

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

*INTEGRITY*, a journal published bimonthly by an independent nonprofit corporation, 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 the Board as a whole.

*(Continued from page 63)*

of another's views meant agreement or acceptance of those views.

When I went to the last Integrity board meeting with my file of response letters, I wondered what would be the reaction of the board, many of whom had voted differently than I did. These dear brothers and sisters demonstrated the unity and love of Christ that I had tried to write about. It is easier to write about unity in diversity, and love in spite of differences, than it is to demonstrate and live these ideals. The board listened to my analysis, my conclusions, my doubts, my fears, and my hopes. They encouraged me. They reiterated that *Integrity* stands for addressing the cutting-edge issues of today, for dialoguing without fear, for seeking the truth, and for accepting as Christians those with whom we differ. One founding board member pointed out that the

real cause of disunity in the church was not differences of opinion, but a lack of love for those who are different than ourselves. He said we don't need to change our opinions but our attitudes. I could have kissed each one of the board members!

Some of your letters made me rethink some of my positions and views on issues. I hope my article did the same for you. As much as we may believe in our candidate or disdain the other candidate, the one in power whom we are to trust is God, not our government nor the leaders in our government. For no matter what are our conclusions about political philosophies, methods, and solutions, we have been baptized into Christ, and there is neither right nor left, Republican or Democrat, liberal or conservative, for we are all one in Christ.

# Integrity

---

---

## Editorial: One Point of Reference

### The Christian Assembly Again: Peace Proposals

Jerry L. Daniel

### Spiritual Truths For My "Sacred Journey" (Part Two)

Autobiographical Journaling or Narrative Theology

Curtis D. McClane

### Request For Good News From Small Churches

### Intercepted Correspondence

### Book Review: *And the Angels Were Silent; The Final Week of Jesus*

By Max Lucado

Reviewed by Henrietta C. Palmer

### Readers' Response

May/June 1993  
Vol. 24, No. 3

### Editors

Diane G. H. Kilmer  
J. Bruce Kilmer

### Layout Editors

Karl W. Randall  
Natalie Randall

### Integrity Address

4051 S. Lincoln Road  
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

### Board of Directors

Sidney R. Bonvallet  
Wayne A. Bonvallet  
Brant Lee Doty  
Elton D. Higgs  
Laquita M. Higgs  
Joseph F. Jones  
Diane G. H. Kilmer  
J. Bruce Kilmer  
Curtis Lloyd  
Curtis D. McClane  
Henrietta C. Palmer  
William Palmer  
Amos Ponder  
Karl W. Randall  
Natalie Randall  
Jan Van Horn  
John Van Horn

### Editorial Advisor

Hoy Ledbetter

### Subscriptions

are by written request. There is no subscription charge, but we depend on your contributions which are tax deductible.

### Back Issues

Available from  
1269 Pickwick Place  
Flint, MI 48507

## One Point of Reference

The devils are at it again. As this issue's "Intercepted Correspondence" reminds us, Satan continually plots to undermine the church by turning our own characteristics against us—our personal development and knowledge, our generational and cultural and political viewpoints, even our understanding of spiritual matters. Almost everything we personally identify with can be twisted into something divisive between Christian sisters and brothers.

Only one point of identification has the power to unite believers and confound those who plot against us: Jesus Christ and his love for us as shown at the Cross. We must focus on this fact, as Max Lucado emphasizes in his book reviewed by Henrietta Palmer. We must take the time to stay focussed on Christ and his love when we face daily matters, as writer Curtis McClane encourages in his article. Only when we remember who we all are in the shadow of the Cross will we have the loving attitude necessary to discuss differences of opinion without causing division (as Jerry Daniel's irenic article and Readers' Response illustrate).

We hope you are encouraged by this issue of *Integrity*. The Board also hopes to hear from you readers very soon in response to our request for good news from small congregations. Feel free to use this written forum to share how Christ has used your "non-mega"-sized congregation to advantage.

May God continue to bless you and keep you!

Diane G. H. Kilmer  
Co-Editor

## The Christian Assembly Again: Peace Proposals

JERRY L. DANIEL

The controversy regarding the purpose of the Christian assembly developing over the past few years in the literature of the Restoration churches is, to my mind, a completely healthy one. It is a question which cried out for study. Prior to the early 1970s it was more or less assumed in our fellowship, though not in the broader spectrum of Christianity, that the purpose of the assembly is primarily a vertical one, a gathering in which each person focusses on the worship of God. By contrast, the past fifteen years or so have seen various brotherhood periodicals carrying essays arguing for the view that the assembly is designed chiefly to meet the need for edification<sup>1</sup>. Drawing heavily on such passages as I Corinthians 14, it has been argued that the encouragement of fellow-Christians, the horizontal dimension, is a more basic goal for the public assembly than is praise of God, the vertical dimension. This view also allows for the possibility that worship is a broader function than that which occurs within the confines of public gatherings; if not influenced by, at least reflecting concepts frequently expressed by certain of the British Romantic poets—for example, Byron's

Shall man confine his Maker's sway  
To Gothic domes of mouldering  
stone?  
Thy temple is the face of day;  
Earth, ocean, heaven, thy  
boundless throne.<sup>2</sup>

## Two Sides Discussed

One of the better recent discussions of the question occurs in the fall 1987 issue of the *Faculty Bulletin* of the Institute for Christian Studies in Austin, Texas. Though the entire volume is relevant, two essays address the matter directly: Allan J. McNicol's "Sorting Through the

Confusion About Worship: Appraisal of Two Paradigms," and Michael R. Weed's "Amusing the Saints: Edification Without Transcendence." Both are well-written and to the point.

In the first of these essays, McNicol correctly notes that we are undergoing a paradigm change, from the old model, "dominant in the churches for the past century," which emphasized authority and correctness in addressing acts of worship to God, to a new model, "which has surfaced and come to preeminence in some churches of Christ" in the past decade (p. 22), and which involves two axioms: 1) unlike Old Testament worship, Christian worship is not "a set of acts or rites anymore, but the day-by-day, situation by situation, living out one's dedicated life to God;" and 2) the purpose of the Christian assembly is edification (pp. 29-30). He then sets out to critique both paradigms and to show that both have major flaws, but his sharpest attack is levied against the newer paradigm, the net result of which he describes as "a total misconstrual of the role of the assembly wherein edification of believers is given greater prominence than the praise of God when the reverse should be the case" (p. 40). He has stated earlier in the essay that "it is a total distortion of Hebrews 10:19-25 to claim that this passage teaches that the central role of the assembly is for the edification of believers" (p. 39), and that therefore, the second axiom of the new paradigm that the central role of the assembly is edification is not confirmed" (p. 39). In McNicol's view both paradigms are of a mingled yarn; neither can be accepted without refinement, yet it is self-evident that he prefers the older model.

Michael Weed's essay is an even stronger renunciation of the view that the assembly is primarily for edification—

McNicol's second paradigm. He tips his hand immediately by entitling his essay, "Amusing the Saints: Edification Without Transcendence." He feels that American society which is "rapidly becoming a highly individualistic, self-indulgent, relativistic, and secular society" has played an important role in producing the concept (p. 47), adding that this view "has led to serious distortions of the nature and meaning of Christian worship---and even defeats its own best intentions" (p. 51). He outlines three "ironies" which have resulted: 1) the exclusion of worship from the assembly; 2) the Americanization of the assembly; and 3) transcendence is irrelevant (pp. 51-53). He finds that this theory of the assembly---which for brevity's sake we will call the edification view---merely provides "biblical warrant for us to do what we already want to do, viz., to accommodate ourselves to what is going on in surrounding religious groups and in society at large" (p. 54), noting that this view has appeared among churches of Christ at the same time when Jews, Catholics and Protestants have become aware of a hollowness in their own worship; a time when they write Ann Landers "complaining that their respective services are more like amusement parks than worship services" (p. 54).<sup>3</sup>

## Clarifying The Question

Brothers McNicol and Weed have done good work in clarifying certain aspects of the question, and have provided a needed caution by reminding us, as Friar Laurence reminded Romeo, "Wisely and slow, they stumble that run fast." Such a caution is especially needed when we run too fast toward a new and insufficiently considered model for so crucial a matter as the Christian assembly. And I believe most readers of this journal would agree that in a society which tends to amuse itself to death there might be a disastrous tendency to make of the assembly another element in the entertainment

industry. Such a move would certainly have toxic results and should be most firmly resisted.

In my view, however, their fear of the dangers and their zeal to defend the uniqueness of the public assembly as a time of worship have led brothers McNicol and Weed to minimize the unique opportunity for edification it also offers. They have, it seems to me, overstated their case and confused the real point at issue.

In the penultimate paragraph of his essay Michael Weed says, "To deny, diminish, or make incidental the presence of the Father or the Son in the Christian assembly, much less at the Lord's Supper, cuts the very ground out from under Christian identity and faithful living; it makes the Christian assembly merely an assembly of Christians" (p. 56). Yes, of course. Who could disagree? The divine presence is a normative presupposition of the Christian assembly. But have the proponents of the edification view ever really wanted to deny or diminish the presence of God and Christ in the assembly? I think not.<sup>4</sup> I believe the two camps are a bit closer together than we sometimes realize; the vertical and the horizontal are not so clearly separate as either side seems to have assumed. A few peace proposals may be in order.

The question "Why does a person attend church?" has, like all other "why" questions, not only different answers, but different *kinds* of answers. If we ask a man why he went to see a film he, depending on his understanding of the intent of the question, might answer, "Because I had been working too hard and needed some time off;" or he might answer, "Because I like the actors in the film." Both could be true, but they answer different questions. Similarly, when we ask "Why do Christians assemble?" one absolutely true answer is "To worship God;" but it is equally true to answer, "To encourage one another."

To put it another way, the term "why"

has several meanings, but two fundamental ones relating to the question before us. It can be used to ask the "Formal Cause," but it can also be used to ask the "Efficient Cause." The Formal Cause involves the nature of an action or process; the Efficient Cause involves the effect(s) of an action or process. One might, for example, ask "Why is a certain poem a bad one?" The answer could be, "Because it is maudlin in concept and vague in expression." But the answer could also be, and with equal validity, "Because the poet wrote too hurriedly and while under stress." Both are correct; they simply answer different questions. The first answers the Formal; the second answers the Efficient. As applied to the Christian assembly, the correct answer to the Formal "why" is, in my view, "to worship God." The answer to the Efficient "why" is "to edify my fellow-worshippers."

## The Assembly's Purpose

Worship of God really is an all-of-life process for the Christian, though that is not to deny that what takes place at church is, and should be, different in kind. We do, of course, come together to worship. How could that be denied? But the particular stated reason for doing it *together* is mutual edification. To say that the proponent of the edification theory "excludes" worship from what has traditionally been called "the worship service" (Weed, p. 51), emphasis his) is to misunderstand. No one, to my knowledge, wants to exclude worship; certainly I do not. I prefer not even to exclude it from the dining room or the classroom, certainly not from the public assembly. But I believe it to be in accord with Paul's instructions so to arrange our public worship as to be consciously edifying.

An illustration may help. I learned to fly some thirty years ago, and until it became prohibitively expensive looked upon private aviation as the best hobby

on or above the planet. For years I was a member of a flying club which provided, in addition to better hourly rental rates, an opportunity for monthly meetings with like-minded aviation enthusiasts. Members of the club found the meetings to be, as regards flying, intensely edifying. The members were friendly and genuinely interested in aviation. We engaged in a great deal of "hangar flying," swapping tales (occasionally even true ones) about airborne adventures. We talked safety, reviewed rules changes, encouraged those who were working on licenses or advanced ratings, and in general edified each other regarding flying. The point is, and its importance cannot be overstated, that we did not talk about ourselves, nor did we simply amuse ourselves in the spirit of our individualistic and self-indulgent age. In one sense the meetings were totally centered on aviation---that is all we talked about. In another sense they were totally for the purpose of encouraging each participant to be a better pilot. Had we met and shared our stream of consciousness, indulged in "self-expression," or allowed our meetings to become mere entertainment, I doubt that we could have made anyone a better pilot. It would have been unfair, had someone charged us with "excluding" aviation from our meetings. We didn't exclude it; we talked aviation, but with a view to helping aviators. Developing the horizontal dimension in no way diminished the vertical.

Focus and purpose are two separate matters. We focussed on aviation, but our purpose in doing so---together, in group meetings---was to encourage one another as fledgling pilots. Similarly, in our public assemblies Christians focus on God, but we do so---together, in groups---in order to encourage one another in our Christian struggles.

## Focus And Purpose

Perhaps the total achievement of the

Christian assembly cannot be confined by such ready epithets as vertical and horizontal; cannot be simplified to the functions of worship and edification. Perhaps complete integrity in that which lies too deep for human comprehension is, in our finitude, impossible. It seems certain to me, however, that a consistent effort to distinguish focus and purpose will prove thoroughly helpful.

It is perhaps gratuitous, but irresistible, to mention here the prima facie strength of the case for the edification view. Any reasonable reading of I Corinthians 14<sup>5</sup> will reveal how very strong it is: "... he who prophesies speaks to men for their u p b u i l d i n g (οἰκοδομην)<sup>6</sup>, encouragement (παράκλησιν) and consolation (παραμυθίαν) ... He who prophesies edifies (οἰκοδομεῖ) the church ... He who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified (οἰκοδομην λάβῃ) ... If I come to you speaking in tongues, how shall I benefit (ὠφελήσω) you unless I bring you some revelation or prophecy or teaching? ... If you in a tongue utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? ... Strive to excel in building up the church ... You may give thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified (οἰκοδομεῖται) ... In church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct (κατηχήσω) others, than ten thousand words in a tongue ... Let all things be done for edification (οἰκοδομην). You can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged (παρακαλῶνται)."

Similarly, Ephesians 5:19 speaks of our "addressing one another" (λαλοῦντες ἑαυτοῖς) in song, while Colossians 3:16 suggests that our singing should "teach and admonish one another" (διδάσκοντες καὶ νοουθετοῦντες ἑαυτοῦς). Hebrews 10:25, whatever else may be said about the passage, firmly assigns the assembly as a solution

for those in need of being encouraged (παρακαλοῦντες).

This language (especially that of 1 Corinthians 14, which undeniably treats the Christian assembly) makes it clear to me that those who hold the edification view have a remarkably strong case. But it is equally clear that brothers Weed and McNicol, and others who agree with them, have pinpointed a very great danger — that if the assembly becomes horizontal in focus it will degenerate into just another self-help function of our hedonically oriented society. Mine is an ironic proposal: I believe that if we are able to keep the assembly vertical in focus and horizontal in purpose we can and will have the best of both worlds.

#### Endnotes

1. Cf., e.g., Ervin Bishop, "The Assembly," *Restoration Quarterly*, 18 (Fourth Quarter 1975), pp. 219–28; also Bishop's series of five articles entitled "The Christian Assembly," in *The Firm Foundation* (1973).

2. "The Prayer of Nature," *The Complete Poetical Works of Byron* (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1905), p. 132. J. Harvill, for example, says, "The rigid segregation of 'sacred' and 'secular,' with worship limited to the 'sacred,' is false for the Christian, since everything he does in word or deed is dedicated to the glory of God." "Worship: A Theological Introduction," *Restoration Quarterly*, 19 (Second Quarter 1976), p. 76.

3. Numerous authors have examined the excessive desire for entertainment in our postmodern age. Two familiar ones are Allen Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Touchstone, 1987), and Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Viking, 1985).

4. As mentioned above, the exclusion of worship from the assembly is the first of Michael Weed's "ironies" resulting from the edification view. I believe this to be an incorrect judgment on the part of brother Weed. Churches which stress the edification value of the assembly do

not appear to me to have excluded worship from it; nor am I aware of proponents of the edification view who have written that worship should be excluded. The danger is, however, quite real. Ervin Bishop's essay, cited above, comes perilously close to the exclusion of worship from the assembly, though I doubt that even in his case the charge can be validly made.

5. All translations are from the RSV.

6. The Greek term οἰκοδομέω and its cognates used most often in these passages, expresses the concept of building up,

sometimes literally but more often figuratively, referring to "spiritual furtherance both of the community and also of the individual by Christ." Otto Michel, "οἰκοδομέω," *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Friedrich; trans. and ed., Geoffrey W. Bromiley, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 5, p. 141. Arndt-Gingrich and the standard lexicons confirm this usage.

Jerry L. Daniel served as minister and elder to the Echo Lake Church of Christ in Westfield, New Jersey. Jerry died on June 29, 1993.

## Spiritual Truths For My "Sacred Journey" (Part Two) Autobiographical Journaling or Narrative Theology

CURTIS D. McCLANE

The concept and practice of "narrative theology" is exciting to me. Having come from a philosophical / theological tradition that has downplayed and negated the significance of personal experience, it was difficult for me to recognize the movement of God in my life. Since my faith constructs only allowed God to speak through official channels, i.e., the Bible first, then the elders of the church, and finally through the time-honored traditions of the church, it never occurred to me that God continued to speak and move and reveal.

The best description of "narrative theology" is provided by Frederick Buechner who maintains that "autobiography becomes a way of praying" (*Now and Then*, p. 3). He points out that the process of everyday living can often blind us to certain themes, patterns, and signals that make up the fabric out of which our life's story is woven. Autobiographical journaling is the process by which our own eyes are opened up to ourselves. It keeps us constantly in tune

with who we are. It is a way of taking time out and calling a halt to the blinding process of everyday living so that we can see God more clearly, we can hear God more distinctly, and we can experience God more movingly.

Recent revival and recognition of the value of the "spiritual disciplines" in Christian growth and maturity (see Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline* and Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*) have paved the way for recognizing journaling as a spiritual discipline. Interestingly, neither Foster nor Willard explore this practice in their books. It is precisely because of the common practice of spiritual autobiography that we know of God's workings in the lives of Christians through the ages. I am thinking of John Newton, William Cowper, Frances Havergal, Isaac Watts and an innumerable host of others. And it is only by reading the works and writings of Jonathan Edwards that we correct our myopic vision of his theology as being only "Sinners in the Hands of An Angry

God!"

Perhaps more than any other recent Christian writer, Thomas Merton re-introduced narrative theology to modern American readers when he published *The Seven Story Mountain*. Following in his footsteps have been the two authors Henri J. M. Nouwen and Frederick Buechner. Nouwen in his *Genesee Diary* and Buechner with his trilogy of *Now and Then*, *The Sacred Journey*, and *Telling Secrets* have provided us excellent models of this literary genre.

Anne Broyles explains that "as a discipline of the Christian faith, journaling may lead to clearer understanding of who one is in relation to the One whose death on the cross puts all things in perspective" [Anne Broyles, "One More Door Into God's Presence: Journaling as Spiritual Discipline" *Weavings*, no. 3, 2 (May/June 1987): 32]. This exercise of journaling, she maintains, is more than just a cataloguing of daily events. Instead, it is an attempt to discover "the hand of God in that dailiness."

So, with all of these preliminary observations behind us now, I want to stress some aspects of autobiographical journaling. I hope to ignite some spark within your spirit so that you, too, may discover the joy of self yielding to the hand of God in your daily routine. For it is in the routine dailiness of our sacred journeys that God is constantly drawing our attention to the signs along the way that clearly manifest the invisible and the eternal.

## Four Characteristics

In order for our autobiographical journaling to really function as a way of hearing God speak, we have to constantly keep before us four features in our writing. I discovered these features in reading an interview that Stephen Kendrick conducted with Frederick Buechner [*The Christian Century*, no. 29, 109 (Oct. 14, 1992): 900-04]. I went back over my own

journal entries and recognized these same features.

First and foremost, narrative theology must be concrete. Concreteness in speaking and writing can often be threatening and intimidating. The more abstract we are in our communication the less responsibility we have. The more abstract we are in our communication the less demanding we are of ourselves. And, the more abstract we are in our communication the less we have to look beneath the veneer of daily living to see who we really are. Therefore, when we speak of concreteness we are saying that journal entries are more helpful when specific names, events, feelings and impressions are mentioned.

Secondly, narrative theology is expressed with an unparalleled degree of candor compared with other forms of communication we engage in daily. Candor means that "I am telling it straight." I am willing to risk the fear of vulnerability so that I can hear what God is saying to me. Candor may be mistaken for objectivity. There is no such thing as personal objectivity with self. I am so wrapped up in my own world that everything I say and do is subjective. Narrative theology functions best when it takes seriously the task of being candid about its own subjectivity.

Thirdly, narrative theology is expressed conversationally. I remember the point in my spiritual journey when I began praying to God conversationally. At first I thought I was committing a heinous sin! I felt guilty as though I were being disrespectful to God. But conversational communication is critical. It keeps me from hiding behind words. It keeps me from thinking and believing that my faith is my words. It keeps me from believing that spirituality is measured by the cuteness of a turn of a phrase, or a theological insight couched in esoteric language. I write as I think and speak.

And last of all, narrative theology seeks to express commonality. My

human experience is not unique. The human predicament that we all face by merely being alive comes to the surface when I write. I see in my life your life. When I hear me clearly I begin to hear you clearly. Universality is the bridge to commonality. Human beings everywhere crave to be understood and to know that their problems are normal. My problems are the problems of the world. I embrace humanity in all of its brokenness when I express that commonality in my own daily living.

By way of example, I want to share with you an entry in my own journal that I think exemplifies these four features of narrative theology. The journal entry is dated, "Thursday, January 27, 1992."

God, the pain is great. Why did my Dad feel the need to take his own life? Did he not know or care how it would affect the rest of the family? It's hard to describe how I feel, O Lord. Confusion. Shock. Anger. Regret. Tenderness. Compassion. Fear--- yes, fear. Fear of my own mortality. Fear of losing Nancy. Fear of not being ready to leave this world when you, Father, call me home.

The more pain we have the more we are able to love. I loved my Dad so much. Wed. morning when I was cleaning the van out, I found the wilted yellow rose I had taken from the casket at the graveside. My Dad was a beautiful yellow rose that wilted while in full bloom. He never knew how beautiful he was. It took me a long time to see for myself.

It's so sad because I don't think he ever knew how much I really loved him. (I don't think I ever really knew either.) And I know I never really knew how much he really loved me.

O the pain of unrequited love!

Heavenly Father, receive my Dad into your arms of love. The tears I shed are for an earthly father who is here no more. The tears I shed come from a well of love filled with sadness.

"A desire accomplished is sweet to the soul" (Proverbs 13:19a).

My "desire accomplished" was holding my Dad's hand on Dec. 31, 1991 (10 days before his suicide). I hugged him and told him I loved him. I prayed for him. God, his soul is in your loving hands.

From this personal journal entry (I hope that it is not too private) the four features of narrative theology are clearly seen. The concrete situation of my father's suicide stripped away all abstraction and theorizing that formerly characterized my thinking about suicide. Candor compelled me to face the conflicting torrents of emotions drowning my soul. The words I used for this entry were very close to normal conversation and I could not hide behind words that sounded like a theological treatise. And last of all, the commonality I share with all those families whose loved one chose the "final exit"--- my heart is large enough to embrace their pain, too. I hurt for the world now.

## Is Journaling For Everyone?

Is this discipline of spiritual journaling for everyone? Perhaps not. Many individuals who grow deeper and more intimate with God choose meditation. Others choose the avenue of sharing faith stories. But it is my conviction that autobiographical journaling provides a unique way of recording and analyzing the movement of God in our lives. Jotting down ideas, emotions, thoughts, perceptions, events, memories, frustrations, temptations, dreams, goals, etc., has a way of making these things real for us. The process of conceptualizing, writing, and verbalizing leads to the product of claiming reality as my own experience. This claiming then allows me to reflect on life. I have personally found that the journal entries have served to provide me with the "stuff" I need for my times of meditation.

If you choose to try this form of narrative theology, some suggestions might be in order as to methodology. As we do this, let us keep in mind the caution of Tilden Edwards: "We must never forget that our methods are not ultimate; they are but means to help realize a relationship that in itself is beyond our methods" [Tilden Edwards, "Beyond Methods in the Spiritual Life" *Weavings*, no. 1, 1 (Sept./Oct. 1986): 39, 40.]

Anne Broyles has provided some helpful guidelines for me as I keep my journal entries focused on God's continual working and presence in my daily life. She mentions five specific areas which can serve as "a window into our relationship with the Divine Mystery, bringing us closer to God this day" (Broyles, "One More Door," 34).

*Journaling from Daily Life Events.* She points out:

We can clarify why we do what we do, in what ways we live out our faith. God most often meets us in the ordinary details of our lives. Do we recognize the risen Christ in our dishwashing, bill paying, or tucking the kids at night? Do we feel God's presence as we write to our legislators or march for peace? Journaling the events of our lives can help us see God in all of life (page 35).

I was captivated by Frederick Buechner's advice on this point. He poignantly states: "Listen to your life. All moments are key moments" (*Now and Then*, 92). The mundaneness of daily living sort of insulates against feeling the significance of what we are engaged in at the moment. Whether it is attending a funeral, feeding a baby in the high chair, etc., God is speaking to us and through us in such daily circumstances.

*Journaling in Response to Scripture.* Broyles reminds us:

The stories of the Bible mean the most to us when they are truly a part of us. We understand ourselves and our world better when we feel touched by

the loving God who has sought and continues to seek humanity throughout history. When we are fully able to enter into a passage of scripture, we deeply comprehend the love and understanding of our Creator.

In my humble opinion, much of the contemporary debate in circles of the Stone-Campbell heritage today regarding hermeneutics misses this point. How are we "fully able to enter into a passage of scripture?" There is more to spiritual insight and growth than just exegesis and hermeneutics. Here we are proposing another dimension to our relationship to the Word: we must identify with it. It is in the process of journaling that narrative theology allows us to enter personally into the sacred stories of scripture. How would I have felt in Judas' place? What is it like to experience the piercing eyes of Jesus following denial? Can Peter tell me? Can I walk the same steps with Abraham as he prepares himself to offer his only son? Betrayal. Denial. Sacrifice. The dilemmas of biblical characters are my own. Real people. Real problems. The ancient text has a modern ring. Instead of interpreting the biblical text, narrative theology allows the text to interpret me.

*Journaling as Recording Dreams.* Anne Broyles suggests that:

Dreams are a special gift of our sleeping hours. Through these subconscious experiences, we can sometimes find needed meaning in our waking ... Without psychoanalyzing every portion of our dreams, we can often gain new insights into our spiritual journey by taking the written dream and prayerfully considering what God might be saying to us in the dream.

Since the pioneering work of Freud, we have been aware of the tremendous untapped resources, and even understanding, of the human mind. This is particularly true when interpreting and allowing dreams to have a rightful place in

a person's life. Often the best time to jot down key ideas about a dream are when you wake up. Dreams are so transitory in nature and conscious remembrance that if they are not immediately jotted down they are easy to lose. In my own life, I can think of a couple of crucial dreams that seemed to be a turning point in my spiritual journey. One had to do with a conversation I had with my father following his death. The scene was so vivid. The conversation so real. The emotions experienced so deeply felt. Out of this surreal encounter, my father and I were able to discuss some things that in real life we were never able to discuss. After this episode I seemed to have an inner peace and acceptance that had not been there before.

*Journaling in Response to Quotes.*

Anne Broyles suggests that:

Our daily times of reading can be the basis for dialogue with ourselves and God. As we read newspapers, magazines, and books, do certain phrases and quotations jump out at us? Are we gifted with a new idea or challenged to reconsider long-held beliefs?

Nearly a month after my father completed his act of suicide I was sitting in the dentist's office leafing through a magazine. I ran across an article on Robert Bly and the men's movement in America. One quote hit me between the eyes: "You never become a man until after your father dies." This prompted an entry into my journal in which I sought to answer the question, "What does it mean to be a man?" And I had to grapple with my own previously distorted perceptions of manhood. God used that quotation to speak to me. It allowed me to participate in an inward journey that otherwise would never have happened.

*Journaling as Recording Conversations.* Broyles observes:

Unless we are in a time of solitude or silence, we engage in dozens of conversations each day. Whether we

are talking with family, friends, business acquaintances or strangers, God may speak to us through a seemingly ordinary conversation. Recording our conversations gives us a chance to look at what we said, heard, and felt in the conversation. What would we have liked to say? Were there things we wished the other person had said? What meanings did we infer from specific words or phrases? Often the practice of writing our conversations gives the opportunity to reflect on how God may use our own and other's words to proclaim God's greatness and mercy.

In the fall of 1991 I was privileged to take a course in my Doctor of Ministry program at Drew University with Dr. Keith Vesper as professor. In this setting we were to turn in a verbatim which was a word for word transcription of a conversation in which we tried to help someone. Through this exercise I learned more things about myself than I really did about the other person. This verbatim has helped me to be sensitive to what I hear in my conversations with others. And I am able to journal my perceptions of what God is saying to me through human speech.

Narrative theology is a way of hearing God. If we choose autobiographical journaling as a way of listening to the presence of God, the methodology must include the features of concreteness, candor, conversational and commonality. Anne Broyles' guidelines show us how our journal entries can be most helpful in our sacred journey.

Narrative theology maintains that my "sacred journey" is inward. That path may be painful. But if we are willing to risk listening to the holy within us, we may just be able to hear the Holy outside of us. It is in the ordinary affairs of the day that the extraordinary presence of God breaks through. Autobiographical journaling is a testimony to me that God still speaks, God still moves, and God still reveals. All of us tend to have our own way in which

we experience God, but journaling is "one more door into God's presence."

Dr. Curtis D. McClane holds a D.Min. from Drew University, an M.Div. from Harding University Graduate School of Religion, a B.A. in Bible from Freed-Hardeman

University, and graduate credits from Christian Theological Seminary and Cincinnati Christian Seminary. For over 15 years Curtis has been a pulpit minister in the Churches of Christ (non-instrumental) and currently serves the Holmes Road Church of Christ in Lansing, Michigan.

## Request For Good News From Small Churches

From the *Integrity* Board of Directors

Much attention is focused on the large "mega-churches" today, but there are many small congregations around the country struggling with their own set of problems: the few active people are overworked; the youth group is small, making it difficult to have classes and youth programs; the singing is weak and lifeless; the leadership is conservative and tradition-bound, unwilling to risk new approaches; a sense of joy and victory in the Lord is lacking; personal conflicts fester, partly because the same people are together all the time; money for facilities or even to pay a preacher is inadequate; the church's image in the community is one of narrow exclusiveness. Although most of those problems are found in larger churches, too, they often have more resources and more room to maneuver in working out the problems.

Is your home congregation's membership 150 or fewer? It may surprise you to learn that this includes a significant number of churches; some

current statistics report that, out of the 400,000 churches in America, 75% fall into that group! We would like to publish an issue of *Integrity* focusing on smaller congregations of 150 or less.

If you are in a congregation about this size, we would like to hear from you! What helps your congregation focus on Jesus and grow spiritually? What has worked in your community when it comes to proclaiming the lordship of Jesus? Perhaps you have found a way or ways to make your smallness an asset---let us hear about it! What could we learn from worship or program innovations that your congregation has tried? As an individual or family in a smaller congregation, you might want to share your thoughts, your hopes, or even your discouragements.

Our goal is to encourage each other. So, please write to us, whether it's a paragraph, a page, or an article. We may not be able to use everything, but we'll be happy to report a summary of all contributions!

*He who walks in integrity walks securely. Proverbs 10:9*

## Intercepted Correspondence

The following "Intercepted Correspondence" is a continuing feature begun in the January/February 1988 issue of *INTEGRITY*. These letters are *INTEGRITY'S* version of C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* and Os Guinness' *Gravedigger Files* and are written by two different *INTEGRITY* board members.

To refresh your memory and inform new readers, our imaginary setting has Bruce attending WordPerfect computer classes, where he accidentally begins intercepting subversive communication between two devils on his computer screen. The *INTEGRITY* board decides that we must inform Christians everywhere of the destructively evil plots of the nefarious teacher Apollyon and his young student Ichabod by publishing the letters for as long as they can be intercepted.

Dear Agile Agitator,

Your latest report assures me that you are well-suited both to your mission and your area of labor. Boiling down all the projects in which you have labored, and evaluating the consequences, I am pleased with your work. I can only urge you to keep up the dastardly efforts toward the spiritual disintegration of Broad Way church.

After analyzing your personality reviews item by item, I make the following comments and suggestions: First, with regard to Sister Campstone. To her, the position you describe is more than logical, it is divinely obligatory. As a consequence of her having been born into unquestionable and unquestioning orthodoxy, she currently reaps the rewards of social and financial prestige which the Enemy himself has bestowed upon her. Those who are denied her successes are reaping what they (or their fathers) have sown. Since the differentiation is made by the Highest Power, separation from those who do not possess such advantages is predetermined as a fact of life. You need do little with her; she will old to her dogma and enforce her application with an admirable firmness. I am sure you will find numerous occasions and courses of action through which this circumstance

can be pressed to our greatest advantage.

In reference to "Scooter" Barton, let me confess that I was aware of his departure from Broad Way, having been informed by my emissary in the area which you refer to as the "greener pastures." We have a direct contact there who exerts a strong influence upon "Scooter." You need not know the identity; in fact, I insist that you make no effort to learn who our informer is; but it is one well-placed in the New Age concept. Everything "Scooter" knows about this movement has been learned directly from our informer, so you may be certain he is in good hands. The teachings he espouses have been designed and propagated from our very own Supreme Council of the Underworld. We intend to move "Scooter" up, up, and higher until he reaches the peak of his usefulness in our grand scheme.

Your little analysis of Brother Silvertone's prayers---masterful in oratory and hortatory content, but without spiritual depth---is precisely what we strive for in the Enemy's ruling ranks. You would be amazed to learn how many of the knowledgeable "saints" equate eloquence and a sanctified-sounding vocabulary with the very ultimate in commitment to the Enemy's cause. And I commend you for your own response to

the Brother. I might only suggest that you inject a tone of envy into your words of commendation. It will do wonders to inflate his ego! And do all you can to prevent his learning that the very best prayers to the Enemy are those pouring forth privately from hearts that are burdened by guilt, but moved by intense sorrow and repentance for wrongdoing.

You would be amazed to learn how many of the solid saints, and particularly the senior citizens, identify with Brother C. Sharp in at least one respect: much of contemporary Christian music is moving exactly where we are pushing it. We have made "gospel rock" *the* mode of modern music for most modern youth. It works well to our purpose to have such a divergence between this taste in the youth and conventional hymns as preferred by the Senior Saints. Teach the young people to laugh at Saint Sharp (behind his back, of course).

As to brother Whitesoul, you have suggested one solution to his continuing resistance of our efforts at subversion: his displacement with a more "charismatic" preacher. It just might work. With the continuing deterioration of so many sheep in the flock, the shepherd may show signs of spiritual exhaustion, frustration, failure in leadership, and general discouragement. Beat down that persistent optimism with every opportunity to underscore failures, discount any successes, and always use a frustrated, whining tone of voice when discussing "church" affairs with all Broad Way people. You can hardly fail.

Yours in mastering mayhem to mortal masses,

Uncle Apollyon

Dear Iniquitous Uncle Apollyon,

I cannot let it pass without protest that you have chosen to limit my knowledge of

the agent now working on "Scooter" Barton. Surely the Infernal Council on Control of Information (ICCI) cannot be that concerned about security! This little gambit makes me wonder about how much I'm trusted. If there is honor among thieves, can there not be trust among devils? Perhaps you would like to shed a little dark light on this matter for me in your next letter.

There is another matter I'm puzzled about. It came up in one of Brother Whitesoul's sermons recently (yes, he's still hanging in there), in which he spoke about that disgusting Cross that the Enemy has shamelessly exploited all these years. The preacher referred to it at first as a scandalous symbol, and I didn't have any problem there, so long as people understand only the surface meaning of the Cross as scandal (i.e., something negative to be ashamed of and avoided). And we can pervert the Cross as symbol ---- indeed, we already have; if we can get people to think of it as something either pretty or trivially sentimental, it won't be taken seriously, even if it hangs in conspicuous display around the church or around people's necks. And whenever people see it as a magic talisman to ward off evil (e.g. werewolves and bad luck), they're not likely to be thinking about its having anything to do with their own surrender to the Enemy through "crucifying the flesh" (doesn't our Foe employ bizarre terms?). It's the preacher's second point in his sermon about the Cross that puzzles and worries me: he said it was a sign of *victory!*

Now I ask you, how is one to make sense of that claim? Oh, I know all of the Christian claptrap about the Resurrection, but so far as I can see, Jesus got tired of the whole human scene and just went back to where He came from, leaving the field to our Infernal Father. I mean, if you look at the history of the world since the Crucifixion, there isn't much evidence of "victory" there, is there? It seems to me

that we've continued to pretty well have it our way, with every evil from petty greed and backbiting to war and degeneracy very much in evidence. And as to the assertion that death has been conquered, I haven't noticed any recessions in the undertaking trade in my stay on earth. So how does Whitesoul get by with telling people that the Cross represents victory?

I seem to remember that "Pete the Rock" (drat it, we almost had him when he wimped out and denied his Master), in one of his letters, had to contend with some brave, shrewd questioners who had challenged the "eventual victory" argument by pointing out that things hadn't changed much since the promise that Jesus would return; in answer to which Old Rocky bluffed his way along by asserting that the complete victory would not be seen until after some indeterminate time the Enemy was allowing for humans to repent and turn to Him. (Fat chance of that, while we're at work. We'll just keep them wearing blinders so that they don't think too much about how they got here or

what's going to happen to them after they leave.) It blows my mind that the Enemy can influence people by saying, in effect, "If you liked the Crucifixion and the (supposed) Resurrection, just wait until you see the Incineration of the Globe and the whole new world that's going to take its place." I want to know when this Tyrant of Creation is going to start playing fair and quit manipulating *our* victories to claim that they're really the avenue to something *He* wants to bring about.

I just can't believe that after all our hard work and all of our successes, things are going to finally turn out against us---- and especially not through such a sorry outcome of the Son's invasion of the world as His being crucified. It ought to be a rule that when you're dead, you're dead! If we allow people to be convinced that even the Cross can be an avenue to the "good" that the Enemy promises, where will it all end? I shudder to think!

Perplexedly yours,  
Ichabod

## Book Review

**And The Angels Were Silent; The Final Week of Jesus**  
Max Lucado (Multnomah Press, 183 pages.) 1992.

Review by HENRIETTA C. PALMER

While writing this book Max Lucado journeyed to Jerusalem to see where Jesus spent his last week and to walk in his steps. Lucado enables the reader to walk beside Jesus on his final journey, to sense his power, feel his passion, and hear his promises. He invites us to follow Jesus on his final journey so we may learn how to make our own journey.

Jesus knew the end was near. He knew the cross awaited and he had just

one week with his disciples. As we journey with Jesus during these last days, his sense of mission, his zeal to teach, and his concern for all people become vivid and very real. Although the book focuses on Jesus, Lucado also weaves stories of ordinary people who demonstrate Christ-like qualities in their own journeys through life.

The last week begins on Friday, the day Jesus journeyed from Jericho to



Jerusalem and encountered the ugly religion of procedure. As Lucado describes people and churches today, we see the importance of avoiding controversies and stances, and, with clear vision, searching for God with all of our hearts.

On Saturday with only a week to live, and with so many things to do, Jesus went to the synagogue, as he always did, and stood up to read. In spite of his busy schedule, Jesus took time to worship. God commanded it, Jesus followed it, and we also need to take time to worship and to keep our eyes on the cross.

Jesus, on the back of a donkey, entered Jerusalem on Sunday, the first day of Passover week. The donkey had been a generous gift to a Master who needed it. Lucado suggests that we all have "donkeys" or gifts that we need to give back to God. He lists a long line of folks who gave little things to a big God.

When Jesus returned to Jerusalem again on Monday, he encountered the money-changers in the temple. With righteous indignation he overturned the tables they had set up in the house of his Father. We are challenged to oppose today's religious hucksters who stand in the way of believers who are seeking to serve God.

Lucado devotes eleven chapters to Tuesday's events. He reminds us, through his wonderful stories, of Jesus' love and compassion and of his special invitation to each of us to follow him.

Since the Bible is silent about the activities of Jesus on Wednesday, so also is Lucado. On Thursday Jesus made the preparations to observe the Passover with his disciples. As host of the Supper, Jesus "took...blessed...broke...and gave" to his followers. He also became their servant as he washed the feet of his disciples. We are reminded that the Lord's Supper is a gift. It's a sacrament, not a sacrifice. Jesus meets us at the table and serves us as he served his disciples at the Supper in the upper room.

Friday morning brought betrayal and false accusations. The crowd turned on Jesus. While surrounded by enemies, Jesus kept his mind on his Father and he kept his heart on home. He knew his hour had come. Jesus appeared before Pilate, and Pilate asked, "What should I do with Jesus?" He made his choice by not making a choice to release him. Today we must also make our own choice. It's impossible to be neutral about Jesus.

Lucado tells us that as Jesus took his final walk from Pilate's palace to Golgotha's cross, his feet were bare and bloody. But just as real as the pain he felt from the beam on his raw back was his vision of us walking together with him.

The final chapters describe Lucado's own visit to the hidden tomb in Jerusalem, a dark, empty tomb which could have held the body of Christ, the Light of the World. Jesus promised to return and take us home. Our journey will end when we take our seats at his table in heaven.

The Bible account of Jesus' last week is familiar to all of us. But Max Lucado's insightful stories and descriptive illustrations make the journey with Jesus very real and personal. A Study Guide is provided at the end of the book to assist leaders of discussion groups.

Max Lucado preaches at the Oak Hills Church of Christ in San Antonio, Texas. He and his wife, Denalyn, have three daughters and they are mentioned in this book. He has written six other books including "No Wonder They Call Him The Savior," "God Came Near," "In The Eye Of The Storm," and the Gold Medallion winner, "Six Hours One Friday."

---

Henrietta C. Palmer has a B.S. and an M.Ed. degree from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. A retired elementary school principal, she writes Bible study lessons for Bible Break, a community women's group which meets at the Troy Church of Christ in Troy, Michigan where her husband, Bill, is an elder. They both serve on the Board of *Integrity*.

Dear Bruce,

I got bogged down with your article "Now That The Election Is Over." I wanted to understand why a Christian would vote for Bill Clinton, so I read and re-read your article. I'm sorry but I still can't understand. I just cannot see how his policies will ever benefit anyone spiritually or materially.

He will remain in my prayers. We as Christians must get involved and we must stay in prayer for him and our country. I'm afraid our country is headed for disaster under his leadership.

I finished reading *Integrity* and want to say "I did find it thought-provoking and spiritually useful in my walk to serve God." Thank you and keep it coming!

Dora Bailey  
Ballwin, MO

I would like to give my perspective as a Bush voter. I would agree that just as the author of the article cannot agree with everything in the Democratic party, I cannot agree with everything in the Republican Party. There are, however, some serious concerns I have with the Clinton policies in regards to the topics covered in the articles.

I am more convinced than ever that the time has come for Christians to look at our role in politics today. If we bear in mind the charge that Jesus gave us, we are to share the gospel with the world. I believe that legislating morality on a world who doesn't know Christ is to deprive people of the same free will to choose Jesus that we as Christians had. God does not call us to force people to live a certain way, rather He calls us to live the example and speak the truth, as long as it is spoken in love. I further believe that our seeming obsession with political activism today is wasting valuable energy better used in meeting peoples' needs

today.

I want to challenge Christians to remember the real responsibilities we have to an ever desperate world. We should not look to government to solve problems that the church should be. If we are, as a nation, ever going to bring back any sense of morality, our churches need to become beacons of hope and not hotbeds of political activism. It is far more critical that our allegiance is not Democratic or Republican but to Christ and the spreading of the gospel.

Randy Rhodes  
Lansing, MI

I have recently been added to the mailing list of *Integrity*. I requested it as a Restoration Review reader. The reason for this letter and the attached information is to thank you very deeply for the article "Now That the Election Is Over."

My wife and I are members of the Church of Christ who are Democrats that voted for Bill Clinton. We basically have the opinions you expressed in your article. We live in a very strong Republican area and our experience within the church and with church people was very similar to yours. We do not bring our politics into the church so we can manage ok dealing with individuals. But in this election the feelings were so strong politics started coming from the pulpit. The Sunday before the election we received some "if you're on God's side you will vote for Mr. Bush." This was very agonizing and frustrating for us.

Thanks again for your courage and the wonderful article.

Pete Ragus  
Lubbock, TX

This is to inform you that we are in receipt of the *Integrity* for Jan/Feb 1993

and *may it please be our last one!* I am enclosing a copy of a "Focus On The Family" article that you need to read, study and be concerned about, please. You mention Clinton's "message of concern and inclusiveness"---- get real; this is all political. We do not want your paper anymore, and I'm sure you are a major disappointment to Leroy Garrett and I imagine Carl Ketcherside is turning over in his grave.

Douglas and Karen Wilson  
Rochelle, IL

The election is over. We made our choice. Now we need to make the best we can of what has been done. We need to pray for Bill Clinton, and his running mates, Hillary and Al. In your *Integrity* article, you suggest that you could in good conscience vote for Bill even though you knew his support for homosexuality and abortion. I voted for George and Dan even though I knew they were not perfect. There's considerable difference between accepting repentant sinners and assisting immorality. You related that you hope for great statesmanship from Bill Clinton. I love you anyway. Roman citizens in the 1st century had no choice. We've made our choice. Is *Integrity* an appropriate forum for discussing politics?

Ray Downen  
Joplin, MO

Please remove my name from your subscription list. You may be able to justify your vote in your own mind, but please don't try to justify it in the mind of your readers.

Chuck Weinsheimer  
Doylestown, OH

[In the Jan/Feb '93 issue] I appreciated Carl Smith's "On Bearing Fruit." Yes, I was reared in the tradition which teaches that my fruit are the souls that I bring to Christ. The idea of my fruit being fruit of the spirit rather than the souls I converted was actually ridiculed.

Bruce, I really liked your "Now That The Election Is Over..." You expressed a lot of my thoughts. Your conclusions about unity in diversity is wonderful, and we need to be reminded that this is the only kind of unity there is!

I have to agree with Charles R. Gresham---- "Intercepted Correspondence" was great! Gordon C. Brunner's book review was interesting. I discovered Yancy's book a few years ago and found it informative and revealing.

Thank you again for another great issue!  
Frankie Shanks  
Poplar Bluff, MO

I appreciated the bridge-building spirit of your article, "Now That the Election Is Over." Your appeal for mutual understanding assures me that you will warmly welcome some feedback on the subjects you have raised.

I was displeased with your quote of an unnamed friend of President Bush saying, "I'm not sure he has any convictions." Such innuendo from anonymous "so-called" friends is unworthy of repetition.

There are many wonderful ways in which Jesus was open and inclusive. But this is certainly not what got him killed, as you averred on page 10. Theologically and ultimately, it was God's will and plan that led Jesus to the cross.

You wrote, "I cannot see Jesus condemning homosexuality in the way most Christians do today...Jesus did very little condemning except for the religious establishment" (p. 10). Most homosexuals are not in the "disenfranchised humble" category. The ones who are humble are dealing with this struggle painfully and away from public attention. All the others are visibly demanding rights and privileges based on their flaunted perverted condition. Jesus would condemn *it* far more clearly than we do, all while loving the sinner. But sometimes love is tough.

The Darrell L. Bock quote you used reveals his head is either in the sand or in his TV (same thing, perhaps). The "religious right" is extremely involved in needs which exist beyond the womb.

You questioned Bush's "policies toward the poor" (p. 9) as if they gave "moral and compassionate reasons" not to vote for him. In nearly every practical sense both he and Clinton support federal aid and provisions for the poor or unemployed. The question is always, "How

much?" or "for how long?" The differences are almost always in small fractions (of a big pie). But policy differences rooted in different principles are not necessarily immoral or unloving.

Leonard Allen first drew me to deeper convictions regarding the egregious ethical outrage that is abortion. I was desensitized to what it really was by popular thinking. Abortion breaks the heart of God. This industry fights not for toleration but demands tax support, prohibits parental consent policies, opposes a 24-hour waiting period, and hides behind the skirts of the noble cause of women's rights. Fathers' rights are aggressively and scornfully ignored. The child's rights are, shall we say, aborted. Abortion ends a life but the surviving mother must be tenderly loved in spite of it all. Grace is more amazing than abortion is evil.

When the world owes us food, health-care, love, service, equal treatment, respect, justice, compensation for pain, etc. (all good things), our gratitude is moderated by the assumption that they were deserved. Grace sees blessing and lives kindly even in the worst of times. Grace accepts all favors as unmerited. The "entitlement mentality," however, sees red and burns even in the best of times. It expects favors.

You expressed a trust that Clinton's "message of concern and inclusiveness will have more impact on helping people and on changing people's wrong actions than all the moralizing and exclusion of people, and all the laws will ever do" (p. 10). Well said, and I hope so. But don't forget that Scripture is not a bad recipe for healthy change and it is heavy on moralizing and light on economics (the heart of Clinton's message and the message of his heart). Clinton seems high on tolerance and calls people to hope in government to a significant degree. These are often perceived as alternatives to personal change. They soften the hard edges that lead to real and needed changes. "Expecting moral excellence from a generation raised to be non-judgmental is like expecting fruit trees in the city dump" said one L.A. Times letter to an editor.

Perhaps we disagree on several counts. Let it be honorably. I am amazed at how much a

response your article evoked in me. Thank you. I remain impressed with the main spirit of your thoughts.

Joel Sollandy  
Moorpark, CA

#### Editor's (JBK) Note

I knew my article "Now the Election is Over . . ." (Jan/Feb 1993) would draw some response, but I was surprised by the number of responses and the vehemence of a few of the responses. The letters did confirm to me that such an article was needed and that political issues have as much potential for dividing Christians as doctrinal ones. Some readers missed my point entirely: because Christ and not politics is the answer to the world's problems and needs, we must allow for political diversity in our churches. These differences will strengthen our witness and enlighten our methods, if we do not let them divide us.

When three readers asked to be removed from our mailing list, and when several more couldn't understand what I was trying to say, I asked myself, what was wrong? Was my writing so poor that my point was missed? Did they read the whole article? Was I out-of-touch with the Church of Christ? Was the subject about which I wrote impossible to dialogue about in the church? At least three readers evidently thought so. They could not even bear for *Integrity* to come into their home.

Were political biases affecting my writing or their reading or both? We can get so caught up in our political biases that we fail to remember our bond in Christ is stronger than our differences.

However, many of you were very encouraging to me. You not only got my point, you also saw the need I was trying to address. Several of you wrote that you had encountered problems and disunity because of political differences in your congregation. And several persons, who had voted differently than I, told me that they appreciated the article because they were also concerned about intolerance in the church. They saw the need for Christians to be able to disagree and not think that tolerance

(Continued on the back cover)