when practiced in an unlegalistic manner.

Henrietta Palmer

Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire

Jim Cymbala
(Zondervan, 1998, \$16.99)

The spirit of even the weariest Christian will be renewed with the challenges presented. Make way for God to work in your life through prayer!

My Utmost for His Highest

Oswald Chambers
(Discovery House, 1992, Revised Edition, \$10.95,
ISBN 0-929239-57-1)

This contemporary version of Chambers' classic provides daily devotional readings and insights into God's word. The subject index is helpful for readings on a particular subject you may be studying.

Fresh Faith

Jim Cymbala
(Zondervan, 1999, \$17.99)

This book calls us to trust God and experience his power in fresh new ways in our lives.

The Stone-Campbell Movement

Leroy Garrett
(College Press, Joplin, MO, 1981,
\$29.95, ISBN 0-89900-059-2)

The growth and changes of the Disciples of Christ, the Christian Churches, and the Churches of Christ are presented. I found it interesting that they were so often intertwined, and their traditions have evolved over time.

Bruce Kilmer

Your God is Too Small

J. B. Phillips
(first published in 1952, Simon and Schuster edition 1997)

This book is divided in two halves: the first half disposes of our views of God which are too small; the second half of the book shows how Jesus is the true God, focused so that we can have some understanding of God and come to have a relationship with him. Since I read this book in high school, it has helped me in my relationship with God and has been a help in explaining who God is to all kinds of people from Japanese to Americans, from young to old, from believers to nonbelievers.

Susan Howatch's series on lives of people within the Church of England:

Glittering Images, Glamorous

Powers, Ultimate Prizes, Scandalous Risks, Mystical Paths, Absolute Truths, and The Wonder Worker
Fawcett Crest, New York.

In these books, Howatch's understanding of Christianity (evangelical, liberal, high church, low church, mystical, etc.); the process of conversion (sin, lostness, redemption, resurrection); spirituality; psychology; human nature and frailty; love; sexuality; politics; class consciousness; and history is woven into the lives of her characters as they make their spiritual journeys in the Church of England. I am on my third reading of the series (I rarely read a fiction book more than once) and I continue to benefit from "Howatch therapy."

Deborah Shepherd

The Voyage of the Dawn Treader

C. S. Lewis
(several editions are in print)

Having made previous journeys to the magical land of Narnia, the children in Lewis's story are drawn again into a place where a great Lion, Aslan, rules and is beloved. They join an old friend on a questing voyage full of perils and pleasures. One boy's transforming encounter with Aslan ends with a bath in a pool of healing water and a suit of new clothes! In an essay about writing for children, Lewis describes the way human hearts guard against stained-glass piety the way dragons guard their treasures. By telling stories that portray rather than preach the love of God, he steals past those "watchful dragons."

The Princess and the Goblin and The Princess and the Curdie

George MacDonald
(several editions are in print)

The Princess stories portray the adventures of a young miner and the princess of the realm who, with the help of a powerful and loving "great-great grandmother," conquer the goblins who seek to overthrow the kingdom. The young miner begins by not being able to see the great grandmother and depends on the princess to make known what the grandmother directs them to do. It is only after trusting and believing in the grandmother that the boy can see her.

The Scottish writer George MacDonald was a contemporary of Charles Dickens, and was read widely in his time. Although he made his (meager) living as a lecturer and writer of novels who also wrote works of mythic fantasy, he was always at heart a preacher. Woven throughout all his work there is a thread of love and wonder that draws the reader to fall in love with God over and over. His use of Scottish dialect makes the original difficult for modern readers, but recent revival in interest in MacDonald has prompted the publication of several of his novels in "updated" editions. For a look at the fabric of MacDonald's love for God, wrap yourself in *George MacDonald, An Anthology: 365 Readings*, edited by C. S. Lewis.

Kay Kendall

Secret Strength

Joni Earickson Tada
Questar Publishing, 1976

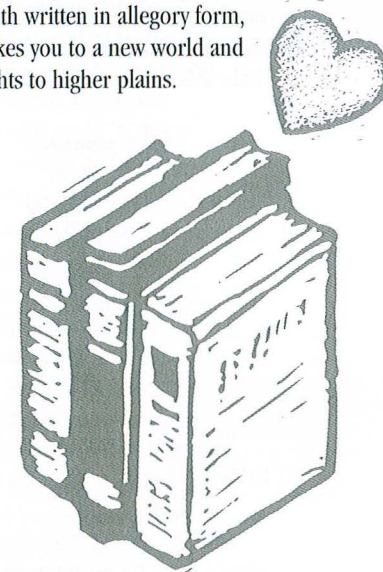
One who writes about adversity

from a wheelchair and with a mouth pen bears a stamp of authenticity. A careful reader here also discovers many ways to listen to God more closely.

Hind's Feet on High Places

Hannah Hurnard
Living Books, Tyndale House

A gripping story of awakening spiritual depth written in allegory form, this book takes you to a new world and lifts your sights to higher plains.



Elton Higgs

Bread for the Journey: A Daybook of Wisdom and Faith

Henri J. M. Nouwen
HarperSanFrancisco, 1997.

This is a wonderful book of daily meditations from a man who experienced life and spirituality at its deepest. In a paragraph or two each day he speaks of virtue, suffering, knowing God, and learning love and compassion.

(continued on next page)

Listen to the Green

Luci Shaw
Wheaton, Ill.: Harold Shaw Publishers,
1971

This is only one of a number of books of poetry by Luci Shaw, who has the gift of putting in succinct and homely terms the key concepts of our faith and the intersections of human weakness and divine strength. One little short poem called "Forecast" reads:

*planting
seeds
inevitably
changes my
feelings
about rain.*



Well. Makes you want to run right out to the bookstore, doesn't it?

Knowing these people the way I do, I plan to use their recommendations to form my reading list for the next little while. Here are two recent discoveries of mine I'd like to recommend to you:

Surprised by the Power of the Spirit

Jack Deere
Zondervan, 1993

Just *wait* till you read this book. It will blow you away. It's written by a former professor at the conservative Dallas Theological Seminary who knew, and even formulated, all those arguments

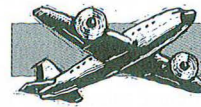
about why the Holy Spirit doesn't do anything in our lives today, since we have the Bible. Well, the Holy Spirit had a thing or two to show him, and he in turn shares his experiences with us. Because he's from a tradition so similar to ours, his revelations of the Spirit's work in his life are particularly compelling for those of us who have been taught that miraculous gifts ceased with the apostles.

Letters to Malcolm, Chiefly on Prayer

C. S. Lewis
new edition 1992, Harcourt Brace

Lewis has such a wonderful way of giving the right words to our feelings and impressions and unspoken inklings. He helps us to think about things, about why we think the way we do, and why we pray the way we do. In this little volume, which is a series of his answers to letters written by his friend Malcolm (I haven't been able to find out who Malcolm is, or where *his* letters are, but I hope to), many vague concepts about prayer we sometimes think about are given shape. He and his friend Malcolm discuss things childlike but profound, such as what God "looks like" to us when we pray; if it's okay to pray to God when we're angry, or how we feel (or ought to feel) when asking God to forgive us our sins. These intimate letters are wonderful reading. I just wish we had the other half of the correspondence. ✠

Noreen Bryant is the Managing Editor of Integrity. She wishes every reader could sit in on an Integrity Board meeting to hear wit and wisdom from the other Board members and to get "filled," as she does.



Walking with Jesus Through the End Times

John Alan Turner

It is an undeniable truth: the only way to prepare for Jesus' second coming is to faithfully obey what He commanded in His first coming, and His first command was simply "Follow Me" (John 1:43).

Easier said than done, right? Following Jesus means that we walk faithfully with him daily throughout our life. The fact is, something inside of us longs for the very presence of our Lord, but we do not know when He might return. It may be many years before Christ returns to take us home. Regardless, our call is to follow the Lamb—to walk with him every single day.

If we study the Scriptures, we will see that, from the very beginning, God has always made provision for those who walked with him. No matter what occurred in the world around them, God's servants were never held hostage to the fears and anxieties of their times. Their walk with God prepared them for and enabled them to overcome anything they might encounter. Jesus said that the days prior to his return would be similar to the days of Noah. When we look at Noah's life, we see that God did not give Noah a specific date when the flood would come. The Lord gave Noah two things: a task, which was to build the ark, and time to get the job

done. The Almighty could have destroyed evil immediately. But the Scriptures tell us that the "patience of God kept waiting during the construction of the ark" (1 Peter 3:20). God's attention was not focused on what would be destroyed but on what was being built.

This is still true today. God is not as concerned with the evil he will ultimately destroy, as he is concerned with the church that is being built. Many of us are so focused on what the devil is doing. The focus of the Lord is not on how dark the world is becoming, but how much light the church is shedding. In the midst of great darkness, the Lord has determined to bring glory to Himself and protection to His people. God told Noah to build an ark. When the task was completed, then the flood came.

We also have a task: build the Kingdom of the Lord and participate in the harvest of the nations. Jesus did not say, "When evil gets worse, the harvest will begin." He said, "When the crop permits, the harvest has come" (Mark 4:29). Noah rightly obeyed the Word of the Lord by concentrating all of his efforts on his task: building the ark. He was

not overly fretting over the state of moral decay. He set his eyes on the goal of completing the ark. We should similarly set our eyes on the task at hand: allowing God to advance his kingdom through us. Surely, God's highest plans will not be diverted by the increase of wickedness. One may say that God's justice demands that he destroy the wicked. Yes, but his nature demands that his good plans and promises concerning his glory in

THE FOCUS OF THE LORD IS NOT ON HOW DARK THE WORLD IS BECOMING BUT HOW MUCH LIGHT THE CHURCH IS SHEDDING.

the church must first be fulfilled!

Look again at Noah. Noah lived at a time when "every intent of the thoughts of his [man's] heart was only evil continually." His world, like ours, "was corrupt in the sight of God, and filled with violence" (Genesis 6:5, 11). Yet, during these same days, "Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord" (Genesis 6:8). What was unique about Noah? How did he find the preserving grace of God in his life? The Scriptures tell us, "Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God" (Genesis 6:9).

I love that Scripture. Noah walked with God. Walking with God means that we stay yielded to his Word and attentive to his Presence. Though we do not see him, we know him. Appropriately, the name Noah means "rest." As the Lord's servant, Noah not only recognized his mission in life, but he found his place of rest in the shadow of the Almighty. Step-by-

step, day-by-day, Noah lived in the Lord's Presence. Noah walked with God and had an intimate relationship with Him.

But to know someone deeply does not happen quickly. It takes time to move beyond the surface into the place of enduring friendship and intimacy. This is why walking with God is so pleasing to Him, for it creates a time-tested bond between God and man. The opinions, criticisms and approval of the world around us no longer control us. Only as our walk with God matures does intimacy with the Creator truly begin and peace about the future increases.

We should not be too hard on those who have falsely affixed the Second Coming or some other prophetic event to a specific date. It is usually the sincerity of these people that propels their prophecies into regional or even national prominence. Many people have been swept up in similar experiences in times past. In the mid-seventies, for example, when threats of nuclear war seemed everywhere, many Christians were predicting divine judgment for America. During those days, many began to speak of a huge comet that was due to appear on Christmas Day, 1975. Previously unknown, the comet was named Kohoutek after the Hungarian astronomer who discovered it. The signs of the times confirmed many people's fears. But when it was published in a religious periodical (whose name shall be withheld to protect the innocently misinformed) that Kohoutek meant "the wolf that devours the lamb," it was certainly a sign in the heavens

that the end was near. Well, Christmas came and went and nothing happened. The comet was an over-exaggerated astronomical flop! So many were so sure of their insights, so fearfully compelled by the signs of the times, yet so wrongly informed. A Hungarian woman was asked her opinion of the scare. Her reply was that she thought Kohoutek meant something like "add a tomato to the stew."

God knows our motives are right, even though our knowledge is often wrong. In researching end times scares throughout history, I discovered that masses of people in Europe were convinced that the year 1666 would see the rise of the Antichrist. This thought led to waves of fanaticism and fear which spread from country to country. There is a remarkable devotional containing a series of letters written by a man named Brother Lawrence, a monk who served Christ as a dishwasher in a monastery. The simple, yet profound, sense of God's presence that accompanied Brother Lawrence made this book, *The Practice of the Presence of God*, an enduring Christian classic. But what changed my life was that his first letters were written in the year 1666, during the time when Europe was awash with fear of the Antichrist! For all the turmoil in the world around him, at least one soul lived in the peace of Jesus Christ. Brother Lawrence serves as a model for our generation.

For when the terrors and

confusion of the endtimes increase, it is only in the presence of Jesus that we shall find a calm and safe harbor. And to truly know Him then, we must walk with Him now. One of my favorite texts is from Genesis 5:22, 24. It reads, "Then Enoch walked with God three hundred years, and he was not, for God took him." Hebrews 11:5 tells us that Enoch had "obtained the witness he was pleasing to God." Enoch walked with God 300 years. I have a hard time walking with God for three days—never mind 300 years! Think of it, every day, Enoch arose and sought the Lord, walking faithfully with the Almighty. Eventually, Enoch became so pleasing to God that, without having to pass through death, he was taken home to be with the Lord. When we faithfully walk with God we bring great pleasure to our Father.

The Scripture says that Enoch "obtained the witness" that his life was "pleasing to God." God communicated His pleasure to Enoch by walking in close communion with him. To know the pleasure of God is to taste the sweetness of heaven itself. Whatever may happen in the future, the God of the future is walking with us today. And while we may not be able to see into tomorrow, our faithfulness to Christ today is our best security for whatever lies ahead. As the first person raptured by Christ, Enoch sets the standard for all whom Jesus will one day gather to Himself. They simply and passionately walk with God. ✨

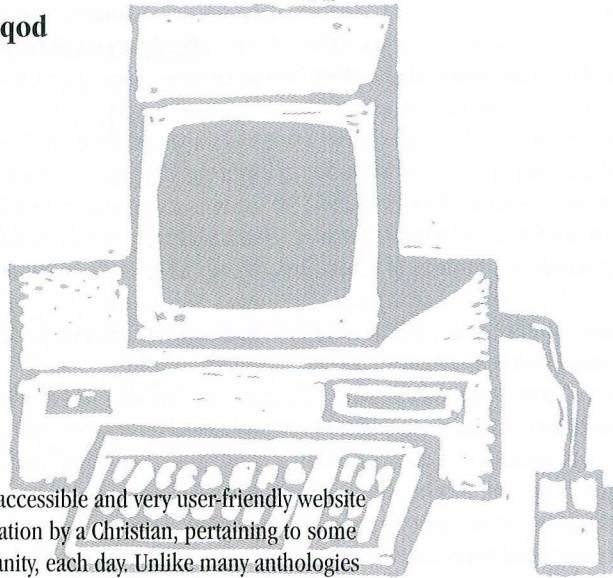
John Alan Turner is the Ministries Coordinator at the Columbia Church of Christ in Columbia, MD. He attended Pepperdine University and has a BA from Bear Valley Bible Institute. He and his wife, Jill, have one daughter, Anabel Grace.



In this section, we feature journals, publications, or web sites which promote Christian unity and may be of interest to you. If you know of others which should be featured, please let us know!

Website: Christian Quotation of the Day

www.gospelcom.net/cqod



This easily-accessible and very user-friendly website features a quotation by a Christian, pertaining to some facet of Christianity, each day. Unlike many anthologies of quotations, these aren't shallow little "feel-good" sayings. Rather, you can find some meaty material on any number of subjects written by Christian authors of all denominations, from all nationalities. The author, Robert McAnally Adams, has maintained this site for four years; therefore, there are over a thousand quotations, all cross-referenced by author and subject. It's easy to find words of wisdom on just about anything in his easy-to-use archive. Seems like a great resource for sermon material!

You can also subscribe to receive his Christian Quotation of the Day by e-mail, and get a valuable historical perspective from the well-written "See What Happened on this Day in Christian History" option. ❁



COMING UP

Spring 2000

Prayer

Summer 2000

Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration:
An Integrity Sampler

Fall 2000

Jesus

Winter 2000/2001

Reexamining the Conflict over
Gender Roles in our Churches

Spring 2001

Christian Colleges

If you'd like to submit materials for any of these upcoming issues, please do so!

We try hard to feature the work of all types of writers—laity and clergy, scholars and "regular old Christians."

For more details on the specific subject matter of each issue or for any other submission guidelines, please e-mail our Managing Editor at <noreen@integrityjournal.org>.

We are here to serve you. If *Integrity* can minister to you by featuring articles on a specific topic, please let us know.

www.integrityjournal.org



5393 Crooks Road
PMB 44
Troy, MI 48098
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
ROYAL OAK, MI
PERMIT NO. 696