

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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have to be a sensitive, sensible steward of the earth, conserving the earth's resources and preserving and enhancing its beauty, not only because ecological responsibility is crucial to our survival, but because of the consciousness that our earthly home is also the craftwork of God given into our care.

Thus we play out much of our relationship of love with the Creator by serving Him in everyday creaturely ways. And by so doing we in turn confer meaning and significance upon the material universe in which we live. It is in the context of a personal relationship of love with the God we discern in the cosmos that we find

meaning and value to our human labors and human enjoyments.

What is our place in the universe? What is the purpose of life? Interpreting the data of science and the phenomenology of man in the cosmos according to the recognition of the Creator-Father God, we may definitively and joyously answer: We are here to share love with the One who has made us with the capacity, and the consequent longing, for His companionship. We affirm the conclusion of the writer of Ecclesiastes to his search for the meaning of life: "Fear God, and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man" (12:13).

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SOME BRIEF NOTES

Tom Lane and I have put our efforts together to make this a sort of special issue (I am asking you to give it a title, after reading it, as a little learning exercise). You have been hearing a lot — possibly too much — from both of us lately, but the subject matter is important, so perhaps you will bear with us a little longer. Tom is a very fine writer, and maybe I can get by riding on his coattails.

We recently added a bunch of very talented people to our board, and we just had a board meeting in which the new members made several extremely valuable suggestions. I am delighted that this publication is in such wise and dedicated hands. You will be seeing the effects of our enhanced leadership in forthcoming issues.

Our recent special offer of Norman Parks' *Woman's Place in Church Activity* had the misfortune of coinciding with the postal rate increase. So, at the suggestion of our mailing department, we are going to continue this offer with an increase in keeping with the new rates. As long as they last, all who respond to this notice may have Parks' little but powerful paperback at the following rates, postage included: 75¢ each for 1-9 copies; 50¢ each for 10 or more copies. Send your order to: Amos Ponder, 1269 Pickwick Place, Flint, MI 48507.

Our campus ministry in Flint (Reference Point) will be needing a new director very soon. If you are interested, or know of someone who is, you may contact me for further details.

Perhaps they would not qualify for a place in *The Grapes of Wrath*, but there is still a lot of pain among our fellow Michiganders who have migrated to Texas looking for jobs. It is hard to be broke and homeless, no matter where you're from. The Christian reaction to such people is sympathy, prayer, and — yes — hospitality. Let us remember.

Cosmic Questions

TOM LANE

Cincinnati, Ohio

Man is a being who refuses to just carry on the routine business of his creaturely existence. He has, it seems, a built-in urge to know the whys and hows of life. From earliest times, and in all cultures, men have looked at the world around them and at their own condition, and have asked again and again the same sweeping questions: What is our place, our significance, our role in the universe? What is our purpose; what is life's meaning? Or, as a Hebrew poet put it in a hymn to God: "When I look at thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast established; what is man that thou art mindful of him?" (Ps. 8:3,4).

Who of us has not gazed entranced at the night sky and felt the universe's majesty, or walked through a crisp autumn forest with its dazzling colors, or stood in awe on the edge of the ocean watching the breakers rush in, and wondered: What is this all about, and how do I fit in? So many unrealistic or unworkable "answers" have been proposed that we may sometimes despair that our questioning might, after all, be in vain. Are there really any solutions to our questions about the universe and our place in it? Where might we find answers, and how can we be sure they're right?

A Source for Answers

Questions about man's meaning or

purpose have traditionally been regarded as belonging to the province of philosophy. Trouble is, there is a disturbing consensus in philosophical circles today that there are no final, decisive answers. Modern philosophy discounts the notion of ultimate truth. Existentialism has it that a person must stoically manufacture his own answers to life, since there aren't any external, objective ones. Behavioristic psychology sees man as a machine or an animal that reacts automatically or instinctively to stimuli from its environment; by this view man is demeaned, the possibility of transcendent meaning to existence is debunked, and the very reality of a human capacity to question is questioned. A curious but curiously influential brand of philosophy known as linguistic analysis disputes the validity of any thought about the order and purpose and value of the universe and of man, reducing all such issues to misunderstandings of semantics that generate false inferences from empirical observations about the world.

When such agnostic philosophies filter down to society in general through the influence of the universities, the media, and the arts, people are left with the impression that, according to the best human understanding, our deep longing questions are pointless, that there are no answers and life has no purpose or value. Thus left with meaninglessness, people try to deny or

escape thinking about larger questions by occupying themselves with business or pleasure, or by resorting to some sort of mysticism. They unwittingly adopt the existential method of trying to make up a meaning for themselves, but find this an untenable approach: still a sense of loss remains; man, it seems, cannot rest unless he is anchored in a purpose and meaning beyond himself and bigger than himself.

Ray Bradbury in his *Martian Chronicles* offers the opinion that life is its own answer, that if pursued wholeheartedly, eating, drinking, and playing

Let us, since life can little more supply
Than just to look about us, and to die,
Expatiate free o'er all this scene of man,
A mighty maze! but not without a plan.
—Alexander Pope

are enough to make earthman or alien content. Many people try to live this way, relishing the good and lovely things of life, but in the end find that their questions will not go away. They can readily agree with the observations of that ancient seeker who, in the book of Ecclesiastes, explained how his indulgence in pleasure and in seemingly purposeful labor still left him with the empty feeling that all is vanity. There must, we cannot help but think, be something more.

Left unsatisfied at the philosophical climate of today, many people turn to science to find answers to their questions about man's place and purpose in the universe. Does science, which has given us so many material benefits, offer solace to our deeper personal, spiritual needs? Science strictly defined concerns itself with matters of material, empirical fact, and is out of its element in drawing conclusions of meaning and value from the

material facts of nature which it uncovers. But science has definite philosophical implications, for the data of science may be grist for philosophical evaluation. Science works to give us a clear picture of the universe itself; philosophy goes on from there to ascertain the meaning of the universe we have empirically observed and described.

However, the raw data about the universe sometimes does not lead to any certain moral or spiritual implications. Philosophically-oriented scientists, and scientifically-aware philosophers, sometimes come up with contradictory interpretations of the facts of nature determined by science. For instance, late in the last century and early in this, scholars tried to draw social implications from the new Darwinian theory. Some concluded that the struggle of the strong against the weak, leading to survival of the fittest, should be played out in human relations as it is in the biological realm. Those who so believed espoused an unrestricted capitalism as the "natural" form of human economics and social interactions. Others, looking at the same biological data, held that man's competition is not with his fellow men but with his environment, and urged cooperation in human affairs as the best way the human race could prosper.

Take another example. Some thinkers applying evolution theory to human issues find man debased and shorn of any claim to significance or distinction by virtue of his lowly origin and relationship to animals and ultimately to the inanimate world. But at a sky show one recent summer at Chicago's Adler Planetarium the narrator ended a presentation on stellar evolution by expressing rapturous

delight in man's relationship to all other things in the cosmos: since the heavy elements from which planet earth condensed and man eventually evolved were formed by nuclear fusion in stellar cores, man, as it were, is made of star dust, is kin to the stars!

Recently astronomy has proclaimed the vastness and discovered many mysteries of the universe. How have philosophical minds interpreted man's meaning in an expanding universe containing billions of other worlds and, possibly, thousands of other civilizations? Some have seen man reduced to a cipher without any significance in an immense and impersonal universe. But at least one astronomer-philosopher, Carl Sagan, is not so cynical. His recent PBS television series, *Cosmos*, presents us with his "Personal Voyage" from scientific fact to subjective meaning. Sagan stresses the vastness and complexity of the universe, but also its beauty and wonder, reveling that man is a part of nature's intricate order. Sagan exults at the thought of tiny man preparing in our time to embark on the sea of space as admiring explorer.

So scientific facts admit of varying interpretations, and do not by themselves suggest final answers to our probing questions of meaning and purpose. Is there any perspective or method of handling the data which might enable us to come up with a single definitive interpretation of the facts about our universe?

One viewer of Sagan's TV series has suggested such a way to interpret the universe and man's relationship to it. In a letter to *Time* (10 November 1980) in response to that magazine's article on Sagan and *Cosmos*, he wrote: poor Carl Sagan so desperately wants to know man's significance in the cosmos, but

refuses to speak the one word that would give coherence and conclusion to his search: God.

Many thoughtful people through the centuries have found that the most adequate explanation of the universe we see about us is God. The New Testament asserts that it is He who made all things, and that in Him all things have their proper reference point (Col. 1:17). The form of the universe whispers the existence of a God, and man's significance and meaning in the universe are illuminated by the existence and intention of God. When we examine the universe and consider how God has purposefully situated man within it, we can obtain answers to our questions: What is it all about? How do I fit in?

The Cosmic Witness: God

Before we can do this analysis, however, we must verify our premise. How do we know there is a God? The reality of God, we have hinted, is itself suggested by the data of the visible universe.

Science is founded upon the assumption, borne out by the fact that it works, that the universe exhibits regularities which may be observed, catalogued, and used as leads in the search for other regularities. The universe is not random or chaotic. It has order. The ancient Greeks had a word describing the universe as an ordered system in contrast to chaos, a word in common use today. They called it *cosmos*.

Now when we give ourselves to speculating about the world around us and wondering about our place in it, we often find ourselves focusing on the fact that the world has order. It is as though things ran according to a plan. Our

questioning frequently takes the form of asking, How do I fit into the scheme or plan of things? And at once, almost without consciously realizing the inference we've drawn, we start asking: What is *God's* plan for me?

The order of the universe evokes our suspicion that there is a God who is behind it all. The inference from the seeming design of the universe is, in fact, one of the strongest arguments for the existence of an intelligent Creator. According to the classic analogy, if a person finds a watch, he immediately is led to believe in the existence of a watchmaker. Likewise, confronted by the spectacle of an ordered universe, we conclude that Someone must have set it up with deliberation and care. It is significant that the great men of modern science, those who have made the pivotal discoveries and advanced the foundational theories of science, have almost without exception been men of deep faith, their faith sharpened by their perception of the order and beauty of nature.

"The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" (Ps. 19:1). His power and deity, Paul wrote in indictment of the godless, are evident in the things God has made (Rom. 1:18-20). The order of the universe hints at God's intelligence; the diversity of things in the cosmos tells of His creativity; the immensity of the things that exist speaks of His power.

But how conclusive a witness to God is the *cosmos*, the order of things?

It is true, as skeptics mention, that the ordinary operation of natural forces and sheer chance can account for much of the complexity and composition of the universe. Evolution does explain a lot. Still the actual origin of those

natural forces which, given a start, would produce much of the cosmic order, or the origin of matter and energy in some primal form, cannot be explained apart from a Force or creative Being outside the cosmos itself.

Among the most fundamental precepts of science are its highly-attested "laws of conservation." These state that in any physical, chemical, electrical or atomic reactions, energy may change its form, or matter and energy may be converted one into the other, but the basic mass-energy equivalence of the whole system remains the same. Put more simply, matter and energy don't just spontaneously pop into existence or zap back out of it. How, then, can we explain how things got here in the first place? The suggestion that matter and energy have always been here is rejected by the most widely accepted scientific view of the history of the universe, which fits together astronomical facts into the picture of a "big bang," a single start, and a subsequently eternally expanding cosmos. How did it start? **The most ample explanation is that a rational Creator brought things into existence, and gave things order and design, i.e., gave the primal substance He made characteristics comprising an inherent potential to develop from chaos to *cosmos*.**

The first chapter of Genesis depicts just such a God who brought order out of void. The close correspondence between the rational, powerful Creator we naturally detect in the universe, and the rational, powerful Creator pictured in the Bible, gives us confidence in the Biblical description of God's nature and intentions. That description, we'll see, provides a useful perspective on our cosmic questions.

While it is possible that the Creator behind the cosmos merely gave the universe its start and sent it on its way thereafter unattended (the deistic conception of God), we naturally wonder whether the God who bothered to make the universe doesn't after all have a continuing interest in His creation, perhaps even a personal interest in our own lives that provides some answer to our need for a sense of value and purpose. **The Bible affirms that God is the key to the proper interpretation of ourselves in a cosmic framework.** Let's take the scientifically-verified facts about the universe and its inhabitant, man, and interpret these, using a philosophical mode of reasoning, but with particular reference to the Creator portrayed both in nature and in the Bible.

The Cosmic Witness: Man

The portrait of the cosmos offered by modern science influences our estimate of our human importance or self-importance. We see ourselves as only a small part of the universal order, and are rightly humbled by the vastness of space and the number, diversity and complexity of its contents.

Some thinkers, meditating on the vastness of the universe, incline to depreciate man even beyond his genuine proportions. In his delightful movie, *Annie Hall*, Woody Allen in a flashback-type scene depicts himself as a depressed child who had given up all involvement in life. Asked by his elders why he just sat around demoralized and doing nothing, he replied: It's the universe — it's expanding; someday it's all going to break apart, so what's the point in anything? More seriously there are those who disparage human

pretensions to meaning in the face of so overwhelming a universe.

But while we are properly humbled by the size and character of the cosmos, it shouldn't get us down. For we balance this awe-begotten sense of humility with due deference to our very power to comprehend something of the universe. Man is distinguished from other parts of nature by his power of mind. And that's worth something. We may be only a small part of the cosmos, but our power to investigate and act upon nature insures that we are not an insignificant part of the cosmos. It is instructive to note how astronomer Sagan has balanced a sense of exaltation in his view of man in the cosmos: in the same TV program he can consistently both identify man as the resident of a miniscule planet tucked in an out-of-the-way corner of a surpassingly large universe, and excitedly envision fearless man setting sail toward his destiny among the stars.

It is the recognition of man's power of mind to study and exercise a measure of technological control over nature that constitutes the basis of the Biblical understanding of man's significance and role in the cosmos. Genesis' interpretive stories of the creation of man describe man as made in the image of God. Indeed, man shares the divine qualities of reason, creativity, and passion for order. With his attributes of mind man received a divine commission to follow through on God's own creative enterprise, working as steward and artisan over creation. Adam was placed in the garden of Eden not merely to eat its fruits (some of them, anyway), but to tend it and maintain it (Gen. 2:15). Nature was placed at man's disposal (Gen. 1:28). To the humbling question, "When I

consider the heavens, what is man?" the psalmist found this answer:

Yet thou hast made him little less than God,
and dost crown him with glory and honor.

Thou hast given him dominion over the works of thy hands;
thou hast put all things under his feet.
(Ps. 8:5, 6)

Why is it that man is made "in the image of God"? The whole thrust of Biblical tradition answers that this approximation of the human nature to the divine was meant to make possible communication and communion between the creature and the Creator. God came walking in the garden, seeking the ones He had made. Ever since man became a conscious, self-conscious entity — ever since he became something more than an animal — God has moved to woo man into an awareness of Himself, that He might give Himself in return. God's plan, the ground and purpose of the cosmos, is described in the New Testament by another of those meaning-full Greek words, *koinonia*: we become one with God, we fellowship with Him, a mutual exchange of love takes place (cf. Eph. 1:4-10; Jn. 1:3). It is by its failure to recognize this divine purpose at work in the cosmos that modern philosophy, like much of philosophy through the ages, is unable to submit a decisive and humanly fulfilling explanation of man's place in the universe.

If man was made for fellowship with God, it follows that meaning and satisfaction result when we find Him in a personal way. Augustine said, "Thou hast made us for Thyself; and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee." Man's reason, coupled with his

creative imagination, is not content to accept raw existence as its own explanation. Instead he continually reaches out to find meaning and significance beyond himself: Why am I here? What is the purpose to life? Christ answers: I am the truth; I am the way; I am love. In the ongoing drama of love between God and man, played out in the milieu of a material world which is His handiwork, His sign and His gift to us, we find the meaning of the universe and of ourselves. In finding for ourselves God's love, we personally appropriate truth and meaning, completeness and fulfillment, and the peace of the end of our searching.

How do we carry on this relationship with God? Prayer and worship assume a large place in our lives. But the Bible suggests that much of our communion with and acknowledgment of God also can, and is divinely intended to, occur in the material concerns of our lives.

1. It is God's plan that man the creature enjoy creaturely satisfactions, partaking with thanksgiving in an unstained conscience the earth's provision for our bodily needs and pleasures (Eccl. 2:24, 25). In themselves these things do not ultimately satisfy our deep longing for meaning and purpose, but savored in loving recognition of the God who gives them, creaturely pleasures take on fuller value.

2. It is God's plan as well as inescapable material necessity that man labor with his mind and hands to derive sustenance from the earth. There is thus holy meaning as well as material reward to be found in the routine of work.

3. It is man's place as dominion-

(Continued on back cover)

Man in Search of Himself

HOY LEDBETTER

Why is it that there is within the male-female relationship an attraction which is as strong as death, which sometimes seems to defy all logic, and which may persist even in the face of considerable hostility? Centuries ago the writer of Genesis 2 answered that question and drew this conclusion: "Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh." Behind that "therefore" is the revelation of the nature of created man, and coming to grips with Moses' starting point will help us to answer many of the hard questions we must face today relative to our purpose and role as sexual beings.

Male and Female

One of the striking facts in the Genesis account of human origin is that man is first designated as a "him" made in the image of God, and then as a "them" consisting of male and female. This teaching is followed by another statement that God, noting that man's solitude was not good, took a rib from man's side, made it into a woman, and brought her to the man. She was therefore bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, and was to be called Woman because she was taken out of Man. All of this leads to the conclusion that the idea of man "finds its full meaning not in the male alone but in

man and woman." And because God has created man male and female, a man leaves his kith and kin, and glues himself to his wife, "and they become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24).

In this original situation, let us note, man had no superiority over the woman (after all, she was made from his side to stand by his side). His only primacy was that of age: he was created *before* the woman. And he was her *head* (let us not be afraid of that word, although it is not used of the husband in the Genesis account) only in the Biblical sense that he was her source and reason for being. And even though in later times woman is obliged to call her husband "lord," there is no hint of this in the creation story. The man and the woman were in a state of equality with respect to each other — although they were sexually distinct — but they had a common dominion over all other creatures.

But then came the fall, with the result that man found himself at odds with the very stuff of which he was made. The woman, made from man, lost solidarity with her source and was cursed to live in desire for a husband who would rule over her and by him to bring forth children in pain. The man, made from the ground, was doomed to move upon cursed ground, sweating amid the thorns and thistles to extract his food from it. Thus began the sorrows of life from which man is yet to be redeemed.

But it needs to be emphasized (and especially so in regard to the woman, whose redemption is not always favored by man) that this fate of man and woman was not God's original intention but was a curse because of the fall.

With this descent into sin man's nature began to be perverted in other ways. Because man and woman were to stand side by side in dominion over other creatures, the Bible inevitably condemns the practice of bestiality as "a perversion," for it is a sin against man's significance — and especially against the woman — to cohabit with a lower animal. In similar fashion the Bible denounces those practices which are inconsistent with God-given sexual differentiation: homosexuality and transvestism are deplored as "abominations" since they interfere with the maintenance of the original distinction between the sexes. As a matter of fact, no sexual sin can be regarded as harmless, for it will inevitably do damage to man's divinely-ordered nature. This truth is a vital part of the Christian's ethical statement, for we do not try to enforce arbitrary and archaic rules of conduct but attempt to maintain practices which will lead to man's true self-realization.

Jesus and Divorce

Our understanding of the significant implications of Genesis 2:24 — "they become one flesh" — will be helped considerably by an examination of the three instances of its use in the New Testament. Jesus used the text to emphasize the permanence of marriage (see Mk. 10:2-12). When he was asked about the legality of divorce, he referred his questioners to Moses' concession — made because of "your hardness of

heart" — that a man might divorce a wife who found no favor in his eyes (the reason evidently being that she would suffer great hardship in living with an unwilling husband).

But this provision, which was for the protection of the woman and not for the convenience of the husband, should not be taken to mean that God was pleased with the dissolution of the marriage. Jesus makes the divine position unmistakably clear: in the beginning he made them male and female; for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one; what therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.

Moses could not possibly put an unqualified stamp of approval on divorce, for the simple reason that no divorce can occur without man putting asunder what God has joined together. Behind every marriage stands the authority of God Himself, and therefore *anything* — whether it be fornication or any less notorious sin — which leads to the breaking up of that marriage is wrong. Divorce, then, is evil. But because man is so sinful, it may be the lesser evil which must be chosen. For that reason Jesus would not say that Moses was wrong in making his concession (after all, the will of God reflected in Moses' law was surely that of Christ as well). He knew that there often comes a time when we have to choose the lesser of two evils. "When our sinfulness traps us in a position in which all the choices still open to us are evil, we are to choose that which is least evil, asking for God's forgiveness and comforted by it, but not pretending that the evil is good" (C.E.B. Cranfield, *Mark*).

But this choice is not open to some of

us who seem to have an irrepressible inclination to rule the bedroom from the boardroom. In interpreting Jesus' teaching legalistically, as so many of us insist on doing, we make no allowance for contemporary "hardness of heart," we forget that Jesus' view of marriage is as old as man himself, and we try to impose on people an ethical code which has been beyond their reach ever since the Fall. Moreover, as practicing legalists we are quite nervous about the fact that Matthew's except-for-fornication clause is not in Mark, for in our better moments we are uncomfortable with the restricting idea that Jesus repudiated Moses' tolerance, and we are reluctant to face the truth that every divorce is a violation of His will.

If we see in Moses' commandment in Deuteronomy 24 an excuse to take divorce lightly, we simply do not have Jesus' view of the passage. The Mosaic concession was not to encourage sinfulness, but to limit it and to control its consequences. The divine rule is that no husband may put asunder what God has joined together. That's the way it was from the beginning, and any violation of that rule falls under judgment. But alongside that fact stands a human "hardness of heart" from which the innocent may need to be protected. It may be very proper, therefore, for the church to minister within the context of divorce as the lesser of two evils.

Perhaps I should point out before leaving this passage that Jesus, in perfect accord with the Genesis account, places the husband and wife on an equal footing: if divorce were an acceptable option, it would not be a peculiarly masculine one. That he speaks of a woman divorcing her husband as if there were nothing

strange about that has been properly seen by scholars as a reaction against the low esteem in which women were often held at that time.

Paul on Prostitution

In our second example, 1 Corinthians 6:16, Paul uses the Genesis text as a part of his answer to the Corinthians' justification of fornication. Sexual intercourse, he argues, is an act of the whole person, and he underscores this fact by employing a word which is used in the Bible to designate man in his totality — the word *body*. His starting point is that the body belongs to Christ, and it cannot therefore be used for fornication. Fornication is more than genital contact: intercourse with a prostitute is an act which necessarily involves the total personality with her. He who unites himself to a prostitute is one body with her, for — he cites the Scripture — the two shall become one.

Fornication is not only a violation of the Lord's claim upon the body, but it is also a perversion of God's design for man's fulfillment as male and female. It makes a mockery of the bonding that occurs when one leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife. The fornicator always gets more than he bargains for, and this is a point which those of us who wish to challenge contemporary moral standards must keep insisting on.

The Model for Marriage

Our third instance and a much more positive exposition of Genesis 2:24 is Paul's application of it to Christ and the church in Ephesians 5. This passage, in which he draws a pattern for marriage which is based solely upon Christ's

creative love for the church, cries out for extensive exegesis, especially since it is so frequently misinterpreted, but we must for the present be content with some brief observations.

In Ephesians 5 we discover that the key to understanding creation and marriage is Christ's love for the church and the church's submission to him. Christ is the definition of the love that makes a marriage: he loved the church

Marriage is that relation between man and woman in which the independence is equal, the dependence mutual, and the obligation reciprocal.
—Louis K. Anspacher

with a self-sacrificing, creative love, and gave himself up for it. The church, responding to this love, is his body, himself. He is the head of the church, but not in a hierarchical sense; the word head denotes Christ as the church's source and reason for being (you may compare the way we speak of the head of a river). Christ and the church are one, and the church is subject only to him.

Nothing is asked of husbands and wives that is not realized in the church. They are to be *mutually* submissive because they fear Christ. Wives are commanded to submit to their husbands only within the context of mutual submission. Markus Barth compares this to the voluntary yielding of one senator to another which may be done without any loss of dignity or status. Christian submission, here as elsewhere in Scripture, is not only mutual but is always voluntarily tendered, never demanded by the one to whom it is given. Where there is no

love, there is no requirement to submit, and within this context of self-sacrificing love there is no question of one having dominion over the other; on the contrary, each one freely places himself/herself at the disposal of the other. Marriage is based on love, and only on love; anything less falls short of the pattern of Christ's love for the church.

The husband is head of the wife only in the way that Christ is head of the church, and that relationship in this context bears no hint of authoritarianism. Christ's headship is expounded by the fact that he "gave himself up" for the church. Husbands love their wives *because they are* their own bodies, just as the church is Christ's body. The standard is not an egotistical self-love (which is depreciated in Scripture), but a Christ-inspired affection for one's alter ego. He who loves his wife loves himself, his own body; and in fact apart from that union he does not really know the meaning of the word body.

To be avoided in marriage are two mistakes which would have a disintegrating effect on the love-created couple. An egotistical husband may wish to be head of his wife in a way that is different from that in which Christ is head of the church. And a self-centered wife may chafe at being incorporated into the "one flesh" and try to assert her independence in a self-defeating liberationism. Mutual love and submission leave no room for these errors.

The "one flesh" which the husband and wife become is "an event, not a substance." It is a meeting of the two in peace and unity, in which the created sexual distinctions are sustained and utilized in such a way that man as male and female finds the true answer to the question, "Who am I?" □

Attitudes Are Important

STAN PAREGIEN

Stroud, Oklahoma

Mrs. Brown's second-grade Sunday School class has never been the same since she told the story of how a lamb foolishly wandered away from the flock and was destroyed. Oh, there was nothing wrong with the way she told the story. But when she asked little Melvin to state the moral of the story, he said: "The lamb shouldn't have gone away from the flock — that's the reason it got eaten by the wolf. It should have stayed with the flock so later it could have been eaten by us!"

Melvin's attitude or "behavioral disposition" toward lambs (or lamb chops!) was crystal clear. Sherif and Sherif, in their landmark study entitled *Social Psychology*, wrote that an attitude "determines a characteristic or consistent mode of behavior in relation to relevant stimuli, persons, or events" (p. 494).

It is important for each Christian, therefore, to examine his own attitudes and to attempt to improve the good ones, while removing the bad ones. For as any leader will verify, positive attitudes usually bring good results and negative attitudes usually bring disappointing results.

The apostle Paul's warm and generous attitude toward the Christians at Rome provides an example worthy of our imitation. To begin with, Paul was thankful for his brothers and sisters in Christ. He wrote, "First, I thank my

God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is proclaimed in all the world" (Rom. 1:8).

Why was Paul thankful for the disciples at Rome? It was certainly not because they were sinless perfectionists, for the apostle later issued this impassioned plea to them: "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Rom. 12:1).

Nor was Paul's thankfulness for them based upon complete doctrinal agreement. Chapter fourteen reveals their lack of harmony on several points and Paul gave this simple exhortation to them: "Let every one be fully convinced in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5). A lot of church splits could be avoided by following that rule of thumb!

Second, Paul constantly prayed for his brothers and sisters in Christ. The apostle told them, "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers" (Rom. 1:9).

Some church folks spend more time preying on their brethren than they do praying for them, as Paul did. An attitude of prayerful concern for God's children would bless us all. An unknown poet wrote with great spiritual insight:

There's no weapon half so mighty
As the intercessors bear,
Nor a broader field of service
Than the ministry of prayer!

Third, Paul wanted to be with his brethren. The apostle indicated that a major part of his prayer for his brethren at Rome involved his desire "that somehow by God's will I may now at last succeed in coming to you" (Rom. 1:9-10).

Some disciples today apparently think that having fellowship with other believers is an optional matter. There are those who seem to look for opportunities to miss the worship assemblies. Many others never invite Christians into their homes, thus missing out on really getting to know their spiritual family. And still others act as if every one except themselves has such grievous shortcomings that they are better off to live in isolation.

Thank God that Paul did not have that kind of attitude toward his brethren! But what about us? Do we pray for opportunities to be with our brethren?

Fourth, Paul intended to encourage his brethren. Admittedly, that is not always the way the church operates. Some preachers delight in disturbing the congregation with every new theological controversy or by demanding the imitation of every new method of "church growth." There are some leaders who enact rules or traditions which discourage even the most committed Christians. And there are some "ordinary" Christians who are just plain "ornery" in their eagerness to criticize anything and anybody.

What a stark contrast with Paul's attitude. The apostle intended to make the disciples at Rome even stronger by giving a spiritual gift (*pneumatikon charisma*) to them. He wrote, "For I

long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you" (Rom. 1:12). Whether this gift was similar to those mentioned in 1 Cor. 12:1-31, I do not know. But I do know that it was designed to *strengthen* them.

And in fact, Paul intended not only to give encouragement but to receive it as well. The apostle wrote that his intention was "that we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith, both yours and mine" (Rom. 1:12). When Christians interact with each other's welfare in mind, mutual blessings and spiritual growth will result.

As a part of his plan to encourage them, Paul was eager to reap a harvest among them. The apostle said: "I want you to know, brethren, that I have often intended to come to you (but thus far have been prevented), in order that I may reap some harvest among you as well as among the rest of the Gentiles. I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish: so I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome" (Rom. 1:13-15).

Paul's attitude toward the gospel was that it should be shared with all people, regardless of their backgrounds. His message was for the Greeks (*hellenes*), those cultured Greek-speaking folks. It was also for the barbarians (*barbaroi*), those persons who were ignorant of the Greek culture. It was for the wise (*sophos*), those naturally learned individuals. And it was also for the foolish (*anoetos*), those unsophisticated and unlearned people of Paul's time.

Attitudes, you see, really are important. And Paul's attitude toward the church in Rome was exemplary in every aspect. Let's strive to improve our attitudes toward our own brethren today. □

LETTERS

What Can a Brother Do?

When a freer thinker finds himself in a legalistic fellowship, how can he fully fulfill his obligation of edifying his brethren without squelching his own views?

We have made a special attempt to do everything within our power to edify the brethren while here. It has been our experience, though, that a natural barrier usually arises when too stringent tests of fellowship are made by them. To be effective among them I must be accepted by and be a part of them, and yet I live with the constant awareness that were my convictions truly known about certain matters I would be ostracized and shunned. Thus, we are required to wear masks if we are to best serve the brethren. Furthermore, when to be known is to be hated, in-depth personal relationships are hindered, making it more difficult either to serve one's brethren or meet one's own needs.

Perhaps no real answer can be given. What I do know, though, is that such circumstances are debilitating to one's spiritual health. I know several brethren who live in constant fear that they will be found out. One brother even hides his *Integrity*, *Restoration Review*, etc., under his bed or in a backroom closet.

Name withheld

Needed for the Needy

I appreciated the article by Norman Parks in the February-March issue of *Integrity*. "Conservative Digression" is threatening the witness of the Church. During the present economic and political situation of this country and the world, and with the current fad of disillusionment with programs to help the needy, it is important that the Church and individual Christians make their voices heard advocating for those in need, and that their actions be seen helping those in need. It is unfortunate that the loudest Christian advocates being heard today are those clamoring for such things as cuts in the food stamp program and for the making of more bombs. Christians may disagree as to the best political solution to the problems of the poor, but we must be heard and seen by the world as people with the care and

compassion of the man who fed and healed those in need.

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Comfortable Bondage

Just couldn't resist writing a note to you about your editorial in Feb.-March *Integrity*. I think there is one huge human problem behind the fact that we so easily obey "dogs" in office without questioning their edicts. It is the fact that bondage can be very comfortable!

Without doubt, the laziest part of a human being is his/her mind. That's why Paul said it needed "renewing" (Rom. 12:2). It's easier (in the context of that verse) to conform to someone else's notions ("this world") than to be transformed, when it comes to the mind. It's easier to do what someone else says (whether husband, elder, or Jim Jones) than to be like the noble Bereans who thought, prayed, and dug hard into the scriptures before they swallowed anyone's word, including the apostle Paul's. It is especially easy to obey man rather than God if you don't want to do what God says anyway.

After 10 years-plus of teaching women's Bible studies, I'm convinced half or more of them think they will stand before the judgment throne and be excused from their sins of omission because their husbands said to clean out the drawers and wax the floors. What we're actually doing is weaselling out of our responsibility. It's not too easy to stand up and be counted for Jesus in the PTA or on the street corner. (That's also why the men only preach in church, where it's easy to preach.)

The children of Israel (who are an excellent picture of us) cried to God about their bondage only when it became unpleasant. Notice they never complained about the leeks and onions they ate — they even longed to go back to that comfortable part of their bondage. But when God did send a deliverer, they gave him more trouble than they ever gave their slave-masters. Why? Again, it's easier to do what you're told and make someone else responsible for your life, than it is to follow God by faith and trust Him for your daily provision in the wilderness of freedom.

Power corrupts those who exercise it mostly because human beings so easily submit to it. Bondage is our ultimate cop-out from responsibility.

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