

*INTEGRITY is published each month and seeks to encourage all believers in Christ to strive to be one, to be pure, and to be honest and sincere in word and in deed, among themselves and toward all men.*

## Integrity

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# Integrity

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Lord's Supper, but even so the point is that they often were present together, expressing to and for one another the glorious unity of purpose that characterized the early church.

So too, the movement for freedom we call the Civil Rights Movement. It was a movement characterized by a closeness brought about by shared purpose, and Dr. King was the servant of that purpose. He drew his support from the friends that were around him. His spirit came from the love of those who heard him, and his strength came from the progress that was made. Like the prophets of the Old Testament, he was vilified, threatened and ultimately killed, but he stands as a model of what a godly man can do and be. "But how," someone may ask, "can you set before

us as a model a man who rumored moral flaws, who created conflict, who healed with the sword of division?" My response is to simply remind us that we talk here of a godly man, not a God, but a man touched by God. We are blessed by not knowing what the rumor mongers said about the Old Testament prophets, about the Apostle Paul and indeed about Jesus himself. I rest confident in the belief that if we would truly be God's people we must catch a glimpse of what went on in Acts 2, and Dr. King serves as a model. Our context is different from his, but is no less incumbent upon us as we honor him on his birthday to see the vision our Lord has placed before us — to listen to what God would tell us to do — to respond in faith and support one another in fellowship and love.

**Editorial: But Willingly**

**Guest Editorial: Our God is Able**  
*Joseph F. Jones*

**Jesus: A Quest from History to Faith**  
*Tom Lane*

**How Much Can Worshippers Eat?**  
*Hoy Ledbetter*

**Thinking About Dr. King**  
*Robert M. Randolph*



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### But Willingly

When Paul shared with Philemon his wishes for the latter's slave Onesimus, he made a statement which reflects one of the great principles of Christianity: "I preferred to do nothing without your consent in order that your goodness might not be by compulsion but of your own free will."

Peter recognized the same principle when he said that the work of elders should be done "not by constraint but willingly." And Paul's direction to the Corinthians regarding the collection for the poor saints could well be applied to any area of Christian service: "Each one must do as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

This means that every act of the Christian must be based upon his own decision. He cannot function as one who pleases God if he operates under compulsion. The implications of this for Christian teachers are very serious. We not only must cause men to work in a certain way, but we must cause them to *want* to do so. Proper behavior is not enough; there must also be valid motivation.

It is evident that Paul lived by this teaching, not only in his dealings with Philemon, but also in every situation. Although, as he told the Thessalonians, he might have made certain demands as an apostle, he refrained from doing so, so that men could always respond to the gospel from the heart. This is why he told the Corinthians: "Not that we lord it over your faith . . ."

As we discuss the so-called authority of church leaders today we need to keep in mind that Paul never made others feel the weight of authority. He had good reason, for service rendered under compulsion is hardly a suitable offering to Him who loves a cheerful giver and who is at work in us *to will* as well as to work for his good pleasure.

—HGL

### Guest Editorial

## Our God Is Able

*Integrity* magazine has now moved into its second decade of service to Christ and the church. While most of us on the board of trustees have had varying tenures of service, our distinguished editor-in-chief, Hoy G. Ledbetter, has been inseparably related to this ministry since its inception. Until recent months, Hoy was a vital part of every issue published, from the reception of a manuscript until the paper was ready for the post office. He set the type (an accomplished printer in his own right!), made the lay-outs, at times ran the press, and kept his steady hand upon the entire process. All of the involvement which he personally gave to the work of *Integrity*, along with his devoted wife, Lillian, has been without any formal salary or remuneration by *Integrity* itself, until last August (1980) when the board made the decision to place him on a very modest salary.

In behalf of the entire *Integrity* board of trustees and the many readers who share its columns, I take this opportunity to express our appreciation and deep indebtedness. And to the Community Church in Grand Blanc, with which the Ledbetters were affiliated for ten years, allowing them the privilege to share so fully in this ministry as an over-all part of their Christian outreach with that congregation, I want to express for myself and the board our genuine thanks. Words are terribly inadequate vehicles to convey the

deeper feelings of the human heart.

As we enter this second decade of ministering through the pages of *Integrity*, however, Hoy is no longer affiliated with the Community Church. There were months during the past year of 1980 when we did not know whether the Ledbetters would remain in our part of the country, and continue their work with the journal. Now those times of anxiety and uncertainty seem well behind us, and we praise God that He has allowed our Christian colleague to remain. But the situation with *Integrity* has significantly changed since the Ledbetters finalized the decision to stay in Michigan.

Throughout the 1980 year we have had to job out our printing of the paper. While not always completely satisfied with the final form which a given issue might assume, we are working conscientiously with our printer to perfect each release of the magazine. Two reasons necessitated the change from Hoy's very personal involvement to jobbing out the printing process: (1) the releasing of Hoy from such intensive physical wear and the more efficient use of his time in other directions; and (2) the basic need for more personal income which implied Hoy's finding additional employment which could meet this need. But we needed Hoy to remain at the center of this ministry through *Integrity*, without which we seriously doubted that journal would



continue. And it is our firm commitment that *Integrity* will continue its vital brotherhood outreach.

Let me now summarize our situation with *Integrity*, and ask that every reader give prayerful consideration. Our cost in printing the paper through the present arrangement approximates \$800 an issue, including postage. But in addition to the cost of the printing, the board of trustees, as previously mentioned, last August reached the long over-due decision to provide a modest salary for Hoy Ledbetter's services. Our two basic expenses, therefore, in continuing this work will approximate \$1,700 an issue or an annual budget of \$10,200. Since we do not charge a subscription fee for the paper, we must rely upon the readers to support this ministry with their contributions.

Most of our board members are very supportive of the work in a financial way; and to them we are grateful. And we are indebted to a few readers who send very generous support either regularly or in "chunk sums" each year. We thank each of you for your gracious help. But of our total mailing list which now exceeds 4,400 in number, only about 400 are providing any financial support. Perhaps this is our failing in

part, not to have kept you more currently abreast of our continuing financial situation; but frankly, we do not enjoy talking about money. We would rather fill our pages with messages to challenge, comfort, and direct the ways of life. Yet the time has come when we must ask you in a very urgent and personal way to help sustain this ministry.

Hopefully, many will take this message and appeal as an immediate occasion to send an appreciation check in behalf of all that our editor has done through the pages of *Integrity*. He has touched so many lives with his Biblically saturated mind and trenchant pen. We want *Integrity* to continue its outreach. We feel God wills it so. And further, we believe confidently with the apostle Paul that "our God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work." (II Cor. 9:8, NIV)

I look forward to both the immediate and regular support from you, are readers, to maintain this ministry so vital to a Christian brotherhood.

Joseph F. Jones, President  
*Integrity* Board of Trustees

## Jesus: A Quest from History to Faith

TOM LANE

Cincinnati, Ohio

Few figures in history have aroused such continuing, varied, and widespread attention as the figure of Jesus of Nazareth. Philosophers and social reformers have labored to interpret and apply His ethics; artists and novelists,

to explore the aesthetic and emotional implications of His person and teachings. To millions of His followers since the first century, the figure of Jesus has been a special object of devotion, in fact that element which sets

Christianity apart from other worthy religions and moral philosophies. Many others have tried to explain Jesus away.

From this varied attention, many conceptions of Jesus have emerged. His followers have sometimes played up certain things about Him while ignoring others. Jesus' detractors have often substituted for an objective picture of Him a picture more readily inviting ridicule.

Who was Jesus really? To ferret out the identity and character of the Teacher from Nazareth, we must enter the realm of historical analysis.

In the late nineteenth century, Bible scholars armed with new theories of literary analysis and historical criticism set out to isolate the "historical Jesus" from the "Christ of faith" presented in the New Testament. Today, scholars in this tradition, which has become the most prevalent school of thought on the subject, have concluded that the picture of Jesus presented in the gospels is so contaminated by theological interpretations that it is practically impossible to reconstruct the ministry and message of the real Jesus of history.<sup>1</sup> Such a conclusion cannot go unnoticed by the Christian, who finds Jesus the root of his faith, nor by the seeking soul who is investigating the claims of Christianity. Can we truly know anything about the life and character of Jesus? And, if we can, what can we determine about His identity and character?

### The Starting Point

To answer these questions, we must first consider the question of the nature and reliability of the documents which form our primary source of information about Jesus. Since the turn of the century, the four gospels, Matthew,

Mark, Luke, and John, have been the focus of skeptical criticism, even by many theologians.

The historic Christian view is that, allowing for the differing styles and purposes of each writer, the four New Testament accounts of the life of Jesus, accounts written within a few decades of His ministry, present an integrated, consistent, coherent picture of Jesus. This position holds that the gospel accounts were composed by eyewitnesses to Jesus' life, or, in one instance, by a man who had meticulously consulted eyewitness reports (Luke 1:1-4). Current liberal or skeptical literary analysis argues that the four gospels were written by post-apostolic age churchmen who pieced together their texts from various oral or earlier written traditions. These writers pictured Jesus not as He really was, but according to the highly adorned image evolved by the developing church. Proponents of this view of the origin of the gospels magnify the differences in the way the various gospel writers depict Jesus into virtual contradictions. Consequently, they charge that very little can really be known about the historical Jesus, for what we have in the gospels is a confused image that says more about the ancient church than about its supposed Founder.

The most honest up-to-date scholarship discredits this debunking view of the origin of the gospels, and its pessimism about the accuracy of the information available to us about Jesus. Objective literary analysis has pushed back the probable dates of writing of the gospel records into the very lifetimes of the apostles themselves. This fits suitably with the testimony of recognized post-apostolic Christian writers who cited first century authorship for



the gospels. And if the gospels were written so soon after Jesus' ministry, there was little time for that process of evolution to occur by which the church is said to have embellished the facts of Jesus' life with supernatural trappings. The argument that the church created a Jesus-figure in its own image is a case of putting the cart before the horse; as conservative Christian apologists have noted, it takes a real Jesus like that portrayed in the gospels to adequately account for a church like that of the first century. The gospels, we conclude, depict Jesus substantially as He was.

Why is it that different gospel accounts present Jesus somewhat differently? Each writer addressed himself to a different audience and stressed those facets of the phenomenon of Jesus that spoke to the particular needs and interests of that audience. Mark, who traveled with Paul and Barnabas through Gentile lands, thus presents Jesus as the perfect servant of God, a universally understood concept. The early post-apostolic writer, Papias, tells us that Matthew first wrote his gospel in Hebrew. Matthew, scholars infer, wrote to an audience of Jewish background. Matthew presents Jesus as the Messiah Judaism awaited; he emphasizes how Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecy. Luke, as he says in the preface to his gospel, wrote to build up the faith of a man named Theophilus — obviously a Greek. For his Gentile reader Luke depicts Jesus as the Savior of the whole world. The writer John, opposing that speculative, mystical sect, the Gnostics, elaborates the divine nature of Christ, and makes frequent metaphysical references and asides. His introduction to his gospel is well known for its singular statements of the pre-existence and divine Sonship

of Jesus. Each of these presentations of Jesus is true. These several perspectives on Jesus do not conflict with, but supplement, each other.

And beneath their varied but complementary perspectives on Jesus, the four gospel writers present a consistent larger picture of the character of the Man Himself. And a convincing picture it is. The Jesus revealed in the New Testament is not a colorless theological abstraction, but a genuine personality. The Jesus of the gospels makes sense.

What was He like? The breadth and depth of His intellect and spiritual insights are clear from the content of His teachings, which offer the scholar an inexhaustible realm for investigation and comment. Yet He retained the tenderness and condescension to summon the little children to Himself. He preached with vigor, and was hardened by an outdoor life and the rigors of long walking journeys as an itinerant teacher, but occasionally had to retire to a friend's home to rest. He possessed a full range of human emotions, and knew when to exercise each. He could utter stinging invective against the hypocritical Pharisees, and with holy indignation drive the money changers out of the temple. Yet He dealt sensitively with the woman caught in adultery. He exulted at the success reports brought to Him by the seventy evangelists He had sent out two by two. He wept at the tomb of His friend Lazarus. He was, as we like to say in my generation, a "real person."

### Where the Problem Comes

Were it not for certain unconventional things Jesus claimed about Himself, few persons would have trouble accepting the gospels' portrait

of Jesus. For the discomfiting fact is, all the gospels record Jesus' unabashed presumption to be something more than a mere man.

Consider a few examples. Early in His ministry, Matthew tells us (7:28, 29), Jesus began to speak about spiritual realities in a manner the listening crowds found curiously authoritative. Moreover, Jesus claimed to be one with God the Father, and in the Father's authority issued His call, "Come unto me" (Matthew 11:27-30). It is in Matthew's account that Jesus most persistently identifies Himself by that unmistakable Jewish Messianic title, "Son of Man." It is in Matthew 16:13-17 that we read of Jesus' approval of Peter's evaluation of Him: "You are the Christ, the Son of God." Mark 2:5-7 and Luke 7:48, 49 record instances in which Jesus, in a perfectly natural fashion, presumed to exercise God's own prerogative to forgive sins, to the raised eyebrows of onlookers.

It is John's gospel that is most particular in recording Jesus' explicit references to His deity: Jesus, it seems, not only taught about God, but claimed to be the one path to God (14:6). Again, He identified Himself to His indignant listeners as one with the Father (10:24-33). He claimed title to honor like that due God Himself (5:22, 23), and casually accepted the worship of a blind man to whom He had given sight (9:35-39). To one perplexed disciple He declared plainly, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (14:8-11).

Some scholars have said that the gospel references to Jesus' deity are merely interpretations made by the early church, that Jesus never personally claimed to be God, but the spontaneous faith of His disciples made them regard Him as something special.

Were it not for the fact that the New Testament portrayal of Jesus as a human personality rings so true, we could entertain such a view. But it is wholly improbable that the gospel writers could have presented so authentic a portrayal of Jesus the man if they were busily garnishing His real life and ministry and words with elements that were not really there. The New Testament, we must confess, confronts us with the historical fact of a man who claimed to be God.

How should we react to this extraordinary claim? C.S. Lewis has listed the options open to us: we may regard Jesus as a lunatic, deceived about His identity, or as a liar; or we may accept Him as who He claimed to be.<sup>2</sup>

Could Jesus have been a lunatic, sincerely but mistakenly thinking Himself more than a man? The Jesus revealed in the gospels displayed remarkable logic and reason in His teachings, and evidences a consistent, balanced, believable personality. He shows none of the usual earmarks of a mind out of touch with reality in so fundamental a matter as its own identity. The possible frivolous charge that Jesus in some way misrepresented His identity also is ruled out by His obvious consistent and pure character; that alternative, while we must mention it for the sake of completeness in our reasoning, is so inadequate it is seldom seriously advanced.

### Affirmative Evidences

By a process of elimination, we are left with the alternative that Jesus was, as He claimed, something more than an ordinary man. But, to discount other explanations does not automatically confirm Jesus' claim. We are driven to ask: are there any positive evidences



that Jesus was in fact an appearance of God among men?

There are three such lines of evidence:

1. Again we can point to the believability of the character of Jesus as He appears in the gospels. We have already constructed a sort of character sketch of Him. Note how naturally and easily this same Jesus could speak of Himself in terms of deity, how naturally He spoke when He presumed to forgive sins, without leaving an impression of inconsistency, pretension, or fraud.

At various times over the centuries theologians have tried to draw up formulas defining and distinguishing the divine and human elements in Jesus. Some have gone to the extreme of stressing His deity to the near exclusion of His humanity, seeing Jesus as a heavenly visitor who temporarily assumed a body but no real human personality traits. Others have challenged the mainline trinitarian views and presented Jesus as a God-anointed teacher but not necessarily God Himself. The safest course is to assent without speculation to the gospels' portrait of Jesus as a fusion of human qualities and divine substance. If, as the New Testament alleges, God did deign to work among men as one of us (Philippians 2:6-8), we could almost expect to encounter such a Man as we have depicted in the gospels.

2. The reactions of the disciples to Jesus, as reported in the New Testament, are just what we would expect of ordinary men encountering a Man in whom God was present in a most extraordinary, unique way.

A few years ago the movie *Oh, God!* depicted the encounter between God, wanting to pass a message to the world, and an everyday man, a young grocer

with no theological training or particular religious inclination, whom God wanted to be His messenger. This young man was at first skeptical of what he saw, finding commonplace explanations for the happenings that constituted God's attempts to contact him. Finally up against irrefutable evidence that these were no mundane occurrences, he became frightened. Later, when scoffed at as he tried to deliver God's message, he experienced frustration. *Oh, God!* achieved a comic effect, but we laughed nervously, for we couldn't avoid thinking, "Isn't this how we'd react in the same situation?"

When we read the gospels, we find the disciples exhibiting similarly authentic human reactions as they tried to make sense of the figure of Jesus. They puzzled over some of His sayings, were sometimes slow to have faith in Him. They marvelled at His miracles. Once when He stilled a storm on the Sea of Galilee, they were afraid because of the display of His awesome power. At other times they felt comfortable enough in His presence to question Him candidly about things on their minds. Wouldn't we have reacted the same? It is hard to imagine that the gospel writers, in that unsophisticated era, knew enough psychology to make up such accounts of the disciples' reactions. We must accept their record that this is how the disciples responded to their experience of Jesus. And seeing what their reactions were, we must wonder: were they not in fact experiencing a Man who was more than a man?

3. The miracles Jesus performed are a testimony to God's active presence with Him. It is appropriate that Jesus, whom the gospel writers allege to have been a manifestation of deity, is

credited with doing God-like things. It's true, though, most of these cases of supposed miracles are not reported in sufficient detail for us to determine for certain that there were no hidden natural causes involved. We might conjecture that the disciples simply misperceived things Jesus did, and magnified them into miraculous proportions. A recent Monty Python film, *Life of Brian*, traces the misadventures and misinterpretations by which a group of superstitious ancients elevated an ordinary, nay, rather bumbling person, into a Messiah-figure (despite his vigorous protests, of course). Couldn't something comparable have actually happened in ancient times, among the people who encountered Jesus?

Fortunately, the one particular miracle which the New Testament writers most heavily rely upon as proof of Jesus' deity is reported in enough detail for us to test possible non-supernatural explanations. That miracle is the resurrection of Jesus.

We will evaluate the accounts of the resurrection by the ordinary methods of historical investigation.<sup>3</sup> In view of the general reliability of the gospel records, a fact deriving from their origin at the hands of eyewitnesses (or that careful investigator, Luke), we make the reasonable supposition that the details given concerning the resurrection event are basically accurate. We find that no naturalistic explanation can account for all the details of the resurrection reports.

The explanation has been offered that Jesus did not really die on the cross, but fainted, and in the cool of the tumb revived. But even if Jesus had not in fact died, how could He, weak from the torture of the cross, have been able

to move the heavy stone seal at the entrance to the tomb? Some have suggested that the Jewish authorities moved the body to a different tomb for some reason, or that the disciples had gone to the wrong tomb when they reported Jesus' tomb empty, or that the disciples only had an hallucination of a risen Christ. These explanations founder on the question of why the body of Jesus, which would have been in their possession or still in the tomb, was not produced by the Jewish authorities to refute the preaching of the disciples that their Master had risen from the dead. The most adequate explanation for the empty tomb, the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus to the disciples, and other attendant details of the alleged resurrection event, is the explanation offered by the apostle Peter: "They killed him by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen" (Acts 10:39, 40; *New International Version*).

A careful investigation of the gospel records gives us a definitive picture of the historical figure of Jesus. Such a study also turns up some strong evidences that in the phenomenon of Jesus, God was living and moving among men in a unique and consummate way. The historical facts of the life and character of Jesus thus lead us to faith in His teachings and in Himself. Through the gospel accounts we hear the voice of the Father speaking over the transfigured form of Jesus, "This is my beloved Son; hear Him." And, believing in Him, we listen.

1. An excellent update of liberal views of the gospels and the Jesus they portray is Kenneth L. Woodward, Rachel Mark, and Jerry Buckley, "Who Was Jesus?," *Newsweek*, XCIV (24 December 1979), 48-55.

2. C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), pp. 54-56.

3. Cf. Jack Cottrell, *The Authority of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978, pp. 50F.



## How Much Can Worshippers Eat?

HOY LEDBETTER

Some of you may think that a discussion of whether or not the early church ate the Lord's supper in connection with a larger meal is a terrible waste of space. But to the conservative who clings to the concept of a specific pattern for worship it is a question of great magnitude. The implications are quite serious to him because if the early church actually did eat the Lord's supper in conjunction with a larger meal, then the usual practice today of limiting the supper to a mere pinch of bread and a sip of grape juice hardly constitutes compliance with the pattern. Since such compliance is viewed as one of the marks of the faithful and the dividing line between the sheep and the goats, some of our friends were understandably upset by one of my editorials in the last issue and would like for me to cite the evidence.

Our understanding of how the early church ate the Lord's supper rests on three passages — Acts 2:42, 46; Acts 20:7, 11; I Corinthians 11:20ff. — in which the expression "break bread" is interpreted as equivalent to "eat the Lord's supper." This interpretation also assumes that "eating the Lord's supper" is not substantially different from the way we assimilate that pinch of bread and sip of grape juice in our meetings today.

In evaluating that assumption we should bear in mind that the act of

breaking bread was of significance in ordinary meals long before the term became attached to the Lord's supper. In the course of ordinary and/or special meals within Judaism the head of the house would give thanks, then break the bread and hand pieces to those who sat at table with him. Thus, "The breaking of bread is simply a customary and necessary part of the preparation for eating together. It initiates the sharing of the main course in every meal" (Johannes Behm, *TDNT*, III, 728). In view of this we should expect that "to break bread" would in the New Testament indicate "a common meal in terms of the opening action" and would in Acts 2:42, 46 most likely denote "the ordinary table fellowship of members of the first community each day in their homes." In other words, if "the breaking of bread" did become a stock expression for eating the Lord's supper (in the sense of limited symbolic elements), then that exceptional technical sense was imposed on the phrase by the worshipping community.

With this in mind let's look at the first of the texts, Acts 2:42, 46: "They devoted themselves . . . to the breaking of bread . . . And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts." Two expressions require definition: "breaking bread" and

"food." Do they refer to two different acts of eating, and, if so, did the two take place within the same "service"? Does one or the other of these terms refer to the Agape (or love-feast) which is mentioned elsewhere in the Bible and in early Christian literature? Does "breaking bread" denote the Lord's supper as we eat it today, and does it necessarily have the same meaning in both verses? If the word "food" is this text refers, as Ernst Haenchen says, to "substantial repasts," what obligation does that fact lay upon the church today?

It is not easy to answer these questions, and, as we might expect, there is a lack of consensus among commentators, but the strong body of opinion which prevails is well summarized by Barclay Newman and Eugene Nida: "It is generally agreed that these fellowship meals [TEV's rendering of "the breaking of bread"] were common meals . . . followed by the celebration of the Lord's Supper. . . . In view of the fact that the *agape* (the fellowship meal) did involve the celebration of the Lord's Supper, it would be entirely appropriate to have a marginal note to explain the precise nature of these meals, which were so characteristic of the believing community" (*A Translator's Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles*).

Regarding the "breaking of bread" in verse 42 R.J. Knowling says, "Paul's habitual reference of the words before us to the Lord's Supper leads us to see in them here a reference to the commemoration of the Lord's death, although we may admit that it is altogether indisputable that this commemoration at first followed a common meal" (*Expositor's Greek Testament*). And other scholars agree

that this assertion is indeed "altogether indisputable."

J.R. Lumby identifies "the breaking of bread" with the Lord's supper and "food" with the ordinary meals. W.F. Burnside reaches the same conclusion, and indicates that "the common meal (*agape*) preceded the Eucharist." A.W.F. Blunt also thinks that verse 42 refers to the *Agape* or love-feast, and he says, "To this communal meal a reproduction of the Last Supper was attached as a Eucharistic Commemoration." R.B. Rackham argues that the term "breaking bread" indicated "at the first the *Agape* followed by the Eucharist." And R.C.H. Lenski, in regard to the Lord's supper, insists that "at this early time it was always celebrated at the end of a meal."

Finally I ask you to listen to F.F. Bruce, who has written *three* commentaries on Acts. In his volume on the Greek text he asks, "Is the reference here [in Acts 2:43] to the Eucharist, to an *Agape*, or to an ordinary meal? Perhaps to all three, if we are to gather from ver. 46 that they took the principal meal of the day in each other's houses, observing the Lord's Supper each time they did so." Bruce holds that this breaking of bread was "a daily occurrence." In his commentary on the English text he states that their observance of the Lord's supper "appears to have formed part of an ordinary meal."

You may wish to pause at this point and reflect on what the pattern for eating the Lord's supper would be if it were based solely on the second chapter of Acts. You might even want to ponder the thought that a point of view which is supported by scholars of such stature as those cited above would at the very least not be considered



unreasonable. But there are two other Scriptures which we must take into account.

The second passage which is supposed to provide us with a pattern for eating the Lord's supper is Acts 20:7: "On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread, Paul talked with them . . ." This text should be placed alongside the statement in verse 11 that "when Paul had gone up and broken bread and eaten, he conversed with them a long while . . ." If "break bread" means "eat the Lord's supper," as is commonly assumed, then notice what happens when we read the text that way: "when Paul had eaten the Lord's supper and eaten . . ."

But are two kinds of eating referred to in this scripture? A "yes" answer seems inescapable. The two aorist participles in verse 11 appear to denote two distinct acts of eating. Regarding the one rendered "eaten" (Greek *geusamenos*) F.F. Bruce says, "This refers to their taking food in addition to the eucharistic breaking of the bread" (*New Bible Commentary*). A fuller statement, which will be appreciated by those who read Greek, appears in a footnote in his *New International Commentary*: "In v. 11 *klasas ton arton* (where the article points back to *klasai arton* in v. 7) refers to the eucharistic breaking of the bread, while *geusamenos* refers to the fellowship meal."

Regarding *geusamenos* (lit. "having eaten") R.B. Rackham says that "we may not unreasonably infer that by its use here he alludes to the Agape, which would in that case have followed the Eucharist." J.R. Lumby's comment is in the same direction: "i.e., partaken of the more substantial meal of the

'Agape.'" W. F. Burnside agrees: "After the Eucharist he partook of some food."

R.C.H. Lenski asserts that the brethren in Troas met "not merely to dine together but to dine in the Agape which was followed by the Lord's Supper in the usual manner of the time." This is supported by Henry Alford: "The breaking of bread in the Holy Communion was at this time inseparable from the *agapae* or *love-feasts*. . . . The *agape* was a veritable meal." William Barclay also thinks of a real meal, adding, "During it or at the end of it the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed." And, finally, F.J. Foakes-Jackson comments, "We may suppose that the breaking of bread was eucharistic, and that it was here followed by a regular meal preliminary to the departure of the apostle."

It may be argued, of course, that the expression "to break bread" in this context refers merely to the opening act of the Lord's supper, and that the words "and eaten" would only indicate the completion of what was started by that initial act. But the apparently broader use of the term in verse 7 makes this highly improbable. It is much more likely that two kinds of eating are mentioned in the passage and that there is no question about the propriety of either one. This would not necessarily mean that other churches followed the same practice, or even that this was always done at Troas, but it does mean that if sound exegesis of the passage does yield a pattern for eating the Lord's supper, it must be a broader one than is often supposed.

In the third text, I Corinthians 11, we find nothing inconsistent with the interpretations already cited. The abuses of fellowship with which the

chapter deals are indicated in verses 20-22: "When you meet together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing?"

Their error was not in eating a supper, but in eating in such a way that there was no real communion, the kind of eating in which one went ahead with *his own* (as opposed to the *Lord's*) supper with the absurd result that while one became intoxicated, another was left hungry. This could hardly be called a fellowship meal! It took no account of the body, it humiliated the poor, and it was merely eating and drinking which could be done at home.

Paul's remedy for this blight on the body was not to ban all meals, but to ban those which were not fellowship

meals: "When you come together to eat, wait for one another." And what if one was too hungry to wait? Then, said Paul, "let him eat at home." Otherwise they would come together to be condemned. They did not need to change the nature, or the quantity, of the food served, but they had to recognize that the church is a body and that communion is not just something to be set on a table.

But this stress on fellowship recedes into the background when we begin to build parties around specific ways of eating the Lord's supper. Which is why I participate in this discussion. I have no desire to tear down traditions except insofar as those traditions tear down brotherhood. But when an act which lies at the very heart of the church's unity so often becomes an occasion for its division, we should at least be open to the idea that we just might have been doing something wrong. □

## Thinking About Dr. King

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This past week we celebrated Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday at Dana Hall. It was a moving experience for those there, and one of the most moving portions of the service was when I asked people to respond with what they remembered about Dr. King. I included this opportunity in the service because I knew that most of the students present knew very little about him. He had lived and died before most of them were conscious of the world about them.

As the adults present shared their memories the room became alive. One

teacher remembered eating with Dr. King at a post-graduation luncheon in New Haven, and how impressed he had been with the man despite the fact that he was not a man of imposing appearance. He had a charisma that captivated those around him. Another woman remembered having Dr. and Mrs. King in her home and the beauty and charm that etched Mrs. King forever in her memory. Others responded, and finally one man brought this portion of the service to a close when he said that he thought Dr. King served for him as a model of what



a religious man or woman should be motivated on behalf of his fellowman by the divine imperative, "Come and follow me." He was courageous in the face of uncertainty and threat, and selfless in the gift of time and intellect. What more could have been said?

I pondered his comment for a time, believing it true but unsure exactly why I felt as I did. Finally, it occurred to me that I would probably put it in a different way. The marks of the truly Christian man or woman may be the cause of some debate, but I would like to suggest to you three that seem to me without question part of what it means to be a Christian, and a fourth that supports us in the exercise of the other three.

### A Vision

The marks I have in mind are discussed in Acts 2 with regard to those who followed Jesus in the dark days following his death. They had, and the truly religious person must have, caught the glimpse of a God-given vision. Certainly those gathered in Jerusalem had a vision, a vision of God acting in their history. And their experience on Pentecost reminded them that God had not ceased to be active. We are reminded of Genesis 12 and the Tower of Babel for they have effectively broken through the barrier of speech and can be understood by one another. And they have a vision to proclaim. They tell the story of Jesus and proclaim, "The Jesus we speak of has been raised by God." He has been made both "Lord and Messiah."

The person who has been touched by God has a vision to give the world. A prophet calls for justice to roll down like a river; a great leader tells of a promised land; a general tests the faith

of his small band by watching how they drink from a stream. Touched by God they know what they must do and they are not afraid to go forward.

Dr. King in 1954 was a minister of an influential church in Montgomery, and a weary black woman refused to give up her seat on a bus. Dr. King found himself catapulted into the leadership of a movement that shook first the South, and then the nation, and then the world. The call was not easily heard for Dr. King was on his way when it came. Success was in his grasp. He could look forward to being part of the black upper class, respected, well paid, a future secured. But he also had a dream—a dream of a nation where the quality of a person counted more than the color of a man's skin. When he wrote *Why We Can't Wait* he dedicated it to his children "for whom I dream that one day they will no longer be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." He later talked often of a dream he had for America and the cadences of his "I have a Dream" speech are indelibly etched on the consciousness of a generation. His dream was a dream deeply rooted in his understanding of the Christian faith, a faith that proclaims that one man died for all men to heal the breach in creation caused by man's sinfulness.

### Listening

But godly men and women not only must have a vision, they must be open to hearing the word of God, open to hearing God speaking to them. Those who heard Peter responded by asking what they must do for they were convicted not only by what they had heard, but by the ambiance of the day. Words do not convict unless the spirit

surrounding the proclaimer rings true, unless the events of the day support what is said. And for many of us it is hard to listen because we are too busy talking, or studying, or living. Moving in a line toward a goal we have set or a vision we have proclaimed, we are too busy to listen. There is a story told of a Jewish community in 17th century Poland, confined in a ghetto, forced to wear the Star of David so they could be identified when they went beyond the ghetto walls. Into the community was born a young man who grew up strong and lovely, a great teacher, a proponent of non-violence and very quickly a leader in the community. Because he was perceived as a threat he was taken before the authorities. He escaped and returned where he was safe. The authorities came and told the head rabbi that they would level the ghetto and kill each man there if the man was not turned over to them. The rabbi thought and studied the Scriptures. He turned him over, and he was put to death. Shortly afterward, the rabbi was confronted by a prophet who said: "You have killed the Messiah." "How could I know?" replied the rabbi. "Did you ever hear him teach?" "Did you ever look deeply into his eyes?" "No," said the rabbi, "I spent all my time in my study reading my books." When are we still enough to hear God's word to us?

Martin Luther King found himself called to hear, and he listened and thought, and he listened and studied, and finally he simply listened and responded:

Just as the prophets of the 8th century B.C. left their villages and carried their 'thus saith the lord' far beyond the boundaries of their home towns, and just as Paul left his village

of Tarsus and carried the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the far corners of the Greco-Roman world, so I am compelled to carry the gospel of freedom beyond my home town. Like Paul, I must constantly respond to the Macedonian call for aid.

### Response

Response is the third characteristic of a life truly touched by God. The men and women who heard Peter on Pentecost not only heard the words, not only saw the reality behind the words, but they responded by asking what they had to do to be part of the proclaimed new kingdom. Their response involved baptism, reception of the Spirit's gift and their proclamation of the vision they had seen and acted upon.

When Dr. King found himself the man on the spot in 1954, he had several choices. He might have refused to respond, and he could have gone on enjoying the fruits of his successful career. He might have played off the pent-up hatred of black people for an oppressive system and allowed his movement to express itself in violence and death. He chose the non-violent model. In his words: "The Negro turned his back on force not only because he knew he could not win his freedom through physical force, but also because he believed that through physical force he could lose his soul."

### Closeness

There was in the early church another quality that was as important as the three I have mentioned. The new Christians continued in the apostle's doctrine and the breaking of bread. They lived what the apostles had taught them, and they were together in fellowship. The term "breaking of bread" may in fact refer to the rite we call the