

*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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## LETTERS

### Building the Airplane

I found the article by Michael Spradlin, "I Dream of Flying," very interesting. His view of primitives building a model of an airplane is very similar to some of the thoughts behind the Restoration Movement. However, since it is a human analogy it is not perfect. I feel that the author misses one very valid point.

There is no question that the church today is divided. However, the major cause of division is not over what the church is to be like but how the work of the church is to be carried on. In this point I believe he misses the analogy. According to his analogy the dissension should be over the method of building the airplane rather than what the airplane is to be like.

I find *Integrity* challenging to my thinking even though I do not agree with much of what I read. I appreciate very much your sending it to me.

ANCIL JENKINS  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

### Supporting Baptism

"A breath of fresh air"—that expresses our feeling in response to "The Gospel in Water" (*Integrity*, Feb. '79) by Don Reece. For too long we have been shamed, abused and put upon by those who decry our acceptance of the consensus of historical scholarship regarding New Testament baptism. This acceptance, together with our own application of honest hermeneutics, has made us the object of patronizing scorn by the "super spiritual." The forthrightness of the referenced article together with its scriptural and extrascriptural supporting quotations was a delight. *Integrity* and many another periodical among us need to offset the flood of writing and preaching from the pens and voices of those who occupy a position of "sweet-spirited infidelity" toward God's Word. *Integrity* is to be commended for giving exposure to such articles as that by Don Reece as well as to those which it so effectively answers.

HUGH M. OLSON  
San Jose, California

April 1979

# Integrity

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### NOTES ON VARIOUS TOPICS

At the first of the year we began having *Integrity* printed by a professional. But after two issues we found that we were not only falling far behind schedule, but had also lost some ground relative to quality. So, in order to try to get back on schedule and to gain time to work out a more satisfactory printing arrangement, we have reverted to printing the journal ourselves.

Our board members feel that this reversion must be only temporary and are determined to meet the goal set last fall. Our main problem, of course, is getting enough financial support—a problem which is still to be solved. In the meantime, we will do our best with what we have. Please continue to include us in your prayers.

\* \* \* \* \*

We regret that in recent months two of our contributing editors—John McRay and Bill Bowen—have had to drop out because of their schedules. We wish to acknowledge publicly our gratitude for their help. On the other hand, we are pleased to welcome Laquita Higgs to our editorial board. Her talent is considerable, and she has been very helpful to us for a long time.

\* \* \* \* \*

A well-known reporter recently criticized press coverage of the pope's visit to Mexico on the ground that reporters knew so little about liberation theology that they did not really understand what was happening. They are not alone. We have found that some of our readers have never even heard of liberation theology. Tom Lane's readable discussion of the subject in this issue will be welcomed by those who wish to have a firm grasp on contemporary religious thought. Also, since it is not all that easy to be a parent nowadays, Sara Brown's article on moral development in children should be very helpful. It is very disconcerting to hear that so many parents regret having children. They seem to need all the good news they can get. □

## An Analysis of Liberation Theology

TOM LANE

Cincinnati, Ohio

The world today is undergoing rapid and intense social and cultural change. Central to this change is the struggle of the developing nations of Africa, Asia, and South America for economic growth and for cultural identity.

In Latin America, the only continent among poor nations in which Christians (mainly Catholics) are in the majority, the interaction of church with a changing society has spawned "liberation theology." The liberation theology movement, laity-oriented and social action oriented, seeks to give a Christian rationale and direction to change. Liberation theology earned attention in the world Christian press with a flair a few years ago, but is gaining a maturity of logic and interest which assures it more than an ephemeral place in Third World religious experience.

Beyond excusable curiosity, why should "we" North American Christians study a distinctively foreign theology? Liberation theology claims to be Bible-based. Hence it demands the attention of all Christians who regard the Bible as the source-book of faith. We must assess liberation theology by its own Biblical standard, and take admonition if we find liberation thought to be in some points more Biblical than conventional thought. Also, liberation theology has inspired "theology of play," a school of thought gaining popularity in our own culture. Play theology, because it is "close to home," deserves our analysis.

Liberation theology perceives a religious meaning in man's historic yearning

for liberation. By "liberation" is meant the struggle of man, today exemplified in the Third World countries, to fashion a just and fraternal society, one in which all people share a like dignity. The Bible, it is claimed, depicts such liberation as a salvation process, for when a man is saved, he enters into such right relationship with his fellow men as well as entering a right relationship with God.<sup>1</sup>

### A History of Salvation

Liberation theology accepts the universalist notion of salvation, that all people, those who consciously acknowledge the deity and Lordship of Christ and those who do not, are saved by the gratuitous provision of God. This salvation is God's providential working throughout human history, and especially in the exemplary self-sacrifice of Jesus, to remold man, malformed by sinful selfishness, into a liberated, selfless, self-expressive creature. God's providential work in human history touches all mankind. Therefore all men are "saved." Some people deliberately seek God while others do not. But anyone who treats others unselfishly is living by God's plan whether he realizes it or not.<sup>2</sup>

Salvation, or liberation, is a historical process. Biblical faith means faith in a God who reveals Himself and accomplishes His will through the course of human events.<sup>3</sup> The paradigmatic acts of liberation are God's creation of the world, in which man was designed with creative



faculties so that he might pursue selflessness and self-actualization; and the overthrow of Egypt's political and military might during the Exodus.

God calls man to continue the work He began at creation (Gen. 1:28). Man, in partnership with God (who sets down guidelines in the Bible), is to "create himself." Man forges himself by working, by transforming the world, by breaking out of servitude, by building a fraternal society.<sup>4</sup> The work of the liberation of man is not yet complete. The Bible in its passages describing "things to come" anticipates a world ruled by love and freedom. Man today labors toward the realization of this utopia. Thus God's work is still going on; man's struggle for a just society is a part of salvation history.<sup>5</sup>

### The Goal: A "Truly Human" Society

Modern affluent societies, say the liberationists in agreement with a broad spectrum of Western liberal thought, are psychologically repressive, inhibiting man's self-expression, making him into Organization Man, brainwashed by advertising and enslaved by inhuman bureaucracy. By contrast, poor societies are materially repressive, denying man the chance to fulfill his personal creativity by sapping his energy in the pursuit of a meager creaturely existence.

Liberation theology wishes for man in all societies a "truly human existence" in which the individual, freed from material want and from social and political coercion, can give direction to his society and can express his individuality, creativity, and love. Man needs a dual liberation: liberation from exterior pressures of deprivation and conformity; and an inner awareness of freedom that enables him to take advantage of the freedom from exterior pressures once such freedom is acquired.<sup>6</sup>

In the consensus of liberation theologians, socialism, which theoretically dis-

tributes the ownership of the facilities of production among the workers, dignifies labor and ensures equitable division of wealth, hence is a more humane economic policy than capitalism. As a first step to the alleviation of economic distress around the world, liberation theologians petition affluent nations to split their wealth with the Third World.

Liberation theology offers a profile of the liberated person. The liberated spirit does justice to his neighbor, cherishes his fellow men as brothers, assists in others' struggles for liberation, and is filled with joy and a grateful sense that his relationship with God and with others is the unmerited bountiful gift of God.<sup>7</sup> He is characterized by hope, the suspicion that in a miraculous way, life, supervised by a gracious God, is ever opening upon fresh possibilities of human freedom.<sup>8</sup>

### Social Change the Church's Task

Liberation does not come easily. Modern man, say the liberationists, realizes that he cannot merely reform the existing order. Reform generates only shallow change. Nor are the poor countries of the world interested in modeling themselves after the rich countries, believing that the status of the rich nations is the fruit of exploitation.<sup>9</sup> What is called for is a deep-running, revolutionary change in which material equality among all nations and all strata of society is coupled with a more *human* society. The present status quo must be abolished, and a qualitatively different one, based upon "new relationships of production," constructed. This change requires "confrontation," in which different kinds of "violence" are used, between the disparate classes of society.<sup>10</sup>

The Christian church—here is liberation theology's call to arms—must put its preaching and its social influence behind the cause of social change, becoming an instrument of social criticism. Standing in the heritage of the Old Testament prophets, the church must condemn op-

pression as an affront to the holiness of God.<sup>11</sup>

It is not enough, liberation theologians argue, to say that Christians should not shirk their duties as members of the human family. Traditional Christianity stresses private life and the cultivation of private values, emphasizing the personal and conciliatory implications of Jesus' teachings. But the Gospel has political and "conflictual" dimensions. Social activism is the Christian's obligation. The Christian experiences God and His Word as alive and efficacious when he joins hands with God in the task of leading man from oppression to equality and solidarity.<sup>12</sup>

Liberation theology agrees with Christian tradition in exalting love as the supreme virtue. Yet it urges Christians to join the class warfare against those identified as oppressors. Is not such conflict contradictory to love?

Love, reply the liberationists, does not imply the avoidance of conflict and the preservation of a fictitious harmony. Love seeks, in solidarity with the oppressed, to liberate the oppressors from their own power, ambition and selfishness. One loves the oppressors by releasing them from themselves. This can only be accomplished, of course, if the love-filled Christian aligns himself with the oppressed in resolute opposition to the oppressive class.<sup>13</sup>

The church, then, is emphatically not a unity in which people of all classes and nations can peacefully coexist in kindred devotion to a common heavenly Father.<sup>14</sup> The church must of necessity be an anti-bourgeois community.

The Latin American Catholic Church, formerly closely linked to the ruling social class, is presented as an example of a church implementing liberation theology. Its priests denounce material, social and political disparity (pronounced "injustice"). Its clergy teach their charges to expect a liberation, to no longer accept their oppression "lying down." Its clergy

follow a simple style of living, and opt for a less opulent and ostentatious style of church architecture, in order to identify with the poor. The Latin American Church is visibly divided, some of its members and leaders supporting, and some opposing, socialistic change.<sup>15</sup> Liberation theologians would, of course, question the Christian commitment of professing church members who refuse to side with the upstart proletarian Christians.

In a sort of inverted postmillennialism, liberation theology envisions man's political and material liberation, for which the church labors, as a potential boon to the expansion of the Christian church. Political liberation may proceed without additional Christians being made as a side-effect. And people may be converted to Christianity even while suffering political and material exploitation. But where men are politically, socially and materially free, there their minds are least distracted from the loftier conceptions held by mankind; there they are best able to give faith in Jesus a fair hearing.<sup>16</sup>

### Flaws in the System

Despite vigorous assertion to the contrary,<sup>17</sup> liberation theology is a political revolutionary theology. It admits, then, of both theological and political appraisal.

Liberation theology displays an inheritance from Marxist thought. Marxian terminology is prominent in the writings of liberation theologians: "proletariat," "class struggle," "social ownership of the means of production." "Philosophers interpret the world," Karl Marx wrote in his *Theses on Feuerbach*; "we change it." Liberation theology is an action-seeking faith, deigning to remake the world into the classless society fantasized by Marx. Like Marxism, liberation theology views history as a litany of class struggles provoked by economic factors. Liberation theology departs from Marxism by maintaining faith in a personal God.



Where it borrows from Marxism, liberation theology draws the same criticisms as Marxism. Like Marxism, liberationist theology takes a simplistic analysis of human history, ascribing man's past predominantly to economic factors. Political, military, scientific, and other factors must, however, be incorporated into any adequate accounting of history. Liberation theology is correct in seeing God at work in a broad way in human history (Acts 17:26-27), but wrongly interprets much Bible history; God chose Israel and upset Egypt not because Israel was specially oppressed, but in virtue of His own sovereign love (Deut. 4:37; 7:7-8).

Liberation theology shares Marxism's belief that material and social change can only be attained by violent conflict in which the oppressed majority unseats the wilfully exploitative minority. But peaceful reconstruction of society along socialist lines, less dramatic and less rapid than violent revolution, has been demonstrated by certain European countries.

In its advocacy of unabashed conflict, liberation theology fails not only to be a valid political stance, it fails to be what it claims to be, a genuine Biblical theory. While Jesus enjoined peace and the reconciliation of man to man, and taught patience under oppression, liberation theology notices only the Bible's call to justice, extrapolating that into license to the oppressed to rise up in vocal, undisciplined overthrow of authority. Liberation theologians point out Jesus' disagreements with the religious and political leaders of His day, but are embarrassed to have to admit that He, no radical agitator, preached only an inner sense of freedom.<sup>18</sup> They fail to observe that Jesus' arguments against the leaders of His day were over specifically religious and ceremonial issues, not political questions. A truly Biblical approach to injustice is that the oppressed patiently endure their misfortune (Matt. 5:38-48; 1 Pet. 1:18-20) while working for change by lawful, peaceful methods, notably the conversion

of the oppressors by reason and example (cf. 1 Pet. 2:12), and the change of institutional structures by orderly democratic process.

### Some Good Words

Liberation theology, barring its Marxist quirks, contains timely and truly Biblical points of emphasis which all Christians should follow.

Liberation theology encourages people to get involved in the awesome task of creating a better world. No mere secular gospel, liberation theology attempts to see social action as scriptural.<sup>19</sup> Despite its concentration on Biblical invectives against injustice and its oversight of Biblical exhortations to patience and tolerance, liberation theology reminds us that social concern is the corollary of Biblical love. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men" (Gal. 6:10). We, like the liberationists, must crusade against want and deprivation: hunger and poverty, disease, illiteracy.

Liberation theologians argue that social, political and economic structures or institutions may perpetuate injustice even if the people living by them are converted to love and freedom. Yet if the structures are changed and people themselves are not converted, sinful people will perpetuate evil through even good institutions. Therefore social change must be accomplished by the transformation of structures and individuals together.<sup>20</sup> North American evangelicals confide in conversion of individuals as the means of social change (when we care about social change at all). The liberationist argument for change of societal structures convinces us to support institutional reforms.

Specifically what structures should be changed, and how? Liberation theology suggests that capitalism be supplanted by socialism. North American Christians, while noting that capitalism is the root of our prosperity, may question some of the results of our economics: depletion of

natural resources and poisoning of the environment; the reduction of persons who "fail" in the competition for jobs to lives of despair; the power of business, through advertizing, to create demand for superfluous, wasteful products; the power of industrial conglomerates to regulate markets and preclude the rise of new business, so that, really, competition is limited and our system is no longer a "free market." Cooperation, not competition or collusion; sharing, not the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few persons and companies, are precepts which follow from the Biblical concepts of love and justice. Such innovations as guaranteed minimum income and re-portioning of tax liabilities to relieve the lower classes of tax burdens, commend themselves to conscientious American Christians as improvements on our current economic system.

Liberation theology inspires all Christians with its startlingly Biblical call to social action.

### Theology of Play

Though inspiring spin-off schools of thought in the U.S. concerning women's liberation and black liberation, liberation theology proper is distinctly the product of Third World thinking. But among less radical South American theologians, and particularly in North America, a form of liberation theology shorn of its Marxist excesses has appeared: "theology of play."

The theology of play has it that God created man in view of His own creative impulse. Creativity is an irrepressible attribute of God. God designed man to himself to be a creative being. Human creativity includes imaginative play and celebration as well as inventiveness applied to practical technology.

In economically depressed societies, man's energies are consumed by the requirements of eking out a daily living. In affluent Western societies, ritual, play, and utopian dreams are considered dis-

tractions from the realistic concern with industrial production. But ritual, play and fantasy are inherent in the nature of man. Personality means imagination. Happiness and fulfillment cannot be equated with economic well-being alone, though they presuppose it. To be deprived of our ability to dream is to lose our fundamental human-ness. Man must be freed from the tyranny of economic necessity so that he may give reign to imagination and creativity with least distraction and restraint.<sup>21</sup>

Play theology is correct in labeling creativity and imagination pivotal human attributes. These distinguish man from animals. But psychologists such as Abraham Maslow have confirmed that individuals have a built-in "hierarchy of needs," so that the more elemental needs of the body and of a sense of physical and emotional security must be satisfied before more abstract human traits, such as the creative inclination, can come to fruition. As the play theologians say, man must be freed from material want and mental constraint before he can fulfill his creativity.

This means that men everywhere must be freed from poverty. This means that man in industrialized states must be freed from subservience to the Organization. Modern Western man has largely forfeited the capacity for spontaneity, imagination, and abandoned revelry and self-expression, in exchange for the sobriety that lends itself to disciplined functioning within highly bureaucratic business and industry and government. Such festivity as remains is artificial and commercialized, such as the safe thrills of Disneyworld. Creativity is subverted by the requirements of the Organization, as in the perverted use of art by advertizing.<sup>22</sup> Organization-oriented man must be liberated to a new consciousness which values human emotional and self-expression needs, which puts the individual in command of the modern industrial resources which if made submissive to human needs can free



man from material want that he may in fact realize his human potential.<sup>23</sup>

### In Summary

Liberation theology is an attempt to blend Bible doctrine with contemporary politics. From this synthesis derives a blueprint for action, a practical theology typified by Marxist catch-phrases, or rather, a political ideology "baptized" by theological language. Yet liberation the-

ology makes an admirable effort to recapture Biblical teaching concerning man's treatment of his fellow men. Though sometimes criticized as provincial, liberation theology, this South American contribution to Christian thought, in the guise of play theology, and in its reiteration of the prophetic message against institutional evil, makes an urgent appeal on behalf of citizens of affluent as well as poor countries. Liberation theology shows us that liberation is for everyone.

1. Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, tr. and ed. by Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973), p. x. Gutierrez is one of the most prominent liberation theologians; this is one of his most important works.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 150-153.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 154.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 194-207.
8. Rubem A. Alves, *Tomorrow's Child: Imagination, Creativity, and the Rebirth of Culture* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1972), p. 194.
9. Gutierrez, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 48.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 169f.
12. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-50.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 275f.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 277.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 114-118, 137-139, 223.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 177.
17. Juan Carlos Scannone, "The Theology of Liberation—Evangelic or Ideological?" *Jesus Christ and Human Freedom*, Edward Schillebeeckx et. al., ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1974), pp. 147-156.
18. Gutierrez, *op. cit.*, pp. 226-231.
19. Ernest W. Ranly, "Liberation Theology: A Reappraisal," *America*, 136 (15 January 1977), 32.
20. Denis Goulet, *A New Moral Order: Studies in Development Ethics and Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1974), pp. 112-121.
21. This, a summary of Alves, *op. cit.* Alves, p. 199, contradicts his plea for the liberation of industrial man by asserting that only the oppressed can be creative because only they have the will to do away with the power philosophy which is the root of oppression. The logical deduction, that in a free society creativity atrophies, would be unacceptable to Alves.
22. Cf. Harvey Cox, *The Feast of Fools: A Theological Essay on Festivity and Fantasy* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1969), pp. 7-10.
23. The thesis of Charles A. Reich, *The Greening of America* (New York: Random House, 1970).

## Moral Behavior in the Young Child

SARA L. BROWN

Dexter, Michigan

"What do you think? A man had two sons; and he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' And he answered, 'I will not'; but afterward he repented and went. And he went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir,' but [he lied and] did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" —Matt. 21:28-31

Since from the moment of his first reflexive birth-cry, the human child is "taught" the moral rules of his culture, it is strange that so little is taught in our churches concerning the moral and religious instruction of very young children. Perhaps this is because the responsibility seems overwhelming! Actually, until the last several decades, little investigation

regarding moral development was done. Even experts in child development didn't know how an egocentric child developed into a sacrificing, moral adult. In view of the widespread discouragement among parents, reflection on recent advances in this field will be especially important.

A child is born with certain innate capacities which will be assumed throughout this discussion of moral behavior. He must have some intellectual capacity, and it will be helpful if he is born with normal vision and hearing. But probably the most important capacity is affective—the ability to form love relationships.

### I. MORAL FOUNDATIONS

The foundation of moral growth is indicated by a term which has recently become common. "Maternal bonding" (which will probably become "parental bonding" as awareness of the father's role increases) refers to the ties established by the mother as she accepts her child without reservation and yields to its demands—for the child is a part of and an extension of her body. To this acceptance by the mother or parent-figure the infant responds in kind, vocalizing when the parent vocalizes, smiling back, turning his head to the parent's voice, fussing for the parent to return, and laughing when stimulated. This building of attachment between parent and child is critical to the development of morality. As Selma Fraiberg puts it, "The condition of non-attachment leaves a void in that area of personality where conscience should be. Where there are no human attachments, there can be no conscience."<sup>1</sup>

Before a child can become a trustworthy adult he must develop a sense of trust in a parent-figure, and trust building<sup>2</sup> is the primary consequence of attachment. The child is wet, hungry, uncomfortable, or in need of attention. He cries. He is picked up, cuddled, talked to, smiled at. His physical needs are met, and the body holding his is responsive to his cuddling

and sucking positions. If this "ritual" is continued on a fairly consistent basis, the child establishes a trusting relationship with his parent, and the first cornerstone of morality—*trust*—is laid.

As the child moves through his social development, he reaches the "I-can-do-it-myself" stage. This pseudoindependence is achieved because he has been given a sense of *self-worth* by his trustworthy parents and has learned that he may have some control over his life by saying "no," by refusing to follow a request, or by walking away from a disagreeable situation. During this stage of growth the child feels autonomous and often acts like a monarch!

He seeks the limits his parents set and tests their adherence to them. He needs to know how far he can go before they become angry or punish him, for he has a strong desire to be loved by them and *seeks to please*—another block necessary to building morality. He views their displeasure and its consequences as a withdrawal of their love and assumes the blame for such happenings (early guilt). Therefore he obeys because he wants to please and it feels good. Right becomes the ability to obey the will of the adult, wrong is to have a will of his own.

The critical character attributes for moral growth, then, are a sense of trust, a feeling of self-worth, and a desire to please the caregiver; and the mortar holding them together is, of course, parental love.

### II. MORAL GROWTH

Much of what we know about moral growth is verbal or theoretical morality (i.e., what a child *says* about morality). The difference between what a child says and what he does is often evident, as in the lives of the adults who teach him. However, because the degree of understanding of moral concepts determines their enactment, a discussion of "beliefs" is valid.



From among the many possibilities let us take one example of moral growth. The lie is considered immoral in most cultures and seems to be a "universal sin." Jean Piaget has made some exciting discoveries about how children perceive the "wrongness" of lying. (The same growth in cognitive and social awareness probably occurs for most unright acts involving social consciousness.)

Lying is a verbal act and therefore cannot be understood or utilized until the child has acquired certain language constructs (i.e., by the age of 3 or 4). From then until he is about 6 the child views a "lie" as wrong because it is a punishable act. For him the act would not be wrong if it escaped punishment: "It doesn't matter, if mommy doesn't know." There are also degrees of wrongness. For example, the same lie involving a larger quantity (e.g., of cookies eaten) is a worse lie. Lies are defined as "naughty words," and because he does not understand the true consequences of the lie (deceit), the child equates using vulgar and swear words with lying. They all represent what Piaget calls "verbal transgression." All the child knows is that he is punished when daddy says he "lied," whatever that means, and he doesn't like being punished. Neither does he like the tone of voice or the facial expression mother uses during the punishment activity. He has not pleased the one he trusts to make him comfortable and secure.

Although the school-aged child does explain a lie as "not telling the truth" and begins to differentiate between intentional and involuntary error, mistakes are still conceived as constituting lies! Perhaps this is so because the child continues to receive punishment for mistakes, in judgment or speech, which are often difficult for the parent or teacher to distinguish. Lies and verbal mistakes are both wrong because they are punished.

Understandably, therefore, lies to one's peers are not so bad since they go unpunished. One of Piaget's subjects said,

"A child doesn't know if it is true. A grown-up knows, so it is naughtier!" So the child takes advantage of his peers' ignorance without fear of punishment or ostracism. My children actually delighted in seeing the weakness of other children when they gullibly swallowed a lie. Sin is enticing—especially that sin which escapes unnoticed and unpunished!

By the time a child is 10 or 12, he has developed some roots of comradeship and cooperation. His views of morality, therefore, are rooted in social consciousness. He extends the trusting relationship developed within his family to the other social contacts in his life. He begins to view lying as wrong in itself, whether punished or not. He realizes that truthfulness is a necessary part of cooperation (such as in organized sports, board games, or school projects) and views the responsibility for truthfulness as mutual; hence reciprocity develops. He sees the lie which is believed as worse than the lie which is detected because it succeeds in its deceit. Because the child can now put himself in another's shoes, he can theorize the motivation behind an act and judge the lie accordingly. Lies can be differentiated from teasing and are defined as intentions to deceive by the 10 to 12 year old.

Because the child has now gained a high regard for the trusting relationship among his peers, lies to them are just as bad as lies to adults: "It's just as bad to a child, because a child can't tell if you're lying or not."<sup>3</sup>

As the child matures into the adult, he internalizes the concepts he has been taught and has experienced until he is able to withdraw from immoral acts because they are against his own conscience, rather than because they are punishable or against social mores.

### III. MORAL TEACHING

It is significant for the parent that the child's moral development can be changed or influenced. It is not fixed (except

probably in sequence of acquisition), but is as dynamic a force as physical and intellectual growth. As a child must walk before he can run, so must he be nurtured through egocentrism to cooperation. Although many children attain a large degree of moral responsibility by age 8 or 10, some *never* move past the egocentric level, and many of those responsible for heinous crimes were not nurtured in their youth—they never developed a trust relationship. What, then, can parents do to build their child's moral foundation and growth?

1. It is imperative that early on we verbalize for a child the difference between a *wrong* act and an *unacceptable* one. Throwing food on the floor is unacceptable, throwing a stone at sister is wrong.

2. It is important that we establish priorities in our family and that discipline be given on a conscious level. Each parent-set must determine what moral behaviors are important to foster and what punishments are appropriate.

3. It is good to know that there are some factors which make discipline more effective:<sup>4</sup>

a. *The longer the delay* between the initiation of the wrongdoing and the punishment, the less effective discipline is.

b. An act which is punished fairly and consistently will be eliminated more quickly.

c. Punishment is more effective when the relationship with the punisher is warm and secure.

d. Frequent punishment is less effective than punishment given sparingly.

e. Punishment which "fits the crime" is generally deemed fairer (e.g., washing the mouth out with soap may be a pretty effective remedy for dirty words!).

f. Punishment before peers and relatives is humiliating.

g. Punishment coupled with *reasons why* the behavior is wrong or unacceptable are more effective, even if somewhat beyond the understanding of the child.

h. Punishment is more effective when the parent remains under control (yelling, hitting wildly, and cursing are poor models for change).

i. A kind parent given to explaining the why's is more effective than one who uses his authority to change behavior.

4. The child must continue to respect the authority figure even when he punishes unfairly. A wise parent admits it if he discovers a punishment has been too severe or unfairly given.

5. The child and parent must forgive each other. If others were involved, attempts to undo the wrong should be made. (A child who steals a candy bar must take it back with apology to truly neutralize his crime and accept the consequences of his own behavior.) After the wrong is punished, it should be forgotten. The child must "forgive" the parent who metes out both justice and injustice.

6. The child must eventually learn that punishment and discipline are necessary to learning. If the punishment or reprimand is given with respect and sensitivity, the child will learn the difficult lesson. Name-calling ("liar!" "thief!") does not reveal a sensitivity to the child.

Given a home which tempers justice with grace (as God does), child obedience motivated by an authority figure will be replaced by an internalized moral code under the control of the maturing adolescent. Self-discipline is the goal to which "chastisement" ascribes. Until that goal is reached, parents must continue to serve as conscience for their child.

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## JACOB AT PENIEL

(Genesis 32:22-32)

From Bethel to Peniel  
Is more than distance and time.  
For my youthful follies,  
God has given me penance  
So closely mixed with prosperity  
That I draw pain and pleasure  
From the same well.  
At Bethel, as I fled,  
The hardness of my bed  
Was the base of His altar.  
The terror I felt  
At viewing the door of Heaven  
Was the bitter leaven  
Of my flocks and wives and sons.  
I knew  
That even after Laban's treachery  
Lay the lonely reckoning with God;  
There is no swerving  
From the path laid out  
By our own deceit.  
"Jacob" I went; "Israel" I return;  
God enabled me to grapple with Him  
Instead of the heel of Esau.  
My limp is the latest evidence  
That the blessings of God  
Are spiced by pain.  
One does not wrestle lightly  
With the Name  
That cannot be changed.

Esau awaits.  
Not all my flocks and herds  
Will cover my offense to him,  
Which has dogged my steps  
For twenty years.  
And still, for all my fears,  
Having wrestled with God,  
And living yet,  
I set my face  
Toward my brother now,  
And embrace my past  
With the calm of one  
Who limps before the Lord.

—ELTON D. HIGGS

## The Restoration Concept

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Christ's one true church apostatized from its original purity by forsaking the inspired instructions of the New Testament. The nineteenth century American Restoration Movement, however, restored Jesus' church in all its pristine glory by obeying the simple, divine teachings of the Christian scriptures. With slight variations, this is the essence of the restoration concept accepted by each of the twenty-five segments of the Church of Christ in 1979. I believe this concept is invalid for at least eight reasons.

First, the restoration concept is invalid because no New Testament passage makes future generations responsible for going back to the New Testament or the Bible by way of some restitution movement. There is no scriptural authorization for the true church to be restored by some kind of sacred blueprint. Is it not strange for a movement which avers, "Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; where they are silent, we are silent," to have failed to discover a passage of scripture which authorizes its restoration concept?

Second, the restoration concept is invalid because it ignores the fact that since its inception, the church has never ceased to exist. However imperfect the followers of Christ may have been, individually or collectively, they have formed an unbroken chain of existence for nineteen and one-half centuries. To reject as totally erroneous the historical development of this church for the centuries prior to the American Restoration Movement is to deprive this movement of a multitude of invaluable insights. To decline to appreciate the church's accomplishments and to refuse to compassionately understand

its failures is to neglect to learn from the former and to run the risk of repeating the latter.

Third, the restoration concept is invalid because even if full restoration could be accomplished, it would not be desirable. It would be undesirable because it would produce an anachronism—a first-century church in a twentieth-century world. This resultant relic of antiquity could not adequately function in a highly complex society. In fact, of the many restoration groups which, over the centuries, have seriously tried to meet the needs of their constituents, *all* have added numerous "expedients" or "extras" to the so-called biblical blueprint in order to function somewhat effectively.

Fourth, the restoration concept is invalid because no two of the twenty-five different groups in the Church of Christ in the American Restoration Movement have agreed upon what should be restored. The church of the first century was beset by divisions, immorality, factious spirit, disagreement as to the nature of Jesus and his resurrection, and many other problems. Every congregation, furthermore, described in the New Testament, in more than a few sentences, is pictured as deficient collectively and individually. Surely no one wants to restore any specific one of these defective religious bodies in toto. And if there is a composite pattern into which all these individual churches are gathered, no two of the last millennium's scores of restoration movements, including the American movement, have yet agreed upon what it is.

Fifth, the restoration concept is in-



valid because it places an inordinate emphasis upon the external elements of the ancient church. Marks of the true church are said to be external elements such as the right name, autonomous congregations with elders and deacons, a cappella music, weekly Sunday communion, and baptism for the remission of sins. I suggest, instead, that internal marks more accurately identify the church which manifests the authentic spirit of Christ; individual and collective expressions of a commitment to the noblest possible vision of God, a caring concern for the welfare of others which is built upon the acceptance of oneself as of inherent worth, a perception of Christians as ethically re-

**No two of these movements are alike  
because each is a specific reaction to a unique historical situation.**

sponsible persons, and a cooperative spirit with other Christians and with non-Christians in the human community. External marks have not and can not in themselves produce a beneficial transformation of persons and society, yet internal marks have great possibilities for just such a dynamic metamorphosis.

Sixth, the restoration concept is invalid because it enslaves its adherents. Jesus brought liberation for his disciples from a paralyzing legalism. But when restorationists view the Bible as a blueprint, it becomes a legal handbook, codified laws which eventually negate whatever freedom Jesus created.

Seventh, the restoration concept is invalid because it enshrines arbitrarily selected scriptural elements as absolute essentials. Many groups had tried the restoration or restitution of primitive Christianity long before the American Restoration Movement came into existence. No two of these movements are alike because each is a specific reaction to a unique historical situation. One of the primary historical factors which gave impetus to the American movement, of which the

Church of Christ is a result, was the multiplicity of divisions in Protestant Christianity. This movement took its peculiar form in great part as an ostensibly unified church seeking to liquidate disunity in Christendom. The uniqueness of this church, however, does not lie in its restoration plea, or in its acceptance of the New Testament as a blueprint, but in the manner in which it selected certain elements in the Bible for its own particular blueprint to meet the specific historical situation to which it was reacting. (For illustration, many in this movement in its early years of existence railed against the practice in other churches of paying ministers regular salaries and called these

preachers hirelings. This was not, it was averred, a part of the New Testament pattern or blueprint for the one true church. Later, however, as the constituents of this movement became more affluent and its ministers more highly educated, regular salaries were thought by the majority to be authorized by the New Testament pattern.)

Eighth, the restoration concept is invalid because there is no generally acceptable way in which biblical information can be applied to present day situations. The total inadequacy of the generally advocated threefold hermeneutic — commands, approved apostolic examples, and necessary inferences — is clearly seen in its creation of one of the most divided religious movements in the history of Christianity.

I am a fourth-generation member and minister in the Church of Christ, but I function on a different basis than the restoration concept. It is suggested that there are potentially viable alternatives to the restoration concept. The explication of these, however, is necessarily a topic for another article. □

## Comment

### PITFALLS OF DISTINCTIVENESS

When God complained that "Israel has become like any other nation and is as useless as a broken pot" (Hos. 8:8), he revealed his expectation that his people would truly be a holy nation. And since holy people are by definition different from others, we should expect "distinctiveness" to be a recurrent theme in the prophetic preaching of any generation.

But while being like others may at times be wrong, as in Israel's case, being unlike them may not be a virtue; and we will run into trouble if we try to extrapolate from Israel and the nations to denomination versus denomination—the focus of much emphasis on distinctiveness today. Surely the differences between professing Christians are not equal to those between God's saints and participants in a pagan fertility cult!

Those who stress distinctiveness need to remember that preaching which is narrow and negative is not necessarily prophetic. According to Paul, separatist prescriptions—"Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch"—may "have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting rigor of devotion . . . but they are of no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh" (Col. 2:21-23). Devotees of distinctiveness may find themselves closer to the Colossian heretics than to Paul.

Paul also warns us (in 1 Cor. 4:6-7) that the desire to "differ from another" may be nothing more than a proud and factious attitude which endows party slogans with the authority of Scripture, to which the correct response is: "Nothing beyond what is written!" It is clear from 1 Corinthians 8 and Romans 14 that there are many distinctions between Christians which are to be accepted, rather than

used for pulling believers apart (which is *heresy* in the Biblical sense of the term).

Obsession with distinctiveness virtually guarantees overstatement of one's own religious virtues and exaggeration of the doctrinal deficiencies of others. A recent incident illustrates this point. When David Reagan, minister of the Central Church of Christ in Irving, Texas, proposed that Churches of Christ "come out of their self-imposed exile and begin to communicate and cooperate with other Christian groups," Guy N. Woods responded with this charge: "Not one of these denominational bodies whose 'fellowship' they so greatly covet teaches either 'the truth about Jesus,' or the truth which Jesus taught. Every one of them denies the validity of his word, the essentiality of his commandments, the identity of his church and the honor of his name."

This shocking statement, reminiscent of Paul's verdict that the heretic "stands self-condemned," indicates how distorted distinctiveness can corrupt even good men, to whom it is so important that *even brethren* who do not agree with it are regarded as apostates. According to Woods, who confuses fellowship with endorsement, Reagan "has *fellowship* with the denominational churches of the Dallas area only by forsaking the faith of the gospel." He also uniformly puts "Central Church of Christ" in quotation marks.

Let us return to the Biblical idea of distinctiveness, which is both a manifestation of our reconciliation to God and our persuasive basis of reconciling the world to him. If that condition and that commission are obscured by our contentions, then we too will be "as useless as a broken pot." —HGL