

Integrity

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I enjoy *Integrity* very, very much. . . Almost every article addresses one of my special needs. . . A number of very important events have occurred in my life during the last four years which have enabled me to enjoy the greatest freedom in Christ that I have ever experienced.

I give thanks to God, first of all. He led me to John L. Edwards through his book, *An In-Depth Study of Marriage and Divorce*; Olan Hicks on the same subject as well as the subject of unity of believers in Christ; Darrell Foltz on the subject of marriage, divorce and remarriage as well as women's role in the church and other liberating truths; and finally Cecil Hook with his *Free in Christ*, and other "Free In" publications and articles; and through him I met Leroy Garrett and you folks. Through Leroy Garrett I met by mail wonderful brother Norman Parks and have his publications *Woman's Place in Church Activity* and *It Shall Not be So Among You*. . . I am thankful to you for your publication and others whose aim it is to present liberating Bible truths.

As an artist, I thoroughly enjoyed your Sept./Oct. Issue. I am delighted to hear such

thoughts as you expressed in your editorial, "Christian Imagination." . . I do have to say that I was very impressed with Amos Ponder's "Variations in Integrity" and I found "Fruit in His Season" by Laurie L. Hibbett to be priceless.

Frankie Shanks
Poplar Bluff, Missouri

It's my pleasure to send a fall contribution to *Integrity*. I look forward to each issue and I especially enjoyed the July/August '89 copy. The tributes to Carl Ketcherside were excellent. I never met Brother Ketcherside personally, but I have read much of his writings and I've heard a great deal about him to the degree that he had a great impact on my theological thinking over the past several years. I have been very much influenced by this man. I'll miss his articles, but it's comforting to know a brother is glorified!

I also hope you get more articles from Laurie Hibbett. "Fruit in His Season" was terrific.

Bob Zerphey
Arnold, Maryland

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Readers' Response

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Resolutions

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In spite of a discouraging Sunday newspaper article declaring that all New Year's resolutions are broken by the third week in January, I am still determined to make some. Periodically, I like to re-evaluate the activities that have seeped into my life, anyway, and a brand new decade is a good enough reason for me to make some effort at a fresh start. Lately, the one main issue that keeps appearing to me in bold letters from Bible pages during study is that *Jesus*, not godly activities, must remain the center of my life. It is a simple fact that it is easier for me to keep busy *doing* than to stop, and sit, and spend time with the only One who can keep me from getting off-center.

So, this year I resolve to take more time for the friendship with Jesus and his Father that they offer me: “. . .and we will come. . .and make our home with (you)” (John 14:23). I intend to make an effort to keep Christ in focus. I resolve to learn in this decade what it means for me to wake up in the morning and “clothe (myself) with the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 13:14). I renew my resolve to become more sensitive and obedient to the direction of the Holy Spirit in me, so that He will “become greater” and I will “become less.” (John 3:30). I resolve to seek after a mind like Christ's; the result will not be a loss of my own identity but the discovery of my own true identity — a personality liberated from the struggle of dark illusions by a Light that gloriously exposes the creation of God. Good works naturally follow fellowship with God, but first things first.

The articles in this issue suggest several concepts that can veer our minds off Christ. Craig Watts challenges our concept of true success. Don Crawford teaches that romanticizing the past can hinder us from boldly facing the future with Christ. Curtis McClane pleads for a re-evaluation of our Church's right to exist. Ken Hensley presents the Thessalonian church as an example of people focused on Jesus. John Loftus discusses our salvation in Christ. Henrietta Palmer reviews Max Lucado's book *No Wonder They Call Him the Savior*. And *Intercepted Correspondence* reveals the two devils constantly trying to knock Christians off-center. Bruce and I hope that the Lord is able to use something in this issue to encourage you right where you need it. To God be the glory!

Diane G. H. Kilmer

What Kind of Success?

CRAIG M. WATTS

Both failure and success have their perils as well as their possibilities. Success is not an altogether positive experience, nor is failure always an unambiguously negative one. Recently I came across the aphorism, “Failure is the backdoor to success.” And so it is for those who can learn from their losses and defeats in order to be better prepared to overcome disadvantages and obstacles in the future. Failure can sharpen our vision of life and it can help us develop new strengths.

At the same time we need to recognize that success can be the backdoor to failure. This is an idea that is generally suppressed in our culture. We tend to assume that success is always desirable. In fact if a person is not particularly interested in being a big success in his or her chosen field we frequently suspect that the person is somehow second rate or — God forbid — unambitious. The definition of success which we readily take for granted is one which uses the acquisitions of money, reputation and authority as the most appropriate means of measurement. After all, what value is success if it is not tangible and visible, clearly marking our superiority over others?

Success can be a trap that ensnares us in self-concern. In order to maintain the status of a “successful person” it is necessary to keep performing in such a way as to continue impressing others. It is anxiety provoking to constantly seek to live up to the social standards and expectations which success requires. Dag Hammarskjöld, past UN Secretary General, wrote, “Thanks to your ‘success’, you now have something to lose. Because of this — as if suddenly aware of the risks — you ask whether you, or anyone, can succeed” (Markings, p. 109). By putting all our energy into the quest

for worldly success, we can lose our way in life and forget those things that are of fundamental importance. (See Mark 8:34-37) In this way, success becomes the backdoor to failure.

As we look to the biblical tradition, we are confronted with a notion of success that is utterly contrary to the way we normally think. Those who are successful according to divine standards are not necessarily the men and women who have achieved materially or have advanced up the social ladder. Rather, being faithful to God's expressed will, even if such faithfulness leads to material loss and public disgrace, is true success. Some of the greatest successes in the Bible looked at times like pathetic failures. Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea, John the Baptist, Stephen and a host of others who were great in faith simply fall short of our image of “winners.” Christians would do well to remember that the primary symbol of our faith is not a shining trophy but a cross — an instrument of execution and a sign of humiliation.

We need to keep this in mind as we endeavor to be a successful church. True success is not marked by the respectable place we hold in the community, not by an abundance of programs and the bustle of activity, nor by crowded pews and a large, well-financed budget. For the church, true success can be found only insofar as we work together to be faithful to the Word of God, regardless of the consequences. Apart from this, everything else we do is of little worth. When our activities and priorities reflect the loving, servant life of Jesus Christ, then, and only then will we be successful.

Craig M. Watts is minister to the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Louisville, Kentucky.

Things Were So Much Easier

DON CRAWFORD

Have you heard the recent country pop song with the words “Life was so much easier twenty years ago?” It is not the grandest music ever written. But several times I have found myself driving along unconsciously beating my thumb on the steering wheel in rhythm to the song, only to realize that the lyrics really bother me. This romantic nostalgia about the past which so afflicted the 18th century seems ever to be with us. Not that I don’t like the past. I love history, old buildings, antique cars and knick-knacks, and, most of all, thinkers and scholars of the past. In much of our thinking about life in general and the Christian faith in particular, we have regressed quite a bit in the last two and a half centuries.

But was it really better to be alive in the past, even just twenty years ago? If you want to live in a vital farming community, yes! If you are having a heart attack and are waiting for the emergency team to arrive, no! If you have to pay for education at a private college, yes! If you value equal educational opportunities for minorities, no! If you want uncrowded freeways, yes! If your child has had a serious head injury, no! If you live in Afghanistan, yes! If you live in China, no! If you . . . well, you get the point.

Do you know what they were singing on the radio twenty years ago? “Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away. Now it seems as if they’re here to stay. Oh, I believe in yesterday.” Yeh, twenty years ago they were singing about “twenty years ago!” Kind of sad, huh?

Romanticizing the past, which is different than respecting and learning from it, can lead to at least two problems (these apply equally well to romanticizing the future, à la Carl Sagan). First, it can cause us to delude ourselves into believing that difficulties in life are only

a temporary phenomenon and to dream of less troubled times, rather than facing today’s difficulties, knowing that difficulty is part of the warp and woof of a fallen world.

Second, in our search for stability in an unstable world, this romanticization of the past can cause us not to go back far enough to find our roots. We can dream of a fictional account of a recent past (the strengths of which have been glamorized and the weaknesses of which have been forgotten), which only serves to cause us to bemoan our present world, rather than going all the way back to the time by which our calendars are measured. For it is to that time when the One who created this world entered into it in order to reform both it and us that we must look to find our roots.

There, in Him, we find who we are, what we are worth, and the purpose and meaning of our existence. There, too, we find the foundations of our culture’s approach to history, human rights, law, science, and democratic processes. It is not by accident that our calendars are dated from His advent into this world. It is from our memory of that time, renewed day by day, that we draw the strength not only to face our world with its difficulties, but to change and reform it. If we must think of the past, let’s think of that time, not because of how wonderful the time was, but because of what He then accomplished for us. These particular memories, more than anything else, will provide for us a sense of our roots and will send us into the present with the courage and power to change it.

Don Crawford is host of *Christian Encounter Talk Show*, heard in over 70 countries on the Armed Forces Network Radio. He, his wife Gloria, and their children make their home in Austin, Texas.

Our Right To Exist — My Plea

CURTIS D. McCLANE

What do the Churches of Christ stand for? Does our Restoration heritage give us, the churches of Christ, our identity and our purpose for existing as a separate religious group? During the last thirty years a number of responsible works have been published exploring our past history and focusing on those themes that were vital during Stone-Campbell’s “Reformation Movement.” Yet, to say today that the Church of Christ stands for what the Bible teaches and that the Restoration Movement seeks to restore the New Testament Church is ambiguous. Leonard Allen and Richard Hughes have documented that we are not the only religious group to make claims of “restoration.” In *Discovering Our Roots: The Ancestry of Churches of Christ* (reviewed in *July-August 1988 Integrity*), they trace our historical roots and document the forces that shaped our movement. The initial spirit of inquiry that pervaded the thinking of Stone and Campbell seems no longer predominate in our teaching and preaching. Instead, since the turn of the century a discernable pattern of crystallization has emerged, thus stifling a clear understanding of our own self-identity.

I respect our roots and heritage, but do not worship it. When we worship our past and become self-satisfied, God can no longer use us. Each individual’s relationship to God is based on that person’s trust in Jesus. The same is true for the church. The church’s existence is based upon the fact that she recognizes Jesus as Savior and Lord, not upon any religious heritage. The important thing to remember is what God has done, and not what we have done. We cannot allow the “Restoration Movement” to become an idol in our hearts that displaces the Sovereign reign of our God.

Some Church of Christ members believe that our right to exist as a religious group is based upon our assumption that “the path we are

traveling is more nearly correct than that of any other religious group known to us.* This statement is as sectarian as any I have ever read regarding the church. Our existence as a religious group does not depend upon our self-assertions of correctness. Neither our religious heritage nor biblical revelation will sustain such an arrogant posture. The apostle Paul spoke of the fallacy of measuring ourselves with others (2 Corinthians 10:12). The path we travel should be in the steps of Jesus.

When Jesus assembled his “religious group” (12 disciples) he did not train them to proclaim their superiority over other existing religious groups such as the Pharisees, Saducees, Samaritans, Essenes, etc. One day, very disturbed by what he saw, John told Jesus, “Teacher, we saw a man driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.” With gentle admonition Jesus told him, “Do not stop him. No one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, for whoever is not against us is for us. I tell you the truth, anyone who gives you a cup of cold water in my name because you belong to Christ will certainly not lose his reward” (Mark 9:38-41).

Our right to exist as a group is based upon a sound historical and biblical foundation. Jesus called his disciples to a renewal (restoration) of the heart. On that basis we call for a restoration of the heart in every person to Jesus Christ. We call for Christian freedom and liberty. We call for the priesthood of all believers.

The Plea

So, what is my plea? It begins with an affirmation: I love the church. As a father who expressed love to his daughters just after he has administered stern discipline, I am making

every effort to convey my genuine love for the church. And by "the church" I am not referring to some abstract idea. "The church" is the people I preach to every Sunday. "The church" is hurting individuals who seek counsel and guidance. "The church" is the hands I shake and the arms I embrace at the assembly. "The church" is real and she is alive! I love the church!

I also plead for preaching and teaching that emphasizes "Restoration of the Heart" instead of the "Restoration Movement." Renewal is at the heart of biblical conversion.

Furthermore, I plead for us to be aware of presuppositions that have been handed down to us regarding the nature of the church. The church is a living organism, she is the body of Christ. God disciplines and challenges her. She is not an institutional organization.

And finally, I plead for the dissolution of an arrogant attitude regarding our standing before

God. As we sound out the call of the gospel of grace we cannot judge the hearts of those who respond. "The Lord knows those who are his" (2 Timothy 2:19). It is not our place to condemn others. Neither do we have a right to chase away our own preachers and teachers if honest Bible study leads them to non-traditional views. As our brother Paul wrote: "Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand" (Romans 14:4).

*Norton, Howard W., *Christian Chronicle*: "Editorial: A Plea to Critics of the Church" April 19, 1989.

Curtis D. McClane received his Masters of Divinity from Harding Graduate School of Religion. Having been in full-time ministry for 13 years, Curtis presently serves the Holmes Road Church of Christ in Lansing, Michigan.

The Thessalonica Church

KEN HENSLEY

I remember the Saturday we spent at the church, loosening bolts, twisting metal, and finally packing twenty pews away in storage. It was a decision which can quickly leak the air out of even the toughest church balloon. Gone was the pew where Jimmy, Dan, Curt, and all the other guys sat and talked about girls (and I don't mean Esther and Ruth either!). Then again, gone were Jimmy and Dan. A few of us hauled away the pew where the Crabtree family customarily would sit at every service. Sadly, the Crabtree family was gone too. The carpet in the back of the auditorium bore the depression marks left from the heavy pews over many years. And yet our hearts bore even heavier depression marks, scars, for years to

come. Though the brick and mortar were as strong and steadfast as ever, it was not time to rebuild.

As you may have guessed, I didn't grow up in the church at Thessalonica. No, it was Illinois. We did many mighty things as we let God work in us and through us, yet we struggled as well. The more I become acquainted with churches scattered throughout the Restoration Movement, the more I become convinced that we need less defenders, contenders, champions, and need more Thessalonians. It may do us well to pay a visit to our Thessalonian brothers and sisters.

The church in Thessalonica was planted by the apostle Paul, and it was not without its in-

itial struggles either. After reasoning with the Jews on their home court (the synagogue) for three days, he finally persuaded some of the Jews and a large number of Greeks (Acts 17:2-4). It is sometimes harder to reason with those who claim to be religious than with those to make no claims. Those Jews who weren't persuaded were belligerent: "They rounded up some bad characters" (17:5) and went after Paul, but the Lord found a way of escape for his servant (17:10).

This was the beginning of the church in Thessalonica. Following such a rocky start as this, one would not expect the church to last, much less prosper in such a climate of hostility. However, it not only prospered, the church multiplied all over the world. The church in Thessalonica is a worthy role model for the churches we serve in, pray for, lead, and love. In these times of seemingly endless tensions and divisions, we especially need to study and reproduce a Thessalonian attitude.

Reproducing this Thessalonian attitude begins with revising our own congregational work ethic, in current religious jargon - commitment. In the opening comments to his first Thessalonian letter Paul praises and emphasizes the service of this church:

"We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 1:3)

Commitment is a word which is likely to raise a few eyebrows in a few church circles. Abused and neglected, often confused with a legalistic approach to Scripture, commitment has been tossed around more in theory than in practice. What is commitment and what should we be committed to? Those who call for a false commitment are just as wrong as those who call for no commitment at all. It is not our place to discuss and debate semantics concerning commitment. What we are to do and be about, as disciples of Jesus, is to find our places in the work ethic described in the Word.

There are three key phrases that Paul used in his description of the Thessalonian church: "your work produced by faith," "your labor prompted by love," and "your endurance in-

spired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." In these three phrases we can find insight into why the Thessalonian church "became a model to all the believers" (1 Thess 1:7) and how we might do the same.

Work Produced By Faith

What is the purpose of the church as we know it? Do we exist simply to amass a string of impressive ministries, from a food pantry to AIDS counseling? Is that why we exist? Yes- and no. Ministries are eternally important and valuable. However, why we minister and serve is of the greatest importance. Paul says that our "work is produced by faith." It is because we believe in all that God through Jesus has done for us that we serve, we work, we are committed. The Christian's work ethic evolves from a bond of relationship with the Father. We work because of our faith; our faith isn't produced by our works. To immerse oneself totally into serving others without the foundation of faith is foolish, because that person will only feel shallow, void of true purpose. Yet we see churches who are still riding waves rolling in from the wading pool, afraid to adventure out into the deep wells of faith and swim. At the heart of Christian commitment must be faith in God, Jesus, and the Spirit.

One Sunday morning, a few weeks ago, I had the opportunity to listen to an elderly preacher. The lesson began well and I hoped for great things to come. Unfortunately, as the lesson developed, it became apparent that what we were listening to was the bitterness of a hardened heart. Words were chosen carefully with every intention of causing hurt and pain. The ranting and raving brought sweat to his brow, though unlike the sweat my Savior shed in the garden. Understanding that we cannot ultimately judge motives, we can witness the results from such an onslaught: hostility, doubt, anger, and alienation.

Labor Promoted by Love

Looking back to this particular sermon, I wondered if this elderly preacher's Bible includes the first few verses of Paul's initial letter to the Thessalonians. Has he highlighted Paul's words on how "our labor is prompted

by love?" One critical point which is often at the heart of every crisis within the church of God is a lack of love, a lack of love for one another, and lack of love for God and his Son. Until we learn to love with some of the same capacity and liberty which God did, we will only stagnate in bitterness. Our work is produced by faith and our labor is *prompted* by love. For the apostle Paul this was a vital concept in following Jesus' style: "If I don't have love, I have nothing" (1 Cor 13:1-3); "If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other" (Gal. 5:15), and "the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (Gal. 5:6b). What we do, how we do it, and why we do it are all outgrowths of our love.

Hope is Jesus Christ

One of my favorite themes is "hope in Jesus Christ." Why? Because we live in a world without hope, a society which seems to glory and bask in its hopelessness. The high number of teenage suicides is evidence of a lack of hope among many of today's kids. Abortion is a vivid reminder that our society doesn't place much hope in the future. Divorce rates have been so high for so long that it is increasingly more difficult to instill hope in young couples. Watching buildings crumble at the mercy of earthquakes, seeing homes scattered by the brunt of hurricanes, it doesn't take much to question faith in this world. And that's why I like to hope in Jesus Christ. Jesus is always the same! In the midst of any change He remains the same.

It is comforting to know that my savior is consistent, and even more comforting to know we have a friend at our side through all storms of life.

Sermons will continue to drag on for what will seem like an eternity. The song leader will from time to time blow the wrong pitch. Some well-meaning brother may even call into question your integrity for using a certain version. Don't let that bog your progress down, endure. Remember that your endurance isn't based upon a Sunday School roll with perfect attendance or tied up in attending zone meetings. Sharing in the Lord's Supper is not why we come to church every Sunday. No, "your endurance is inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." Because we have hope that he will reward those who live a life of service, we serve. Because we have hope in the fact that Jesus is coming back to take us home with him, we endure, we serve, we actively wait.

I still return home to the congregation my family still attends, to the missing pews. I know that for every missing pew and boxed up songbook, there is one missing person for whom Jesus died. And that troubles me. It troubles me because I now know, without a doubt, that it also troubles my God. May we all see to work out of faith, to labor from a burden of love, and to endure this life by being inspired by the life that is to come. Wouldn't you like to go to church in Thessalonica?

Ken Hensley is a student at Freed-Hardeman College in Henderson, Tennessee.

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We Can Fall From Grace According to James

JOHN W. LOFTUS

The two verses of James 5:19-20 present serious problems to Christians who would argue that they cannot lose their salvation. I won't say that these two verses are irrefutable, nor will I claim that they alone will convince a Christian who believes in eternal security. But these two verses cry out for an acceptable theology that can explain them, and it is my contention that the doctrine of "once saved always saved" cannot adequately do so.

We must all candidly admit that whenever we handle the Scriptures we try to organize them into a consistent theology. We attempt to do this because of our belief that they originated from the voice of One Author — God (II Peter 1:21). Sometimes this is really difficult, as theologians will readily admit. Every theology has its problem passages in the Bible, and every theologian must sometimes reinterpret those passages, as best as he or she honestly can, to see if they can fit in their theology. Sometimes words used in a particular pericope are looked at in their secondary senses for this very reason.

None of this should surprise anyone who is a student of the Word of God. This is the task of systematic theology, and its purpose is not to evade God's Word, but to understand it more fully. Yet, because this task appears to be so difficult, there are many theologians who have abandoned systematic theology entirely. They no longer talk in terms of a Christian theology so much as a Pauline theology, a Petrine theology, a Johannine theology and so on. I think they have done so prematurely.

The last two verses in James are a problem, or at least an anomaly, to the Christian who believes in the doctrine of eternal security. James wrote as follows: "My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins." (5:19-20, NIV)

Donald W. Burdick, writing the notes in the *NIV Study Bible*, stated the case for eternal security very succinctly when he wrote that in these verses, "the wanderer is either a professing Christian, whose faith is not genuine, or a sinning Christian, who needs to be restored." Of course, if he's right, then in either case there is no loss of one's salvation. In his commentary on these verses, Burdick sides with the view that James is writing about a "hypothetical wanderer" who is not a genuine believer.**

The reason why Burdick takes this position is not because of the text itself. He wrote: "Since Scripture teaches that once a person is regenerated he can never be lost, it may be assumed that this hypothetical wanderer is not a genuine believer." It is my contention that such an assumption does not adequately deal with the text he has been called upon to exegete. Neither do I think other Scriptural texts support that assumption. Bible verses speaking of our security in Christ (John 10:27, Romans 8:35-39) do not have to do with our *preservation* in Christ contrary to our wills, but rather our *protection* in Christ from outside forces bent on tearing us away from the fold. Contrary to Burdick, there is a third, more plausible option.

There are six extremely strong exegetical arguments against Burdick's interpretation. In the first place, the word for "brother," *adelphos*, in its various cognate forms is used by James twenty-one times in five short chapters. In every case without exception, it refers to fellow genuine believers in Jesus. He speaks to "my brothers" (1:2; 2:14; 3:1, 10, 12), "my dear brothers" (1:16; 2:5), and speaks to them as "believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ" (2:1). Because of this James expects his brothers have a good reason to be patient until the Lord's coming (5:7). He warns these brothers about the stricter judgment in becoming teachers (3:1), against riches (1:9-10), against faith without obedience

(2:14-15), of the evils of the tongue (3:10-12; 4:11), as well as grumbling, and the need for patience (5:9-12). But these warnings all presuppose that his brothers are Christians, and he is merely calling them to holy living. The question is why Burdick thinks that somehow in the last two verses, James now means something other than genuine believers in Christ. The burden of proof is Burdick's.

In the second place, there is the problem of the conditional sentence beginning with, "if one of you should wander from the truth. . ." In Greek there are four ways such a conditional sentence could be written. It could be written as a *first class* conditional statement of fact: "if one of you should wander from the truth, and you will . . ." It could be written as a *second class* statement contrary to fact: "if one of you should wander from the truth, and you won't . . ." It could be written as a *third class* statement of the probable future: "if one of you should wander from the truth, and it's a real possibility. . ." Finally, it could also be written as a *fourth class* statement of the possible future: "if one of you should wander from the truth, and it's possible but not very likely. . ." The fact is that James wrote this sentence as a *third class* conditional statement in the subjunctive mood with the *ean* (particle, if) in the protasis (conditional clause), thus signifying in plain Greek that James thought that falling away was a real possibility.

In the third place, the word for "wander" used three times in these two verses, is from "*planao*," which means to deceive or to lead astray. The tense of this word used the first time is the aorist one which denotes a completed action, with a passive voice — to be in a state of passive deception. It's one thing to be in a process of being deceived, but it is quite another to be in a state of deception, and James says that these former Christians are in such a state. We find this word used in Matthew 18:12-14, where Jesus likened a sheep which had wandered (*planao*) off from the fold and then been found, to those that the Father does not wish to be "lost" or perish, *apolatai*. In II Peter 2:15, the wanderer (*planao*) is someone who follows false teachers in the way of Balaam, who are "an accursed brood!" Satan himself

seeks to "deceive" (*planao*) the whole world (Revelation 12:9; 13:14; 19:20; 20:3,8,10). There can be little question this refers to falling from grace.

In the fourth place, James used the word *epistrepho* to describe the turning around process. It is used twice in these verses, and it is the New Testament word for conversion. When it is used in connection with a person's salvation, it refers to conversion from a state of lostness to a state of being saved. To "turn" (*epistrepho*) is to be forgiven (Mark 4:12), to have your sins "wiped out" (Acts: 3:19), to "believe" (Acts 11:21), to move "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God," so that people might receive "forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith" in Christ (Acts 26:17-18). There is little doubt that the one who fell away now needs to be converted to Christ.

In the fifth place, James offers a maxim of encouragement to those who are working with fallen brothers. That maxim speaks of the real possibility of a genuine believer who falls into a state of lostness to find salvation. James wants to give his brothers encouragement concerning such a fallen brother, so he offers a maxim that applies to such a situation as this: "Whoever turns (*epistrepho*) a sinner from the error (*planao*) of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins." The "sinner" in this maxim, according to the context of these verses, is the former brother in Christ. Such a brother needs to be converted in order to be saved and forgiven, something James hopes will be done.

In the sixth place, in the maxim itself, James uses the word "sinner" (*hamartolos*) to apply to the former brother in Christ. From a study of this word, it becomes very clear that when "sinner" is used in this substantive form, it is almost without exception used of someone that the speaker thinks is outside God's grace. This is very different than saying someone has merely committed a sin (*hamartia*; Cf. James 1:15; 2:9; 4:17, & 5:15). The "sinner" (*hamartolos*) needs repentance (Luke 15:7, 10), mercy (Luke 18:13), stands condemned (Romans 5:8), and is likened to the ungodly (Jude 15).

It is true that some people are called "sin-

ners" who are actually not estranged from God's grace, but that is only a matter of the speakers perspective. It was common usage for the word "sinners" to apply to those outcasts deemed by the religious leaders of Jesus' day to be outside God's grace — whether they actually were is another matter. That's why it is said by those leaders that Jesus ate with tax-collectors and "sinners" (Matthew 9:10-13; 11:19), and the Gentiles were labeled as "sinners" (Galatians 2:15), and even Jesus himself is labeled "a sinner" by these leaders (John 9:24). In prayers of repentance a "sinner" claims to be far from God's grace (Luke 5:8; 18:13), or entirely undeserving of God's grace (I Timothy 1:15 — Paul here adds novelty to the word by stressing that he stands continually in need of God's grace). But none of this undercuts the fact that when this word was used, it meant that the person using the word was describing someone who was not saved so long as he remained in that state.

Taken together in its context and as a whole, James 5:19-20 provides a serious exegetical obstacle to the once saved always saved doctrine. Burdick's two options are out of the question. James is not talking about a professing Christian whose faith is not genuine — he's talking to fellow believing brothers. Nor is James

talking about a sinning Christian who is merely in a dangerous spiritual condition — he's talking about a former brother who stands in a state of deception, who needs to be converted from his lost condition in order to be saved from death and cover a multitude of sins. Hence the death he is saved from is spiritual death, as Burdick admits in his commentary.

A third exegetical option fits the text much better: James is talking of a believing brother who passively falls away, or neglects his salvation and drifts away (Hebrews 2:1-3) who is in need of conversion and salvation. It is the person who willfully apostasizes and rejects Christ having once known him, who cannot be brought back to salvation (cf. Hebrews 6:4-8). Otherwise, we are kept in God's protective care through faith (I Peter 1:5). So long as we believe, we have assurance of our complete salvation in Christ.

*In *The Expositors Bible Commentary* ed. Frank Gaebel (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981) p. 205.

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Book Review

No Wonder They Call Him The Savior
Max Lucado, Multnomah Press, 1986.
164 pages.

Reviewed by: HENRIETTA C. PALMER

How would you respond to a disenchanted Christian who turned to you and said, "I just want to know what counts. I grew up in the church. I wanted to go into the ministry. I took all the courses, the theology, the languages, the

exegesis. But I quit. Something just didn't click." He summed up his frustration with this appeal: "What *really* matters? What counts? Tell me. Skip the periphery. Go to the essence. Tell me the part that matters."

Max Lucado shares the answer to "What *really* matters?" many years after he was first asked the question. At the time, he found that all the verses he had so obediently memorized seemed inappropriate. All of his canned responses seemed timid. He later discovered the

answer in Paul's words in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 15:3-4: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures. That he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve." (RSV)

Max Lucado says his answer now would be: "The part that matters is the cross. No more and no less." The purpose of this book is to help the reader to take a good look at the cross and to really know it. He compares being religious without knowing the cross to owning a Mercedes without a motor — a pretty package but no power!

Part I, The Cross: Its Words, focuses on the final words from the cross and describes the loving, obedient Savior who gave his life for our sins. As the chapters unfold, Christ on the cross becomes very human to the reader as the Savior experiences rejection, pain, thirst and loneliness. But his divine nature is manifest when he endures the cross and is victorious over death.

Part II, The Cross: Its Witnesses, portrays two types of people who were touched by the cross. Some were touched by choice and others by chance. We read of the ten disciples who ran when Jesus was arrested and crucified, and how they appeared one by one, at the same upper room. Although they fled because of fear, they came back — and they saw Jesus again!

Lucado also pictures John, the faithful friend and disciple who stayed by Jesus at the cross. **Part III, The Cross: Its Wisdom**, describes the forgiveness found in the open arms nailed to the cross. One arm of the Savior was extending back into history, the other arm was reaching into the future. An embrace of forgiveness for all who will come.

Max Lucado is an artist with words. His insights are creative and thought provoking. His descriptions of the blue-collared Jew who became our Savior are fresh and powerful. Lucado has included personal and very touching stories throughout the book to remind us that human nature is the same today as it was 2,000 years ago when Christ endured and conquered the cross for our salvation.

Max Lucado spent five years in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, telling the people there about the wonderful Savior and the cross. He is currently a minister for the Oak Hills Church of Christ in San Antonio, Texas, where he lives with his wife, Denalyn, and their children. He has also written *On the Anvil*, *God Came Near*, and *Six Hours One Friday*.

Henrietta C. Palmer has a B.S. and M.Ed. degree from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. She is a retired elementary school principal, and she has taught Bible classes at the Troy Church of Christ in Troy, Michigan for the last thirty-five years. She and her husband, Bill, serve on the Board of *Integrity*.

Thank You

Since our fall contribution letter and follow-up card, many of you have generously contributed to the ministry of *Integrity*. Enough contributions to cover almost three of our six annual issues have come in and we are very, very grateful! Your kind letters are most encouraging to us.

All of us on the *Integrity* board appreciate all the financial help you readers can give toward this ministry. Thank you very much.

Integrity Journal
Board Members

Intercepted Correspondence

The following "Intercepted Correspondence" is a continuation of a feature we began in the January/February 1988 issue of *Integrity*. These letters are *Integrity's* version of C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* and more recent 'Os Guinness' *Gravedigger Files*.

To refresh your memory, we have an im-

aginary setting where Bruce accidentally comes across these letters in his computer class. Bruce thought he would warn the rest of us of what may be going on under our very noses. The nefarious teacher Apollyon continues his instructions to the young devil Ichabod.

My dear overbusy Nephew,

Your latest abbreviated missile left me wondering exactly what you have been doing during the past summer. Mentioning the "recent orgy of repentance and revival at Broad Way" and your effort at picking up the pieces told me little of your methodology, and less of the results. I do not doubt your industry, but it does sound as if you are reacting more than instigating action for our ignoble cause. If we are to succeed, we must take an aggressive role; and no time is more opportune than when there is some kind of turmoil among the Enemy's "saints."

Of course a few of those involved in conduct unbecoming to the Enemy's cause have given some evidence of true sorrow — even of repentance. That is not unusual, so long as the number is not excessive. Of course some of those not directly involved will manifest an attitude of superior self-righteousness. This, too, is to be expected; but it is, from our perspective, often an advantageous fact. You have only to commend and flatter these last-named ones at every opportunity, assuring them that the victory has been a consequence of their own strength of resistance, and that they are immune to this and other attacks upon their chastity and honor. Build carefully and allow time to solidify their attitudes of self-righteousness and pride — then lower the boom at the propitious moment, and in the precise circumstances which you contrive with greatest care. The law of averages alone will yield some fish in this net!

My knowledge of similar experiences in the past shows that a moderate number of the "penitents" really mean what they say, and it will be difficult to ensnare them in the same trap. With these you must change your tactics. If they will not fall again to sexual aberrations, perhaps they can be successfully lured into pharasaical self-adulation and boasting; or perhaps they can be tempted in the area of covetousness. (Their recent sins were, as you will recognize, simply one of the many forms of this trait, which some of the Enemy's followers have labeled one of the 'Seven Deadly Sins.') Try luring them with a totally different bait. Use your own demoniacal ingenuity to devise these ruses: turn their covetousness toward money, bigger houses, more land, or whatever repressed desires you may perceive within their lives.

Your little dissertation on the use and abuse of terms such as "sacred" and its cognates tells me that you are developing a most useful sense of analytical observation. These Americans may well have the poorest sense of the truly "sacred" as any people on earth. They have elevated such a miscellany of objects and concepts to the category as to make the very term itself insipid. By all means, encourage this in your own talk; and you have a splendid opportunity to capitalize upon this with the Worship Committee. It should not be hard to convince its members that the order of worship, the very routine slavishly followed, is sacred, and is not to be tampered with. You would seem to enjoy the most to gain for our cause by encouraging,

or even demanding, a rigid, legalistic position on the order and contents of worship.

And I suggest that you can, with a good and carefully executed plan, make your Fellowship Committee into more of a *Disfellowship* committee. Need I say more?

I hope in your next communication you will bring me something of an update on those principals among the congregation whose lives and conduct are so influential and even vital to our greatest success.

Yours for continuing
spiritual hemorrhaging,

Uncle Apollyon

My dear, esteemed, unscrupulous Uncle,

I have little to report on my connivings in the Worship and Fellowship Committees, except to say that I have been successful in keeping both committees from seeing any need for them to work together. That is to say, the Worship Committee has very little concern with fellowship, and the Fellowship Committee gives very little attention to worship; in fact, if they think of each other at all, it is a source of competition. People in Worship Committee meetings often say things like, "We could get more people out to worship if we didn't have so many social gatherings competing for their time;" "That Fellowship Committee bunch think their activities are the only ones that matter in this church; they took ten minutes of the worship service to announce the next pot-luck — and did you see how many of them got up and left early last Sunday morning to get to the park for the picnic?" Fellowship Committee people, on the other hand, usually see worship as something to be endured so that we can get down to the real business of the church, which is to have a good social time together. I am happy to say that very few persons on either committee realize that true worship is a fellowship of believers and true Christian fellowship is bonded by genuine worship together. The few

who do have such ideas are quickly shouted down by the majority, who resent any implication that their particular set of programs and plans is not the most vital thrust of the church. (By the way, one advantage of my being on both committees is that each sees me as its spy on the other one.)

Your mention of covetousness got me to thinking about why it continues to be so effective as one of our "Seven Deadly Sins." As I write this, we are about to begin the end-of-the-year holiday season, and I assume that we shall once again have marvelous opportunities for aggravating both open and concealed covetousness. Although I rejoice in open covetousness, which causes people to hate those who have more than they do, and to justify all sorts of wrongdoing in the process of getting more material things for themselves, I get the most exquisite satisfaction out of seeing someone who assumes he *can't* be covetous, because he merely wants to hold on to what he has and is not trying to scramble for more. Most of the people in our congregation are fairly comfortable, and a good number never deprive themselves of anything they have cash or credit to buy. I do my best continually to assure the comfortable that they *deserve* what they have and that God expects them to enjoy it to the hilt — why else did He give it to them? Most of the time they don't need my reassurance and are quite happy to coast along living with more possessions and income than three-quarters or more of the rest of the world. The holiday season, however, presents many emotional appeals to help the needy, and I have to be on my toes to prevent people's responses from being any more than a temporary sop to their consciences. Fortunately for us, even those who contribute somewhat generously in November and December give little thought to sharing their wealth with others during the rest of the year. I believe that attitude qualifies as covetousness, don't you? After all, it enables one to enjoy a disproportionate share of the world's goods without giving a thought to whole groups of people whose poverty unwillingly underwrites the prosperity of others. It is especially gratifying and ironic to see this blithe insensitivity in a season that begins by emphasizing

thanksgiving and ends by celebrating the coming of One who (foolishly, of course, in our view) "made Himself poor" for the sake of these deliciously ungrateful vermin. How we anticipate the anguish of many at the end when they realize where their casual riches have gotten them!

Some strict Christian people, I understand, object to Christmas as a religious holiday. Well, it is true that over the years we have worked a good deal of paganism into it, even if some of that effort was lost when a few of the pagan symbols (like the evergreen tree — life in the dead of winter) became "baptized," so to speak

and got partially absorbed into the larger Christian picture. On the other hand, we've had eminent success in turning an originally Christian figure, "Saint" Nicholas, into a legend thoroughly detached from Christ and surrounded with its own entirely secular mythology. On the whole, I think I rather like Christmas; for so many it is the season to be greedy, frustrated, and debauched that we may well gain more from it than the Christians do.

Sacrilegiously yours,

Ichabod

Readers' Response

Thank you for devoting an issue to the artistic endeavors of Christians. Alas, part of our legacy from Campbell's Protestant forefathers, Calvin and Zwingli, has been an overemphasis on verbal communication and argument at the expense of the variety of human expression that exists and that has been employed by the Holy Spirit to bring us to a closer understanding of God. The sterility of our church buildings speaks volumes in this regard. . . and there are some now who question whether we should have kept architecture, and who would toss it out with scripture, poetry, and painting!

It has not been easy to be an aspiring orchestral conductor and artist in such a strait-jacketed tradition. Thank you for showing the eloquence and intrinsic worth of the offering of the artist's talents before the Almighty.

Alton Thompson
Baltimore, Maryland

We have read *Integrity* for several years and have enjoyed and appreciated it a great deal (especially when our dear brother Carl Ketcher-

side was writing in it).

I was just planning on sending a donation/subscription when the Sept./Oct. issue arrived yesterday. I was so disappointed in it — had it been the first issue I'd ever seen, I would never want another! . . . Too much "imagination" for me!

Mrs. Carlos D. Turner
San Jacinto, California

Congratulations on twenty years of *Integrity*. I have not been a subscriber very long but I have found your articles to be enlightening, interesting, and appropriate. Thanks.

Paul E. Garrett
Paris, Texas

Holly Allen's article on the vine and branches was terrific. Keep up the good work.

Doug Smith

(Continued on next page)