

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

## Integrity

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# Integrity

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either group take this admonition (caring for the homeless & widows) seriously." Of my associates within the church who have been actively involved in child care (without exhausting rhetoric and energies discussing ways and means of providing that care), I have never received the impression from any that providing a Christian mother and father, clothes, food and a warm place to sleep for the homeless was "herding orphans . . . into elegant concentration camps" in order to obtain "captive audiences for indoctrination." One might as well level the same accusation at all Christian parents for having any children of their own (simply livestock to propogandize). Absurd!

I'll take my stand alongside Dr. North and others who have taken strides in

caring for and loving the homeless and will not be so bold as to look into their hearts and impugne motives. I support child care, to be done both individually and congregationally, and will leave the judgement of my motivation for such in the hands of the great judge (not referring to brother Haymes, of course).

May I echo the sentiments of Ira North and encourage my beloved non-institutional brethren to come back home and expend the energies used in debating *how* to assist the needy to more practical use. The world is lost and dying and cannot be won by dialogues among us on the proper methods of administering the golden rule.

Steven Clark Goad  
Flint, Michigan

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### Divine Renewal or Ecclesiastical Navel-Gazing?

Dr. Rosemary Ruether, eminent Catholic theologian, has suggested that many of the church renewal approaches have been little more than an exercise in "ecclesiastical navel-gazing." We must begin "not from institutional introspection, but from theological vision, and lay again upon the community the demand to live out of that vision as its mandate."

Although the numerical count of New Testament Scripture references to "renewal" is rather limited, the concept is at the heart of the Good News. For to be renewed means to make new again, to make like new, or restore. A more formal dictionary definition reads: "Renew means to put back in a condition like new something that has lost its freshness, force, or vigor."

The contemporary "renewal movement" in the churches dates back several decades, and is somewhat concurrent with what came to be characterized as the "charismatic movement" among conservative and evangelical churches. Perhaps because of this association of the two ideas the focus on spiritual renewal in churches of our Restoration heritage has been limited, many leaders fearing that any unusual emphasis on church renewal would lend itself to the charge that the church had gone "charismatic" (understood in many circles as equivalent to tongue-speaking Christians). Being neither threatened nor disturbed with this particular fear, the editorial board of *Integrity* felt it could make a significant, even if limited, contribution to the Biblical doctrine of renewal which needs to be heralded among the churches.

In "Renewal and the Holy Spirit" the present writer focuses on a maxim of the natural and spiritual worlds, that "like produces like." If it is spiritual renewal that is desired, then it can only come from the source of life, the Holy Spirit Himself. Hoy Ledbetter, our long-time editor-in-chief, presents an incisive contrast between the futility of the mind alienated from God and the life

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## Renewal and The Holy Spirit

JOSEPH F. JONES

The past two decades have witnessed a significant flurry of books about church renewal. Seminars, conferences, and workshops focusing on church leaders' concerns about renewal are now a common occurrence. Only a few months ago the writer, along with several other Christian leaders from the congregation in Troy, Michigan, attended such a conference in Nashville, Tennessee, which provided occasion to look at renewal and Christian unity. Hopefully, this issue of *Integrity* will add something significant to the present felt need of many Christians to explore the nature of spiritual renewal more fully, to look for its implications in the personal and corporate life of God's People.

### Why This Contemporary Concern About Renewal

While there are some apparent factors which seem to evidence that the Christian churches of our nation are experiencing growth and vitality, the perceptive believer somehow gets the feeling that all is not well within. As a

Troy leader recently brought our Laotian refugee family the four miles from their house to the church building, he pointed out ten or twelve "churches" to them, seeking some way to bring them into a growing consciousness of the Christian religion. There are indeed almost countless churches (i.e., congregations having buildings, membership lists, and announced programs), but that they are spiritually alive and vibrant as the People of God may be a matter of serious question.

From the external trappings of religion to a more discerning assessment of what in essence exists, we become painfully aware of lifeless churches — whether viewed by grievously declining memberships or lack of any solid dynamic within. Struggling and dying churches are a reality of our time. A college student hitch-hiking home was asked by the minister who befriended him, "What do you think about the church today?" After riding for miles in silence, they passed an old barn out in the rural area, and the student said, "That's what I



think about the church.' And what an indictment by the younger generation, to see the church as little more than an innocuous anachronism, perhaps rather harmless (like many of its leaders), but also rather outdated and useless.

Within many churches there is lack of any significant rationale for their existence; and religious leaders often are baffled to understand either the nature of such widespread disinterest in Christian concerns, or to have any answers for revitalizing extensive but nominal lists of members. Frequently the worship efforts of many churches evidence lack of any real spiritual dynamic within, and there is woeful lack of any compelling commitment to the Person of Jesus Christ. That the church is presenting any challenge in meeting the multiple social and moral problems of our society is likewise a matter of continuing debate. Need we mention other reasons why there is painful concern on the part of many genuine Christians about church renewal?

### Search for Remedies

Aware that something was indeed amiss within the contemporary church and that it has not risen to the difficult demands of our age, many churchmen have gone on the attack with zest and determination. It is more observation than criticism to point out that many of these remedies have been rather superficial in nature to revive the church of God from its lethargic condition. The focus on "balloons, buses, buttons and bugles" has witnessed some increase in actual numerical response to worship and other church programs; and this is not to be disparaged. But that the spiritual emptiness of Christians' lives or

the pallid witness of the church corporate have been significantly confronted may be seriously questioned.

While the superficial approaches were being bandied about, however, there was growing insight into the real source of renewal for the People of God. Fresh study of Scripture was making it clear that spiritual renewal could only come from the Holy Spirit. For it is a maxim of both the natural and spiritual worlds that "like produces like." From Jesus Himself the church began to see anew that man must be "born of water and the Spirit;" that upon repentance and baptism the surrendered believer received the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38); that the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey him (Acts 5:32); that by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, and all have imbibed that one Spirit (I Cor. 12:12, 13); and that the follower of Jesus has experienced the "washing of regeneration" and the "renewal in the Holy Spirit." (Titus 3:5) Indeed, church renewal and the presence of God's Spirit seemed inseparable.

But as this conclusion was being realized that renewal of individual and Body life rooted in the indwelling presence of God's Spirit, a corresponding fear seemed to seize upon many in the traditional churches, who reasoned that to recognize the Holy Spirit (not just the inspired word) as the source of renewal, would arbitrarily lead to the conclusion that the church must become "charismatic" in the contemporary use of that term. Fearful of such a possible conclusion and its implications for their status with other churches in the brotherhood, there was evident stifling of the Spirit in the life of many congregations; a strong reactionary effort emerged to stifle healthy study of the

subject, and concerted voices threatened any who dared acknowledge too strong leanings on the spirit of God as the very source of spiritual birth and Christlike character.

### Affirmations on Renewal

Several New Testament references to renewal will hopefully stimulate further pursuit of this theme by those who yet feel their Christian experience is lacking, that they are inadequate to cope with any degree of effectiveness with today's stresses and demands; and that worship is so stifled and inflexible that it would be difficult to affirm with the apostle Paul that we "worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. 3:3) After his exhaustive treatment in Romans 1-11 of the themes of sin and salvation, and the Good News of God in Christ with all its multiple benefits, the apostle Paul continues in the latter part of the epistle with the moral and ethical implications of being Christian, living the truly holy or sanctified life. His appeal for full surrender and godly character rests upon the believer's experience of the "mercies of God;" followed by an urgent appeal that they not allow themselves to be fashioned by the present age — an ever present concern for the People of God — but to experience transformation by the renewal of their minds, which then gives validity to the Christian's spiritual discernment of what is the Will of God. (Rom. 12:2) This refashioning of the believer's life is achieved not by mere outward obedience to a religious code which gives him some ground to boast before men, but through the daily renewing (making new again) of the

inner self. "To put it in Pauline language," writes Barclay "Paul would say that left to ourselves we live a life *kata sarka*, dominated by the human nature at its lowest; in Christ we live a life *kata Christon* or *kata pneuma*, dominated by Christ or by the Spirit." (Romans, 170) The process of inner renewal sees the believer steadily growing into Christlikeness, for "we all ... are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit." (II Cor. 3:18. See also 4:16)

The renewal of the inner life, constantly in process through the ever creative working of His Spirit, is discussed in somewhat parallel passages by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians and Colossians. Employing the figure of clothing, the believer is portrayed as having put off the old nature which is "corrupt through deceitful lust," and through renewal in the spirit of his Mind, has "put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." (Eph. 4:23) In contrast to the futile thinking of the unregenerated man (v. 17), the Christian convert undergoes a radical reorientation of his mental outlook, so the NIV rendering, "to be made new in the attitude of your minds." As Skevington Wood suggests, "This can only take place under the influence of the Holy Spirit, acting on the human spirit (pneuma) as it affects the realm of thought." (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, II, 63)

Closely related to the Ephesian passage on renewal is Paul's affirmation (actually a strong exhortation) that since the believer in Christ has put off the old nature with its sordid and evil



practices, he must now be constantly "renewed in knowledge after the image of his Creator." (Col. 3:10) Curtis Vaughn concludes that "the essential thought is that the new self (new nature) does not decay or grow old but by constant renewal takes on more and more of the image of its Creator." (*Expositor's Bible Commentary*, II, 213) Being renewed (anakainoumenon) is a present tense, expressing continuous process of renewal. And being renewed "in knowledge" is both the goal and sphere of this renewal process, as the apostle prayed, asking that believers be "filled with the knowledge" of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, to lead a life worthy of the Lord." (Col. 1:9, 10)

### "Renewal in the Holy Spirit"

In his highly instructive and corrective personal letter to Titus who was ministering in Crete, the apostle Paul describes the unregenerate man in graphic language. He is self-willed and rebellious, lacking in moral discernment, a slave to passion and pleasure, full of malice and envy, both hating and hated — a dispicable person indeed. But to such persons came "the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior," who "saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in (of, by) the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon

us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior." (Titus 3:4, 5) Alive and dynamic churches are conscious of their source of life, their moment of cleansing, and their continued assurance of the Spirit's work to renew (make new) daily. Without attempting any definitive exegesis of such a comprehensive statement of salvation as that found in Titus 3:3-7, it seems evident that the apostle is affirming the initial experience of having been cleansed and renewed by the washing of regeneration (baptism) and the inherent work of God's Spirit in renewing the forgiven believer. But never does God begin a work without purposing to complete it according to His will (Phil. 2:12, 13); so with the ever-present Spirit of God indwelling the believer's life there is daily renewal (II Cor. 3:18; 4:16). We may affirm that the divinely intended purpose, two-fold in its nature, is a radical change in man's initial relationship with God known as "justification," and finding its fulfillment in daily renewal we "become heirs in hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:7)

With genuine spiritual renewal in the churches, there will be evident growth in Christian character, the "fruit of the Spirit" in life; worship will be a deeply spiritual experience, transforming the worshipper who will know that he has been in the presence of the living God; witness and work for the God who acts will characterize the People of God. For such renewal we gladly and gratefully sing, "To God be the glory, Great things He has done."

## The Answer to Futility

HOY LEDBETTER

"We are born crying, live complaining, and die disappointed." This dreary description of human existence, although quite old, correctly portrays many people today who lament the poor quality of their lives and who, if they really understood what ails them, might appeal to the church in the words of Bob Dylan: "I just can't make it by myself; I'm a little too blind to see. Shine your light on me."

But the church has its own problems. It is often too much in the dark itself to be able to give reliable guidance to others whose lives lack meaning. And when it has lost its ethical and spiritual bearings, it stands, alongside the pagan, in need of being remade through the ongoing process of renewal which the Lord has ordained.

This renewal is discussed in some detail in Ephesians 4, and the last paragraph of that chapter provides several clear indicators of the church's need for renewal, to wit:

when the members can excuse lying to each other and believe that the essential

unity of the body can be maintained by anything less than "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,"

when anger arises for the wrong reasons, or is excessive, or is prolonged and so prevents reconciliation;

when a dearth of true Christian stewardship allows the taking of what rightfully belongs to another (whether a fellow Christian or not) or condones the selfish use of the material goods one has properly acquired;

when speech, if not actually filthy, is merely talk which makes no contribution to the spiritual furtherance of others;

when personal relations are characterized by bitterness, lasting wrath, outbursts of fury, shouting, slander, or hateful feelings;

or when the saints misrepresent the Lord who saved them by being unkind, pitiless, or unforgiving.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit, who is our assurance of "authentic existence," is grieved by liars, angry Christians, thieves, and insulting speakers in the

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"Even though our physical being is gradually decaying, yet our spiritual being is renewed day after day."

II Cor. 4:16, *Good News Bible*



church. But how do we account for the presence of such blotches on the community of believers? And what can be done about them?

According to the author of Ephesians (see Eph. 4:17ff.), members of the church, notwithstanding their profession of faith, may be controlled by a pagan rather than a Christian outlook, and in his warning to the Ephesians against the Gentile way of thinking he accounts for a great deal that is wrong with our own generation. We are constantly meeting miserable people whose problem is precisely that of the ancient Gentiles, of whom Paul said, "They live in the futility of their minds." They are like the man who persists in watering a fence post with a leaky bucket (watering a fence post is a well-worn figure for futility, and the word itself comes from a root which means "leaky"); life as they try to live it is a completely useless exercise. They are like the backsliding Israelites who tasted the fruit of paganism: "they worshipped worthless idols and became worthless" (Jer. 2:5). And if God's chosen ones back then could go so far astray, those who make up his present community can claim no immunity to futility but may indeed live lives which for valid spiritual reasons fail to yield the desired outcome.

The absence of any real direction in living is underscored by another description of the Gentiles: "they are darkened in their understanding." And since light, knowledge of God, and fellowship with God are closely associated in the Bible (as are their opposites), a corresponding fact naturally follows: they are "alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them." The subjects of such declination are not merely sinners; they

are sinister sinners, for life on this level can lead to all sorts of atrocious behavior. Indeed, as Goethe put it, "There is nothing more frightening than ignorance in action."

But we must insist that the pitiful plight of these purposeless pagans is neither tolerable nor excusable. They are fully accountable for their ruined lives and for the lives they ruin. When God said to Hosea's generation, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge," he also gave the damning reason: "because you have rejected knowledge, I reject you . . ." (Hos. 4:6). These were not just unfortunate people who were unable to gain the necessary insights; they had been given all that was required but had *rejected* it.

Likewise, the Ephesian ignorance is to be attributed, not to lack of opportunity, but to personal callousness: it is "due to their hardness of heart." The heart covered with a huge callus, preventing it from being sensitive to touch, is a haunting picture of the distance between man and God. One of the winsome characteristics of our Lord is that he "can be touched." In contrast, all that can be said of those who live as benighted pagans is that they are merely "touchy," selfishly sensitive to their own inner impulses but incapable of constructive yielding to either God or man. This lost sympathy is spotlighted in a poignant verse by Philip James Bailey:

I cannot love as I have loved,  
And yet I know not why;  
It is the one great woe of life  
To feel all feeling die.

Those who know no prick of conscience or fear of judgment — who have

literally "given up feeling" — give themselves over to conduct which Paul designates as licentiousness, uncleanness, and greed — conduct which is so gross that it hardly seems appropriate to mention in a discussion of the *church's* need for renewal. But it is precisely the point of Ephesians 4 that the church is endangered by the futility of mind in which man does his own thing. Have we not all heard it asked of some wayward saint, "How could he do such a thing?" This is how.

When Christians lose their regard for accepted rules and standards, when they lack moral discipline or sexual restraint — that is to say, when they are licentious — they claim a freedom which is the very opposite of the freedom with which Christ makes us free. It is, conversely, a license which springs from futile thinking and results in every kind of uncleanness.

I regret that the fine old word "shamefastness" has fallen into disuse. This word appeared in the original King James Version at 1 Timothy 2:9, where it held on for about fifty years until the editons began to replace it with the inferior "shamefacedness." Although the American Standard Version brought it back, it is now generally gone from our vocabulary and from the dictionaries. Similar to the conventional "bedfast," "shamefast" indicates that one is held fast by a sense of shame. Incorrigible cynics may surmise that there is no such condition to describe today, but this is true only for those who have turned out the light. Surely the bride of Christ has not completely lost her ability to blush!

While Paul's second word, "uncleanness," is often associated with sexual sins, in this passage it seems to include a great deal more. It represents the mani-

fold physical, moral and ceremonial consequences of a useless, dark, ignorant, and callous attitude which rejects God's revelation to and purpose for man. The wicked works which the term connotes are carried out in an atmosphere of "greed."

Paul's indictment of those who are "greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness" reminds us of Catullus' warning that a woman cannot trust the oaths and unsparing promises of men, for the promises are forgotten and the oaths become perjuries "as soon as the lust of their greedy mind is satisfied" (*Odes*, LXIV). This lust of the greedy mind, however, characterizes encounters other than that of a man with a maid. F. Scott Fitzgerald spoke in *The Last Tycoon* of an ambitious Hollywood underling eyeing one of the Great Ones "with open economic lechery." But regardless of the specific object of one's greed, the futile mind manifests a selfishness which is always yearning but is never satisfied. The Christian who reverts to the pagan attitude may, like the chastized youngster who wondered why God had to have a swear word for a name, tries to shift the blame for his unhappiness outside himself, but there is only one answer to his folly: he must get back to basics.

If in our words and actions we do not communicate Him who called us, Paul has one thing to say to us: "You did not so learn Christ!--assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus." This unique statement, the only one in the New Testament which speaks of learning *a person* (although Mt. 11:29--"learn from me"--comes close), bears out Calvin's suggestion that Christ is a school, but he is also both the message



and the teacher. Not only do we learn about him, but we also *learn him*, for "truth is in Jesus." There is no way to know the truth except by knowing Jesus. Although false teaching is not far in the background, the main point is that the way to escape from the futility of the secular mind is by incorporation into Christ, which is more than a mere intellectual exercise.

This, then, is the answer to those individuals and churches whose quality of life leaves something to be desired. But how are we to bring about such renewal? In some cases we will not, and this fact must be faced. Some churches are lost causes, not unlike some of the seven churches of Asia. They are hogs who do not appreciate the message, dogs who will attack those who bring it. I mention this encouraging fact, not to suggest that ministers of renewal should relax their efforts, but to remind them that they need not blame themselves for failure, for they can do no more than lay upon those in their charge the requirements for renewal.

The first requirement is this: "put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts..." The Christian is under obligation to escape from that manner of life in which he has been cheated out of truth and its concomitants by the trickery of sin. It is a road to rottenness, a rottenness already being experienced via what Markus Barth calls "a realized eschatology of evil," and he must quit it.

The next directive is to "be renewed in the spirit of your minds;" but whereas "put off" in the previous verse and "put on" in the following one are in the aorist tense, denoting a decisive, once-for-all action, "be renewed" is in the present

tense, which indicates a continuous process of renewal as opposed to a single instance. This short imperative bears two important points. First, renewal involves a total change of the total man--repentance in its basic sense of a *change of mind* (turning from "futility of mind") which manifests itself in righteous action. Second, this process is something in which a person is engaged every hour of his entire life. The one for whom renewal is a past experience is simply out of touch with Jesus, the truth to be trusted and obeyed. Those who behold his glory are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another.

The final requirement is that we "put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." In one sense putting on Christ is a one time experience, in another it is an ongoing process. We did put on Christ, and yet we are always putting him on. As we put on him who is the image of God we partake of the divine nature--and character. Thus we live the life of God, from which those who are possessed by futile thinking and darkened understanding are alienated, and in which corrupting "deceitful lusts" are supplanted by "true righteousness and holiness." This is life with meaning, and it comes not from patching up what we already have, but by a complete renewal.

While it is true that the power for renewal does not lie within ourselves, but comes from him who can create all things, the individual's own responsibility is crucial. And one's success in meeting that responsibility is not all that hard to gauge, for even if we are a little hazy on how well we have "put off" and "put on," we can measure our renewal

by whether or not we have "put away" all practices which are inconsistent with our knowledge of Christ. This brings us to some specific questions regarding our motivation.

Does the recognition that we Christians are members one of another impel us to put away falsehood and to invariably speak the truth with each other? Does awareness of the devil's aggressiveness induce us to monitor our indignation to prevent our anger from leading us into sin or lasting beyond sunset? Has sharing our Lord's sensitivity to those who are in need motivated us to give up thievery and crafty business activity and to maintain an honest occupation for the specific purpose of being able to help the poor? Are our unruly tongues so consecrated to the Lord that we refrain from all good-for-nothing talk and build each other up with helpful and timely speech, making every word a vehicle of God's

grace? Does our appreciation of our spiritual credentials--the Holy Spirit within us as God's mark of ownership and guarantee of final liberation--make us determined not to grieve the Spirit by doing anything which would frustrate his creative work in us? Do we believe that we are saved solely because God in Christ forgave us, and is this conviction so strong that it compels us to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving toward one another, and enables us to be done with the social evils of bitterness, wrath, anger, shouting, slander, and hateful feelings of every kind?

These questions really tell us that we, as God's dear children, must try to be like him, and that our lives must be controlled by the same love with which Christ loved us. This is the road to which renewal leads, and our answers to the questions (for the substance of which we are indebted to Paul) will give us some indication of how far we have yet to go.

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## Renewal and Community: Some Observations on Acts 4:23-31

EDDIE L. DUNN

The surge of spiritual renewal throughout our land and throughout our churches has been the cause of both enthusiasm and concern. The reasons for the enthusiasm are obvious to those who have either experienced or been witness to the "renewal in the Holy Spirit." The concern, on the other hand, appears to focus on the kind of carnal,

ego-centric abuse Paul was addressing in the 12th, 13th, and 14th chapters of The First Corinthian Letter. Simply stated, these Spirit-filled believers had lost a sense of community, and renewal in Corinth was in grave danger of losing that which made it both divine and lasting: love.

Paul M. Miller has clearly stated what



we must all know inherently, but so easily forget in our "me-istic" age: "Man cannot develop his own essential nature and uniqueness unless he interacts with the essential nature of his brother man . . . In this live interplay lies the secret of man's search for fulfillment. Unless he can really give himself in honesty and transparent, open-faced sharing with his brother he cannot 'grow a soul' himself."<sup>1</sup> Community is, therefore, basic to renewal in God's scheme of things. To see this operating in the early church, and to discover some of the principles underlying the relationship between renewal and community, I suggest a brief look at the incident recorded by Luke in Acts 4:23-31. This "prayer meeting" which followed the miracle-induced arrest and threatening of Peter and John reveals, I believe, some interesting insights.

### Divinely Ordained Interdependence

"When they were released they went to their friends and reported what the chief priests and the elders had said to them" (v.23). Although separately performing their individual ministry in the healing of the lame man and the proclamation of the Good News at the temple, Peter and John were keenly aware — and gratefully so, I might add — of their membership in the body of believers. Just so Bonhoeffer observes: "We *are* members of a body, not only when we choose to be, but in our whole existence."<sup>2</sup> Peter and John found within the community of God's people the appropriate place to relate not only

1 Paul M. Miller, *Group Dynamics in Evangelism* (Scottsdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1958), pp. 19,20.

2 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954), p. 89.

threats received but also joys experienced. They were dependent on this fellowship and the fellowship was dependent on them. "We are members one of another" (Eph. 4:25), wrote Paul, and they would have agreed. If love for God is indeed impossible without a similar relationship with our brother, then we should not be surprised that God has placed true renewal within the context of community. Let us not forget this.

### The Response of Fellowship

"And when they heard it, they lifted their voices together to God" (v. 24a). Whatever the special efficacy of prayer "where two or three are gathered" in the name of Jesus to "agree on earth about anything they ask" (Mt. 18:19, 20), this group of early believers was about to experience it. Real spiritual transformation begins to occur when honest need is expressed and appropriate response is given within the framework of fellowship in the Spirit. Whether it is confession of sin followed by the expression or the assurance of forgiveness, "weeping with those who weep," or "rejoicing with those who rejoice," the touch of our Savior's hand is nowhere so strongly felt as in the experience of true Christian community. This, and not legal constraint, is why we are told: "Let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near" (Heb. 10:24, 25).

### Exalting God as Sovereign

"Sovereign Lord, who didst make the heaven and the earth, and the sea and

everything in them . . ." (v. 24b). As stated earlier, we have reason to beware of the pervasive influence of our highly self-oriented society. Gifts of the Holy Spirit, experiences of intense spiritual enlightenment or commitment, and occasions of being used by the Lord can be so misunderstood and misused as to foster a false sense of greatness. This is what Paul refers to as a man's thinking of himself "more highly than he ought to think" (Rom. 12:3). This misguided individualism has a powerful corrective in the experience of Christian community, where there is the interdependence spoken of earlier and where God is constantly proclaimed as "Sovereign." In such a context it is natural to ask: "Who then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, *as the Lord assigned to each*. I planted, Apollos watered, but *God* gave the growth" (I Cor. 3:5, 6).

### Focus and Stability Through the Word

"Sovereign Lord, . . . who by the mouth of our father David, thy servant, didst say by the Holy Spirit, 'Why did the Gentiles . . .'" (vv. 25, 26). The Word of God properly defines our individual experience. Peter and John and their fellow believers were, by citing Scripture in their prayer, placing their experience in the context of God's will and purpose. To do this is to see everything and everybody - including oneself - in the correct light. This is true whether referring to threats, victories, insights, gifts, or anything else. Certainly this can be done in prayerful, individual study of the Word. However, it appears inevitable that each of us will need the

help of the community of believers to allow that Word which "pierces to the division of soul and spirit" to do its complete work in giving divine stability and proper focus to our lives with Him. Thus, again, true renewal in the Spirit and community are inseparable.

### Seeing Renewal as Outreach

"Grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness, while thou stretchest out thy hand to heal, and signs and wonders are performed through the name of thy holy servant Jesus" (vv. 29, 30). When their prayer came to the point of petition the emphasis was clear: they wanted to be followers of Him who "went about doing good." A Christian alone and inactive is an anomaly. When Jesus sent out His disciples He said, "Freely you have received, freely give," and if He has spiritually renewed *you* His message is the same. It is impossible to be a loving, sensitive member of a fellowship of believers without seeing the purpose for what He has given you. The call is to listen, to lift, to labor for, and to love, "especially those who are of the household of faith," but also "*all men*" (Gal. 6:10). Unfortunately there are some fellowships which have, to use David Wilkerson's expression, developed into "bless-me clubs," but these are tragic distortions of the church of the Suffering Servant.

"*the place was shaken . . . they were all filled*" (v. 31). Remember, this was the place "in which they were *gathered together*," and they were filled "*with the Holy Spirit*." Renewal and community - yes, quite inseparable!



*THE TALE OF ONE DELIVERED*

Mark 5:1-20

No chains so strong as those which bind within;  
The broken body-bonds I hauled about  
But mocked the fetters clinging to my soul.  
Content were men to leave me there  
Among the tombs  
To be companion to the dead.  
So great their dread of me  
That they saw only flesh and blood run wild.  
The pit within was too much like  
The shadow following each of them.  
Then came One who spoke beyond  
The naked, bleeding flesh  
And challenged Legion in their den;  
He called me out of living death  
And cast the captors into captive swine.  
Their finely woven bonds  
Were slashed in pieces by  
The sharpness of His love.  
Now among the living I have come  
To tell how much the Lord has done for me.  
How strange: they see in my deliverance  
Not freedom from the tomb,  
But the doom of swine swallowed in the sea.

Elton D. Higgs

Editorial continued:

which has been touched with the redemptive love of God in Christ, in "The Answer to Futility." Eddie Dunn sees the creative working of God in Christ as the church, the community of believers fashioned together in a

common experience of forgiveness, and sustained by the indwelling presence of His Spirit.

We hope to have a more definitive statement about the future of *Integrity* magazine in the next issue.

Joseph F. Jones

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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(Editorial Comment: Circumstances do not always permit the publication of reader responses when they would be most timely. However, whether for lack

of space in a given issue or due to delayed reader reaction, there are letters we believe you would still like to read, including those which follow.)

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Dear Editor:

Brother Wayne Weise's comment (July-August, '79) regarding my truck driver illustration is an excellent example of the "unmitigated sophistry" and "confusing of the issues" to which I had reference in my article. The point was not whether or not the driver would have considered transporting his cargo in a horse-drawn wagon. The point was that when he found himself thirty miles off course and headed in the wrong direction he didn't think that he needed specific authority from his company to put himself back on course, but had enough plain, common, ordinary, horse-sense to know that it was the only reasonable thing to do. So had the Restoration fathers. Would that those who are quibbling about "no authority for restoration" had as much!

Don Reece  
Radford, Virginia

Dear Editor:

I was saddened by Don Haymes' evaluation of Ira North's invitation to the "antis" in a recent *Gospel Advocate*

editorial to come back home. I found Haymes' "The Signs of the Times" (Sept., '79) tasteless and lacking in any positive purpose, an example of which was the hypothetical Purgatory illustration where he might cast his lot with the "antis" if a choice had to be made.

To suggest that North has misread the mechanics of the non-institutional schism is to sell him far short of any viable insight into brotherhood dissonances. And to accuse North of not being aware of the severity of the dichotomy which has developed among two parties of the Restoration is to ignore the reason behind the invitation in the first place. Furthermore, calling brothers Thomas and Lemmons "politicians" only confirms my belief in the uselessness of Haymes' judgemental diatribes.

Having grown up in the "anti" fellowship, and later making a transition to the cooperative position, I can observe this separation of ideologies from both sides of the polemic platform. In defense of my "anti" and "institutional" brethren I register a personal resentment to the Haymes' charge that "few members of