

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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ON THE VALUE OF INTEGRITY (continued from page 72)

world. I learned that there were others who were also concerned about the matters which I saw as our real problems: authoritarianism, dogmatism, and intolerance. Most of *Integrity's* writers were men I did not know and had never heard of, but I wanted to read more. I not only got on the free mailing list, but I asked for all the back issues.

I can't say that everything appearing in the past ten years of *Integrity* has come as a revelation to me. Any fool can see that not only is the quality of writing in *Integrity* uneven, but also the writers are constantly disagreeing with one another. But that is exactly why the ministry of *Integrity* is such an important one! Its purpose is not to control the thinking of

its readers, but to contribute to the process of dialogue by making a variety of views and insights available to the readership.

A bit less than two years ago, my wife and I moved to Flint, Michigan to work with the Reference Point ministry, a college-oriented Christian fellowship. I came to this area largely because I was eager for the chance to be in personal fellowship with the people who are responsible for *Integrity*. For about a year now I have been on the journal's board of directors. It pleases me to know that *Integrity* is still trying to help people spiritually the same way it helped me. And I consider it an honor, not a duty, to share in the ministry of *Integrity*. □

November 1978

Integrity

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NOVEMBER, 1978
Vol. 10, No. 5

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are by written request. There is no subscription charge (we depend on contributions from readers and God's grace). However, contributions are necessary for our survival. Since we are approved by IRS, they are deductible. **Important:** Readers who fail to notify us of address changes will be dropped from our mailing list.

Available back issues can be obtained from Amos Ponder, 1269 Pickwick Place, Flint, MI 48507.

Manuscripts

written exclusively for INTEGRITY are welcomed.

Mailing Address

8494 Bush Hill Court
Grand Blanc, MI 48439

NOTES REGARDING THIS ISSUE

This issue of *Integrity* is the result of a friendly conspiracy by the board of directors who, without my help, planned and solicited the articles, including the one they asked me to write on our goals. Although I am in complete sympathy with its purpose, I do have reservations about printing some of the personal comments, especially since my name appears where it does in the column at left. Nevertheless, I have refrained from tampering with their expression of thoughts which they felt should be shared with our readers.

At the risk of sounding like a mutual admiration society, I wish to acknowledge here my gratitude that God has enabled me to work with the capable and congenial people who make up our board. Although they vary a great deal in age, background, and nature of training, they are closely united in the purpose which brings them together, and their dedication to this project is demonstrated in many vital services which do not receive public notice. We are all very much in their debt.

I am particularly pleased that three of our great pioneers have met on our pages this month. Their editorial experience is considerable. Leroy Garrett is editor of *Restoration Review*, which I consider must reading. Carl Ketcherside influenced thousands as editor of the now retired *Mission Messenger*. And Norman Parks, though not an editor of a religious journal, served for a number of years as senior editorial writer for the *Nashville Tennessean* and has published articles in several leading newspapers and periodicals. Future generations will hail them as great heroes of our time, and we would be very unwise not to listen whenever they speak.

We regret the absence of David Graf, who is highly esteemed among us as a warm friend and talented co-worker. He is recuperating from serious eye surgery, and we ask you to labor with us in prayer for his complete recovery.

—HL

For We Walk by Faith

JOSEPH F. JONES

Chairman of the Board of Directors

On August 5, 1978 the Board of Directors of *Integrity* unanimously approved a new approach to the actual publication of this journal. Since its inception ten years ago, the paper has been prepared and produced by a staff of dedicated volunteers, under the resourceful leadership of Hoy Ledbetter, who has served not only as editor-in-chief but in performing many of the necessary tasks from typesetting to completed form. Without the aid of subscription funds, utilizing the committed voluntary service of many Christians, employing the most diligent of methods in fiscal management, and the graciousness of gifts, we have continued this ministry to its present level of national and world outreach. For this first decade of growth and ministry we thank God and acknowledge our continual dependence upon His graciousness.

While we rejoice in the growth and success which have characterized *Integrity's* history thus far, there now exist problems and concerns with which we must come to grips; and one of the major questions being faced by the Directors of this enterprise focuses on the actual production process of each month's issue. First in importance is the quality of the material which we offer to our readers; and we are most fortunate and blessed with an editor-in-chief who understands religious journalism, is himself an intense student of the Word, and writes with dignity and persuasion. Those of us now bearing responsibility for the continued ministry of this journal want to make it

possible for Hoy Ledbetter to spend every hour possible investing himself in the content of this paper: writing, research, editing materials submitted. This indeed is his gift and we need to provide him every opportunity to be a good steward of this gift.

As those know who are closely associated with this paper, our brother Ledbetter has been deeply involved in the actual physical production of the publication since its beginning. (Many others have literally poured their time and energies into this work also; and for every such commitment we continue to be grateful.) Besides the time and energy which Hoy spends personally in seeing the paper through from typesetting to completed form, there are other factors of deep concern to the Board including rising costs of materials and services to publish, along with the expanded responsibilities of cutting, folding, and readying the paper for actual mailing.

It is the cumulative impact of all these variables which led the directors to pass in August the resolution authorizing that the complete publication of the journal be jobbed out, from the approved editorial copy to ready-to-mail issues; and this is indeed a decision "to walk by faith," or more literally, "to publish by faith." The decision will be prayerfully and critically reassessed after the first six month period in an effort to guide the future of the journal toward the most realistic fulfillment of our stated objectives.

In finalizing this decision over a period

of many months, three major concerns relating to our editor, Hoy Ledbetter, have weighed upon us, and we share these with our readers candidly and without apology.

STEWARDSHIP OF GIFTS

We believe in the Biblical principle of stewardship in every dimension of life, and nowhere is it more applicable than in the situation with our editor and his contribution to this journal's ministry. Talented in the actual ways of publication with reference to a paper, Hoy's deeper gifts from God are as a student of the Scriptures, a distinguished ability to communicate truth through written form, and to teach in various ways. We need as good stewards of God to liberate this servant of Christ from the many pressing details and demands in the physical preparation of this paper, that he might employ his gifts more directly to the message being published. Although never complaining about the physical and emotional investment of self in these multiple demands, it is clear to those of us who share more closely with him that he would welcome this shift in focus on the stewardship of his personal strengths to the ministry at hand.

EXPANDED MINISTRY AT COMMUNITY CHURCH

For over ten years now Hoy Ledbetter has served God through the various outreaches of the Community Church in Grand Blanc, Michigan (part of the greater Flint area). This church has graciously allowed Hoy to direct the burden of his ministry toward *Integrity*, yet it has felt the void of his needed services in other vital areas because of the consuming demands of serving as *Integrity's* editor (and general production manager!). The Flint area needs desperately the kind of ministries which Community Church envisions, and is presently involved in; but the Community Church needs the personal presence and power of Hoy Ledbetter in

a more vital way, as he allows Christ to work through his Christian endeavors. Our decision to job out the publication of *Integrity* will release our brother and Christ's servant for even more extended ministry.

PERSONAL FAMILY NEEDS

Hoy and Lillian Ledbetter bear heavy family burdens which perhaps not all our readers know about, but which we the directors feel deserve our sensitive response. The Ledbetters' twelve year old daughter, Priscilla, was diagnosed a few years ago as having Friedreich's Ataxia. It is a slowly crippling disease, for which there is no known medical cure, although the family continues to seek and provide for her every known medical care. Hoy and Lillian (Jary) need more time to share with themselves and their children; and with the passing of time there will be increased demands on their emotional and physical (as well as financial) resources. This Christian couple, serving so selflessly for many years, deserve the sensitive and loving support of those who have received so bountifully from their ministries. The Board's decision is a genuine step, we believe, in providing them the necessary time and opportunity for mutual ministering within their own Christian family.

AN APPEAL

Our decision to job out the publication of *Integrity* is indeed a venture of faith, but our faith is not without validation based upon the gracious ways He has sustained us during the first decade of this ministry. With our present need to publish about 5,500 copies, we need an additional \$500 income per month. Already several board members and their spouses have humbly and trustingly pledged to secure the first few months of publication under this new approach, while all the board members are prayerfully reassessing their own stewardship in this ministry also.

But we need and earnestly solicit the

immediate and continued support of those who are sharing the message and outreach of *Integrity*. First, your immediate financial response is essential, whatever the amount may be; and secondly, we pray that each reader (family) will consider placing this ministry on a continuing support basis. In the decision of faith enacted by the board for this ministry of the Word, we are confident with the apostle Paul, that "God is able to provide you [and us] with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance

for every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8).

As concerned stewards of the gifts shared with us in this work, the board is carefully reviewing our responsibility to the supporters of *Integrity* in terms of the most effective and reassuring communication, that your graciousness is employed to the glory of God and the good of others. But more of this in the article by our treasurer, Darrell Thoroman. Please send your contributions and commitments to: Mr. Darrell Thoroman, Treasurer, *Integrity*, 8494 Bush Hill Court, Grand Blanc, Michigan 48439. □

Mirrors and Crystal Balls

DEAN A. THOROMAN

Member of the Board

Some might question the value of looking backward at anything. So would I if there were no attempt to profit from the shortcomings and shortsightedness of the past. Progress should include evaluation and this is impossible without some consideration of what has gone before.

Time and change seem to be inseparably intertwined, so no one should be surprised that *Integrity* has been and continues to be changing and changeable. The first board of directors was largely made up of men from two congregations and this small group obviously looked at matters from a relatively narrow viewpoint. Their first editions now look quite amateurish and give the impression of wanting to air local, controversial issues. Content, then, was more parochial than provocative. Financing was meager and the board spent more of its time puzzling over payment of current bills than in planning for the future. Production equipment was usually dilapidated or borrowed and caused grave concern about meeting mailing deadlines. Material to publish was seldom easy to find because the editorial staff was limited to the members of the board and the readership was

not expanded enough to reach out for assistance in this vital area. If you were among the early "subscribers," this brief historical sketch should bring back memories of our struggle to grow. Your patience and encouragement as well as your criticisms and suggestions have been most helpful in bringing us to where we are. You are part of the reason for our survival.

As the mailing list expanded to almost every state in the union and to several foreign countries, the editorial staff received more and better articles to be considered for publication. It seemed imperative to reach out to larger matters and to seek writers who could capably deal with items of importance to our Restoration heritage as well as with topics of current relevance. The editors came to realize that spiritual brothers and sisters in many places were wrestling with problems of leadership, the Holy Spirit, the role of women in the church, the basis for fellowship, the definition of ministry, and others which needed to be tested in the forum of open discussion. The board has tried to grow to fit needs for its time. Our efforts have not totally succeeded nor failed. You are the final judge of that.

Perhaps this does not need to be said often, but it does bear occasional review. *Integrity's* board feels no compulsion to publish everything submitted to its editor. Conversely, there is no deliberate attempt to squelch any topic deemed appropriate for Christian journalism. Elsewhere, Hoy Ledbetter emphasizes our long-standing publication policy in terms of over-all goals.

An excellent staff of contributing editors now provides you with articles that are thought provoking and wide ranging. These writers have been helpful in relieving the editor from some of the strain of having to write filler material in each edition by constantly drawing from his own resources.

The mechanical production of each month's *Integrity* requires the expenditure of exorbitant amounts of time and energy. Many operations from typing the finish copy to delivery at the post office are obsolete at best and extremely frustrating at the worst. Our limited capital has forced us to cope with out-dated equipment and not-always-dependable vol-

unteer laborers. Sometimes we wonder if any issue will be out on time and in good condition when you receive it!

Changes in outreach, direction, board membership, quality of production, and readership should now be matched with changes in methods of putting out *Integrity* and in the proper use of our editor's time. Please read Joseph Jones' article on this topic in this issue.

The present board has committed itself to the challenge of change. This edition is dedicated to the acceptance of that challenge and is our way of "bringing you on board" and inviting you to join with us in *Integrity's* next move ahead. We want you to help provide the financial base which will enable us to continue in whatever way the Lord desires. Our combined efforts will be positive and powerful, so please be generous. The ongoing nature of such a project will require ongoing support, so please be committed. When you respond with your gifts in care of our mailing address, include suggestions which will make this ministry even more effective. □

A Means of Togetherness

ELTON and LAQUITA HIGGS

Contributing Editor, Vice Chairman of the Board

On vacation recently we attended a Sunday morning worship service at a Church of Christ which has struggled but survived in the little town for over a hundred years. The young preacher was full of enthusiasm, and his evangelistic exhortations raised visions of staggering numerical growth for the church in that little town, if only everyone would work a little harder. He was an articulate and talented speaker, but in view of the many problems within that church which our friends had recounted to us—adultery, desertion of families, suicide, drug and alcoholic addiction—the preacher's numbers and percentages sounded slightly ridiculous. One

was saddened by the opportunity he missed for a real ministry to the very audience he was exhorting to be more evangelistic.

Many, many people must be sitting in church week after week with unattended needs. Some have emotional problems; others, intellectual difficulties; some may have clearly articulated their concerns, while others may feel only a vague sense that their needs and aspirations are not understood by those around them. Too often the local congregation does not cultivate an atmosphere in which these difficulties can be frankly discussed, even with the elders or the minister. Communication among such troubled believers is

all-important, and *Integrity*, in its small way, contributes to that sense of community, even among those who are far apart geographically. The letters received by our editor, some of which are never published, attest that there are those who do feel a little less isolated and frustrated because of the expression of thoughts in

Integrity which they find encouraging or enlightening.

We are too little aware of the church as a mystical union of all believers, and a concerned Christian publication such as *Integrity* can aid in making the kingdom of God a shared reality in the hearts of God's people. □

A Necessary Forum

GENE HATCHER

Member of the Board

I think of *Integrity* as a forum for those Christians who are not neglecting the "weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith."

It is a necessary forum for those Christians who are still seeking God's truth on matters pertaining to His will toward man and have not bowed completely to the fixed and filtered thinking of other men.

I enjoy being associated with Christians who try to speak up for all of the disenfranchised of the Lord's church—

such as women who do not have a proper voice in the affairs of the body, or seekers after a "greater truth" who are, more frequently than they should be, actual victims of an autocratic and unloving leadership.

To these and others *Integrity* represents a continuing ministry.

It is our prayer and hope that you as an interested reader will have a part in this ministry by contributing financially on a regular basis. □

A Pledge from the Treasurer

DARRELL E. THOROMAN

Treasurer of the Board

When Virgil Moughler invited me and some others to his home in 1969 to discuss the possibility of a religious periodical, I felt very good about being part of such an endeavor. I envisioned that it would be a parochial thing, localized in the Flint area. In typical human fashion, I didn't realize that when we let God go, his work might not be confined to the boundaries of our particular locale. We had a mailing list of some 1400 households that we were to use for our initial mailing list. With some hurried calculations, we felt that the cost of the publication would be within our financial capabilities. In addition, we expected to contribute our indi-

vidual talents, thereby reducing production costs. We also anticipated that some of our readers would want to assist us financially. Besides, what we didn't know wouldn't hurt us!

Well, it's been a fantastic project! We have only had to actually borrow money once during the subsequent nine years, and, with little fanfare, our mailing list has ballooned to some 5,000.

Others who are writing in this issue will probably address this subject, but let me say this: we have the editor-in-chief, Hoy Ledbetter, burdened down with too many functions, so it's time to move on to Phase II. This means that the work

between editing and addressing will be jobbed out, and, naturally, that means more money, especially acute now with skyrocketing costs and runaway inflation.

We pledge to use all funds received in the best possible way and in a conserva-

tive manner. In keeping with the goals of *Integrity*, we pledge ourselves to His cause.

For those contributors who care to have one, we will be glad to supply a copy of our Annual Financial Report to them. If you can help, will you? □

On the Value of Integrity: A Personal Testimony

JIM SIMS

Secretary of the Board

For some nine years now *Integrity* has been an important part of my reading. It has helped me place my life on a firm foundation. It has helped me to understand the gospel which I advocate. It has lain the axe to the root of some of my poorer thinking, while at other times equipping me with a spiritual sword. Christianity today needs a sense of mission. From now until eternity, as long as there are sojourners contending for the faith, *Integrity* will remain a valuable source of inspiration. One might even say it's a Christian standard.

Seriously, now, *Integrity* came into my life in February, 1971. At that time I was a graduate of York College and Oklahoma Christian College, and was teaching in a junior college Bible Chair program in Texas while struggling my way through graduate studies in religion at Baylor University. I was a rather confused young man, trying to figure out where I stood on all the important issues facing Christians everywhere. I mean the real biggies, questions like: What are Pat Boone's chances for eternal life? Would you want your sister to marry a charismatic, or your minister to become one? What is the quickest way to hell, by playing the piano in church or by eating unleavened bread on Thursdays? You know, the real biggies!

While the brethren were busily trying heretics and burning witches over these and other similar matters, I had one of

my rare moments of insight. I reasoned that the ingredient most frequently lacking in our "discussions" was the calmness and reasonableness of spirit which I decided was the "Restoration Attitude." I even managed to scrape up a proof-text quotation from Alexander Campbell: "We ought . . . (always) to act under the conviction that we may be wiser today than yesterday, and that whatever is true can suffer no hazard from a candid and careful reconsideration."

Being young and inexperienced, I did not know that we had a rule against fighting fairly. When the honorables B.C. Goodpasture and Reuel Lemmons graced the pages of their respective journals with my thoughts, I soon found myself being assaulted through the mail. A small avalanche of letters came to me questioning, in no particular order, my sanity, my liberalness, my conservativeness, my rejection of restorationism, my defense of restorationism, etc., etc., etc., ad infinitum, ad nauseum.

I was beginning to feel somewhat abandoned. Then I received a letter from a brother in the Lord whom I still have never met, Don Reece. He was actually able to read some sense into what I had said about attitudes. But, most importantly, he included in his letter a few sample copies of *Integrity*.

After reading those first issues of *Integrity* I didn't feel quite so alone in the

(continued on back cover)

A Precipitous Journal

LEROY GARRETT

As I sit down to write these few paragraphs I have just returned from the far northwestern part of our nation where I visited with a church in Bellingham, Washington, which is less than an hour's drive from the Canadian border. The church is ministered to by a bright young preacher named Rob Blakely, a lad that revels in his newly-acquired set of Campbell's *Millennial Harbinger* as well as his newly-acquired son that his wife Becky presented to him recently. The new acquisitions vie for his time.

Before I left the area Rob extracted a promise from me: that I would be sure to send him the address of a paper he had been hearing about but had never seen, *Integrity*. I shall do more than I promised, for I shall send him a gift "subscription" to that paper, even though it is the one paper that does not have the usual subscription arrangement.

Rob Blakely is one among thousands who both could and would profit by continual exposure to the likes of *Integrity*. Many of our leaders, especially among the younger set, are experiencing dramatic change these days, and the character of that change will depend in part upon what they read. They called the old Greek philosopher Heraclitus "the apostle of change" and one of his favorite sayings was "You can't step into the same river twice." Sometimes I am tempted to paraphrase the old sage and say "You can't visit the same church twice," but that might be overstating it. It is enough to say that those of us who are heirs of a

unity movement are changing so substantially that we will never be the same. Part of that change is evident in our growing concern for our roots as a people. It may also be seen in our thirst for good and challenging reading.

Integrity was once described by one of our researchists as "open." That is enough to make it worth reading by folk who have been "locked in a room with open doors," to quote Ernie Campbell. Some of us have been scaling the walls into new worlds and are daring to have new experiences. It is a pilgrimage where we need all the help we can get. *Integrity* serves in providing that help, not only because it is open, but because it is out there on the growing edge of our changing world. I like it because it doesn't always have to be right. It is willing to take chances, willing to get its nose bloodied. William James, the Harvard philosopher of yesteryear, insisted that the one ingredient that makes life worth living is *precipitousness*. *Integrity* is like that, *precipitous*, especially when its editor, who may well be the best editorial writer we have, is wielding his pen. That is another way of saying when you read *Integrity* you might be led off the deep end and be in need of a parachute! And folk who have escaped from locked rooms do not always have a parachute handy. But that is one more amazing thing about our changing people, that so many of them who are willing to scale new heights never fall but what they, like the proverbial feline, land on both feet!

Our movement has been strewn with

thousands of journals in its 175 year history. Most of them did not survive for more than a few issues. *Integrity* is among the small minority that has lived for a decade, and it is yet but in the bloom of youth. It has survived only because it has deserved to, and that because it has something to say. It will find its support from those who want our people to be freer, more responsible, and more spiritual. I

We Need Integrity

W. CARL KETCHERSIDE

I have often thought how fortunate it was that the brethren selected *Integrity* as the name of this significant little journal. When I saw my first copy there came to my mind the statement of Samuel Johnson, "Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful." I had seen the futility of the first and the havoc wreaked by the second. It seemed to me that, in launching this new vessel of communication upon troubled waters, brethren were setting for themselves a tremendous goal for journalism among those who had long been subjected to censorship and one-sided presentation.

Integrity is from the same root word as integrate which means to bring together into a whole, to unify. Integrity is to be complete or undivided. Our sectarian attitude had decreed that many of the papers be purely partisan mouthpieces, oracles of a single opinion. To write about issues which had been kept in the cellar, to allow divergent views to be expressed, to refuse to be frightened off by false accusation, insinuation and innuendo, to be honest, open and sincere—all of this was needed. But it required a par-

am one of those, and I salute this feisty little journal with hat in hand.

As William Bradford could say of an emerging new nation in a new land, we say of *Integrity* in its relation to what Alexander Campbell dared to call "the millennial church": *As one small candle may light a thousand, so the light here kindled hath shone unto many, yea in some sort to our whole nation.* □

ticular kind of dedication which had often been sadly lacking.

I am happy to say the brethren have succeeded to a remarkable degree in progress toward their original goal. The articles have been challenging. Some of them have been daring. The stance of the editor has been non-sectarian. This is evidenced in the fact that the paper is read across many lines. It is regarded as fair and honest even by those who disagree with its general thrust. Minds have been changed. Hearts have been enlarged. Lives have been enriched by reading it. That it should accomplish this in such an abbreviated amount of space is proof that "diamonds do not come in piano boxes."

Only those who have edited papers without commercial advertising, or without subscription rates, know the difficulty of continuing each month with costs going higher. Such papers must depend upon the willingness of those who share in their intentions and aspirations. If everyone who read would show his appreciation by mailing a check each time he has been benefitted the financial problems of the editor would end and he

could concentrate upon the content. I am aware of the move to revise the approach in the office. I am thoroughly in favor of it.

Justice Robert Jackson wrote in 1943: "Freedom to differ is not limited to things that do not matter much. That

would be a mere shadow of freedom. The test of its substance is the right to differ on things that touch the heart of the existing order." We need honest dissent. Without it our ignorance will be frozen at its present level. Our brethren need integrity. They also need *Integrity*. □

A Prophetic Voice

NORMAN L. PARKS

A people without a prophet are a lost people. A people who will close their ears to the prophetic voice are headed for failure.

They are most likely to see the prophet as a threat when success seems within their grasp, when religion seems to "pay off" with status, security, and prosperity, when they are "on the make." It is at this point that they are most likely to "kill" their prophets and stone them who are sent unto them. And it is precisely at this point that the prophet's voice is most needed.

What need have we in the Church of Christ for a prophet when our bargain with God is turning into a cornucopia of success? Look at how the great Southern Sun Belt is booming with its billions in military contracts to our own benefit! Note how our churches are multiplying in this great belt, with handsome buildings and impressive budgets! Weigh our impressive growth in numbers and our success story in suburbia! Note the fact that a great TV chain has accorded us recognition as a major religious body, with an offer of free time to speak to the nation! Be impressed by the number of "million-dollar" Sundays when we want to do something big! Behold the multiplicity of our seminars, lectures, workshops,

preacher-training schools, elder gatherings, retreats, and new church-related institutions financed by our bond-selling capacities! Consider our mass-attended conferences and floor exhibits! Weigh the fact that we can pack chartered planes to foreign cities for religious conferences-vacations! Be aware of the fact that we sway legislatures and even move the American Congress! Measure our influence and affluence by our fifty and hundred-million-dollar universities and our aborning parochial school system to perpetuate our orthodoxies! Where is there a time or place for a prophet, always calling for self-criticism and reassessment?

The answer is that establishments cannot abide prophets. Particularly so when their special brand of religion seems to be paying off. In such an on-going establishment preachers are transformed into clergymen who hail the status quo. Prophets must be silenced for fear the people will hear their message and begin to turn the world upside down.

In the case of the Restoration Movement, its modern priests garnish the tombs of its earliest prophets like Campbell, Stone, and Johnston, but seek to "kill" the living ones. The pleadings of these earlier prophets who stood for res-

toration, freedom, and fellowship are reshaped to defend creedalism, conformity, and exclusivism. Still the contemporary Restoration Movement, with its encrusted traditionalism and sectarianism, is not lacking its modern prophets. They are being heard in spite of the hostile Establishment and their voices are welcomed by thousands yearning for the creative and prophetic spirit. It cannot be doubted that there is generating among us a growing distaste for legalism, exclusivism, and creedalism, a greater appreciation for the grace of God, and a longing for renewal and fellowship within God's family.

Ironically, the disenchantment described above within the Church of Christ with institutionalized authoritarianism has also become widespread in many denominations, and there is a search on for spiritual renewal beyond the confines of sectarian control. Were he living today, Alexander Campbell would see in this development an unparalleled opportunity for the restoration plea. Instead, the Church of Christ establishment has retreated further into its exclusivism and views the present foment with fear and distaste.

There had to be men of vision among us to call us back to the purpose of Restoration and to welcome the opportunity for understanding and mutual truth-seeking with the developing religious revolution. *Integrity* is the fruit of such vision.

The name was a fortunate one—a strong, Biblical name. We are called upon in the Scriptures to lead lives of integrity—at one with all who are in the family of God, guileless in our intentions, honest in our truth-seeking, completely furnished for good works. The choice of editors was equally felicitous.

In his nine years as editor of *Integrity*, Hoy Ledbetter has demonstrated the high marks of scholarship. But he has also demonstrated that scholarship can speak the language of the common people. In every article there appears the strong con-

vicition that the ordinary man has the intelligence and character to decide what is right when the evidence is laid before him. Also implicit has been the conviction that confidence placed in the judgment of the ordinary man is safer than that in any elite. In so doing, he has called the church back to the fundamental Restoration principle of the right of individual interpretation at a time when our hierarchy has been repudiating it in practice.

If Hoy Ledbetter has been a gentle, courteous, kindly prophet, he has only spoken the unadorned truth in love. *Integrity* has shown the folly of enforced conformity as the road to unity, and faction as the means to purity. It has made clear that doctrinal concern is not the justification for apartheid. It has demonstrated the wisdom of openness by which alternative views may be weighed without fear. It has shown the need for knocking, seeking, asking, and even questioning our basic beliefs in the pursuit of integrity.

Integrity has brought hope and sustaining power to thousands of readers who long for a better fellowship and a more open church. But its work is far from done. There are vast numbers who have settled down into defenseless passivity that passes for peace under authoritarian lordship. In their chosen or enforced silence they need to hear the summons back to Restoration principles. Few readers are aware of the great personal cost to the editor in producing this fine periodical, including the physical labor of printing it. A prophet should not be bogged down with setting type when his voice needs to be heard across the nation. May we readers welcome with our increased personal support the proposed plan to put *Integrity* on a new footing and a new budget basis so as to give its editor more time for more important work. At least each of us can be a good prophet by proxy through the pen of the editor of *Integrity*. □

A Reassessment of Goals

HOY LEDBETTER

Bearing in mind Benjamin Disraeli's warning regarding history that "all great events have been distorted, most of the important causes concealed, some of the principal characters never appear, and all who figure are so misunderstood and misrepresented that the result is a complete mystification," let us glance back at what was, to a few people at least, a great event—the birth of *Integrity*—and review the objectives of its originators.

Integrity grew out of the concerns of a small group of church leaders who early in 1969 began planning a modest publication which was intended for interested readers in southeastern Michigan, who, we felt, were not hearing all the good news they had a right to hear. With that limited ambition we adopted the name *Integrity* (a happy suggestion by my wife), pooled our funds, formed a nonprofit corporation, scrounged enough equipment to publish (we even invented some), and sent out the first issue in June.

As it turned out, we happened to be in the right place at the right time. There was more sympathy with our concerns and more respect for our effort than we anticipated. As a result of editorial comment, news reports, and various plugs in other journals, as well as verbal discussion, our mailing list quickly swelled with requests from the far corners of the earth. Libraries—often to our surprise—began requesting copies for display and thereby introduced us to many readers. People often reported discovering *Integrity* many miles from home, even in strange lands (Pat Boone, for one, picked up a copy in Hong Kong). But what impressed us most was the sheer joy of discovery indicated

in so many letters. And the same joy is still frequently communicated to us by readers who, at this late hour, are first discovering a publication like *Integrity*, and whom we must constantly remember as we assess our goals.

That joy was by no means a one way street. It was immensely encouraging to us to learn that there were so many others who shared our vision of a better fellowship. This vision was partly set forth in our first issue, and perhaps those who understand our feelings will pardon us for stating it in predominately negative terms.

We were grieved that the brotherhood we loved and did not wish to abandon had fallen among sectarian thieves, who had robbed it of its good name, stripped it of many of its great thinkers, wounded it with a Lord-denying conformity which disguised an incessant doubt, and left it weak and voiceless and detached from the unreconciled world. But we also believed that we as a people were capable of recovering our ministry of reconciliation which seemed to be so hopelessly lost amid our own schisms, and that we would, like Paul, welcome relief from the pain of kicking against the goads if and when the factional scales were somehow removed from our eyes.

We had seen our churches divide and subdivide over issues which were utterly inexplicable to those outside our communion. Clashes among brethren which seemed to corroborate the contention that "there is no wild beast so ferocious as Christians who differ concerning their faith" were not just isolated incidents. Free speech was repressed, and arguments were won by forbidding argument. Au-

thoritarianism was rampant, and the right and responsibility of private interpretation was commonly denied in practice, if not usually in theory. In view of our egregious sectarianism, our claim to be a unity movement seemed ludicrous to outsiders, who politely laughed behind our backs. With a stupendous capacity for believing the incredible, we found Biblical justification for factionalism as characteristic of "peculiar people." Ignoring the history of our movement and evading the ecumenical spirit of the early church, we had developed a theology of exclusionism which virtually guaranteed the expulsion of dissenters from the brotherhood. And when we succeeded in isolating ourselves from all internal corrective influence, we were left alone to gaze into a mirror which reflected our own dogmatism, and were transformed thereby from party spirit to party spirit. Truth could then be defined, not as what one cannot help believing, but as, above all, affirmation of the incidentals which made us different, and brethren were declared "sound" or "loyal" if they danced to the tune of our distinctive dogmas.

We were also disturbed by the number of preachers we knew who were just not themselves on Sundays. Their concessions made in private were either tacitly or explicitly disavowed in the pulpit. A common justification of hypocrisy was "the brethren aren't ready for it yet." Some quietly avoided discussing certain subjects out of fear that their influence would be destroyed. One brother found it encouraging that there were so many cowards around; at least, he thought, sensible views were being held, which might someday be stated openly. Regarding this condition our first editorial commented:

We also believe that one of the greatest needs of our generation is that of genuine honesty. When the time comes wherein the point of view we express is determined by the company we are in, it is time for us to ask what became of our integrity. When we cannot question our own beliefs without threatening the peace of the church, we may

well lament the departure of such Christian virtues as forbearance and self-surrender. When one cannot speak his mind without destroying his influence, he could profitably (even if painfully) investigate the real basis of that influence. And when Christians are so afraid of their own positions that they cannot bear to hear alternative arguments, it is time to ask what we are afraid of.

We were also concerned about the damage being done to many of our bright young preachers, for whom David Elkins spoke with a moving appeal:

We love the Lord and His truth as much as our Christian maturity allows. We want to discard or change nothing which is really sacred and eternal. But you must realize that we have our own truth-seeking to do, our own spiritual lives to direct, and our own salvation to work out. We need your help, but it is often lacking. Your scorching words are futile. Your time-worn denunciations are impressive but leave our questions unanswered. Your branding and disfellowshipping leaves us hurt but unhelped. For the sake of Christ, unity, peace, and our souls, please love us, understand us, and even condescend once in a while to listen to us. Forgive our youthful rashness and impatience. Gently lead us back to the narrow path instead of breaking our skulls with a two-by-four when we seem to be out of line. Answer, as best you can, our heart's questions instead of cutting our tongues out to keep us from asking them. But most of all, put your arms around our shoulders; stand by our side; help us fight our innermost battles; guide us into, or seek with us, a consistent and relevant theology.

Under the conviction that what we faced was wrong but remediable, we set out to discover and to communicate a viable basis for oneness, and in our first issue called attention to two principles which we regarded as vital to maintaining the unity which the Spirit inspires.

The first of these is the supreme authority of the Bible. Of course, the worst tyrants and sectarians claim to recognize the authority of the Bible, and often ridicule their opponents for failing to do so. But if the Scripture is to be authoritative for us, we must be "open to reason"—a Biblical virtue—lest self (the true concern of the tyrant and sectarian) get in the

way. If we really intend to yield to the Word and are not afraid of what we may learn, we will acknowledge our need for brotherly dissent. People with open minds and honest hearts welcome having their ideas put to the test. I do not suggest that we hire an atheist to come in and debate with us, but other believers in the lordship of Jesus and the authority of Scripture may save us from exegetical pitfalls. This is why *Integrity* has been and will continue to be a forum in which any relevant subject may be debated so long as the authority of the Bible is respected.

When Paul laid upon Titus the burden of "sound speech," he used a Greek word which may be defined as rational, intelligent, and pertinent. *Intelligent* suggests that God's spokesman will have the capacity to acquire and apply knowledge. He will use his God-given ability to think and will not be sloppy in his scholarship—the very opposite of the anti-intellectual who is honored in some circles. *Rational* implies that the knowledge discovered will be communicated in a reasonable manner to reasonable people, who, it is assumed, are capable of distinguishing truth from error when they are provided with sufficient information. *Pertinent* indicates that the well-informed message, logically presented, will have a precise bearing on the genuine needs of the hearer, so that his Christian faith may be logically related to rational existence in the world.

This "sound speech" is contrasted in the Pastorals with "myths and endless genealogies," about which we know but little, but which may be frighteningly close to some of our own preoccupations. However that may be, we have our own myths, and since a myth is a notion based more on tradition or convenience than on fact, even our belief in Jesus may be mythological, if it does not rest on a solid theological foundation. *Integrity* is devoted to rescuing us from all myths by means of the sound speech Paul requires.

The second principle stressed in our

first issue is the right of private interpretation. This right, which is also a grave responsibility, cannot coexist with authoritarianism, manifest contempt for independent thought, or hasty excommunication.

The Protestant—and Biblical—idea of salvation by faith implies that each person's faith must be worked out individually. The alternative, superficial conformity, is no faith at all, since it results from yielding to human pressure and for that reason denies the lordship of Jesus. This is why Paul was quick to disown any intention of lording it over the Corinthians' faith; had he done so, he, rather than Jesus, would have been their lord. If, under threat of ostracism, anyone adopts the opinion of another and denies his own heartfelt conviction, no matter if his own is wrong and the other is right, he sins. This is precisely what Paul meant when he said that "whatever is not of faith is sin." The sin consists in a practical denial of Jesus' exclusive claim upon us all.

But history has demonstrated that this fundamental truth is extremely difficult for many people to accept. Consequently Christian liberty is never won once for all but must be won continuously. On this behalf we must always "speak out clearly and pay up personally," as Camus put it.

In addressing the problems of division and dishonesty we have tried not to ignore the interests of those who are neither sectarian nor insincere. Our sizable community of writers—who to a large extent will determine our future goals—can and will bring the Lord's word to bear upon broader concerns relating to the faith we proclaim, the fellowship we experience, and the service we render as God's reconciling community. It is our aim to include something in each issue which will be interesting and helpful to each reader. But our greater aim is to submit our work to God and constantly respond to his direction, for we have no doubt that any good work which is truly his will be brought to satisfactory completion. □