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Integrity

*INTEGRITY*, a journal published bimonthly by an independent nonprofit corporation, is intended to be a ministry of reconciliation which utilizes the varied talents of a large community of believers. These believers, united in faith, but divergent in opinions, seek to accurately reveal God to both the church and the world so that all may become one as He is one. Accordingly, it should not be assumed that the views expressed by individual authors necessarily represent the opinions of either the editors or the Board as a whole.

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**Where Jesus Leads**

When we answered the call, "Come, follow me!" we were like Peter and Andrew: none of us knew where we were going. When we two editors consider where some of the people in our own Christian teen youth group have traveled over the last 25 years, the paths Jesus has led our friends and us along have been tremendously varied...from preaching in Guatemala...to providing camp experiences for street kids in New York City...to teaching children in St. Petersburg, Russia...to overseeing courts in Michigan...to serving as elder in a large church in Nashville ...to successfully teaching elementary school children in a Detroit suburb...to managing children's homes in the midwest...to getting to write for and edit an international Christian publication.

But, as you and I and the early disciples quickly learned, following Jesus also means taking an inward journey that brings unexpected twists and turns: routes which lead us through our worst fears; tempting detours resisted only by developing spiritual disciplines; scenic views of God's mercy and God's love that are too good to keep to ourselves.

All we knew in the beginning was that we wanted to know Jesus, to be with him, to be like him. This pursuit of divine friendship with Jesus and his followers will lead us toward our destination--"to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ" (Eph.4:13b). When we follow Jesus we take the road toward becoming "whole, entire, undiminished"--which also happens to be a definition for the word "integrity." A reprint appearing in this issue of an article written by W. Carl Ketcherside in November 1978 discusses the need for unifying wholeness in Jesus. A response from F. LaGard Smith to Jim Whitfield's article published in the July/August '94 issue is included to give these fellow followers an open forum for the purpose of helping all of us readers mature in Christ. The four other articles in this last issue of our 25th year of publication were submitted by readers who are willing to share with us some of the unexpected places to which Jesus has led them.

During this 25th anniversary year, *Integrity's* 15-member Board of Directors reevaluated our Statement of Purpose (included in the Sept./Oct. issue) and rededicated this journal's ministry to its stated intent. We will continue

(Continued on page 113)

**A Plea For A Return To Our First Love**  
ANN IHMS

*"...These are the words of Him who holds the seven stars in His right hand and walks among the seven golden lamp stands: I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet, I hold this against you: you have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place." Revelation 2:1b-5.*

I submit to you that the lamp stand has already been removed from many of the congregations known as Churches of Christ and that many more are very close to losing theirs. I do not speak idly or without expertise on this subject. I am a seventh generation Church of Christ Christian on my father's side and a fourth generation Church of Christ Christian on my mother's side. Benjamin Franklin, the preacher, was my great-great-great grandpa. I have grown up in the church that so many of you newercomers now claim as your own.

I speak to say please, for the love of our Mighty Savior and Lord Jesus Christ, return to your first love. Do the things you did at first. The church is not our first love. JESUS is! He is what makes the church worth something.

It is Satan who is turning you away from Christ and concentrating your minds on secondary matters. Christ is primary. Everything else, including the church, is secondary. Does this mean that I am saying that the church is not important?

Of course not. It is important because Christ says it is. However, he did not die for an institution, he died for you and me (people, individuals). If you dare to emphasize the church as all important then you have left your first love. You love the church more than Christ.

Some of you may say, "This is just semantics. How can you separate Christ and the Church? Emphasizing the church is the same as emphasizing Christ because the church is the body of Christ." Think of it this way: if my husband emphasized his love for my body over his love for me, what would happen to our marriage? I can tell you unequivocally that it would be a horrid relationship. It would be shallow and selfish. Praise God that my husband loves me first, me, Ann Ihms the person. I am the love of his life and then secondary to that is his love of my body. Do you see how sick it is to reverse that relationship? I believe that the Churches of Christ as a whole have done just that.

**Upon What Is Unity Based?**

The Restoration Movement was based on the importance of the unity of believers. Look what has happened. Church of Christ Christians are now the most divisive group in Christendom. Divisions occur over whether or not someone can get married in a church building or whether or not there should be a kitchen connected to the church building or whether or not congregations can join funds to help do an evangelistic mailing.

Unity is based today on whether or not a person or group sees the church the same--NOT whether or not a person or group sees JESUS CHRIST as the SON of the LIVING GOD and accepts him as their Lord and Savior. We must look to Christ and him alone as the Author and Perfecter of our faith. I have even heard

people in the Church of Christ say that Baptists and Church of God folks are just as lost as Mormons or Jehovah Witnesses. Do you realize what kind of a mentality led to that kind of thinking? Is Christ what is central to people who think that? No, because Christ is important to Baptists and Church of God Christians. There, I did it. I dared to call some people in another denomination "Christians." Do you know what that got me? I was nearly disfellowshipped from my Church of Christ congregation in Indiana. My worthiness to fellowship with that group was not decided on who Jesus Christ is in my life, but rather if I agreed with the elders on who they say is a Christian.

Sure, it would be convenient (and much more in our control) if we could determine that someone must not be a Christian because they don't attend our church which, of course, must be the Church of Christ. "What else would you call it?" a deacon asked me. God calls the body of Christ "the called out ones (ecclesia)." In Russia Christians are known as believers. How about the name "Disciples of Christ" or "Christian Church" or "Bible Church." Paul warned us about labels in Corinthians. He listed the label of those proud ones who followed Christ exclusive of others with just as much a rebuke as those who isolated into a group following Apollos (I. Cor. 1:10-12).

### **Spirit-Generated Unity**

Have you seen the deep confusion about who or what the Holy Spirit is in the Church of Christ? The confusion seems very widespread. I believe that the reason for this is since the Church is our focal point rather than Christ, we have quenched the Holy Spirit's ability to work in our lives or congregations. The Holy Spirit always points people to Christ rather than himself. If a person's life is centered on their faith and trust in Christ, then you know the Holy Spirit is present in that person's life.

### **What Saves Us?**

Christ's death on the cross saves us, and the Holy Spirit leads us to that great salvation by leading us through the process of rebirth. This process is symbolized by baptism. I know with all my heart that it is not baptism that saves us. To many in the Church of Christ that is heresy. God led me to Brother Zerr's translation of John 3 just when I needed it two years ago. E.M. Zerr, a very respected minister of the Gospel in Church of Christ circles, wrote a New Testament Commentary in the early 1950's. Listen to how he translates Jesus's answer to Nicodemus: "A man must be born of the water, having been begotten by the Spirit." Zerr explains that the Greek word "genoa" that is translated in English "born" involves much more than just the coming out process. The word genoa includes the whole development process from conception through birth. You were born of your mother because you were conceived by your dad. It is a process. You were born of water because you were conceived by the Holy Spirit. It is a process. Does this understanding of what Jesus said in any way dilute the importance of baptism? Of course not. In fact, it greatly accentuates the whole meaning of being a follower of Christ's.

### **Who Are Christ's Followers?**

The word Christian has been so diluted in our culture that most Americans consider themselves Christians. The best definition of a Christian is a follower of Christ. Being a follower includes the process that God does through us by the power of the Holy Spirit which transforms (sanctifies) us into the holy people we should be. Can you be a follower of Christ's without being baptized? That seems to be a critical question in the Church of Christ. Do you realize that many people (outside our Church of Christ fellowship) who call themselves

followers of Christ also practice water immersion? Are you willing to admit that many people you know who love Jesus also love the Bible and love people and are striving to know God's will for their lives? Is this by accident? No, it is the work of the wonderful Holy Spirit. We can quit arguing about whether or not a person run over and killed by a truck on his or her way to be baptized will be saved. It is not our job to try to figure out the destiny of those souls. That's God's job. He has given us plenty to do and we had better get busy doing it. Our job is to tell people the good news of his Son.

"Repent and do the things you did at first," John records Jesus as saying to the church in Ephesus. Please ask yourselves, "Would he say the same thing to us today?" I believe he is. Turn to Christ and him only. Don't worry about taking care of the Church of Christ institutional church. The Spirit is preparing the bride for our Lord's return. Rejoice and again I say "Rejoice!"

Ann Ihms holds a Masters Degree in Ceramic Engineering. She and her family currently meet with a non-denominational fellowship near their home in Russiaville, Indiana.

## **On Mixing Christianity & Politics & Labeling People**

### **PETE RAGUS**

The mix of Christianity and politics has always been volatile. In this area, like most areas, the practice of assigning stereotypical labels is dangerous. With labels, not only are certain positions and issues identified as good or bad, people are automatically pronounced good or bad by their labels. Among Christians, there is a need for honest, prayerful, and tolerant discussion regarding these issues, without resort to labeling.

Two terms that are popularly used today in both political and religious circles are the terms "liberal" and "conservative." The term "conservative Christian" has become a very popular term that is used in both political and Christian circles. Since the concerns addressed in this article are with the Christian community, the remarks will be limited to this area.

I would like to start out by suggesting that Christian congregations give consideration to and discuss the following questions about recent trends to mix politics and Christianity and to use labels to identify Christians:

1. Upon what scriptural basis is mixing politics and Christianity or "labeling" justified?
2. Can you find any specific examples of Jesus, the apostles, the disciples, or the church as a group involved in similar activities?
3. Can you find the words "conservative" or "liberal" in the Bible?
4. Is the label "conservative Christian" in the Bible?
5. Can you find any example in scriptures where Christians were given a general label that did not have a specific meaning?
6. What type of word is "conservative" and what does it mean?
7. Where did the term "conservative Christian" first come from?
8. What is a "conservative Christian?"
9. Why were the believers called Christians first by those in Antioch and then wherever the gospel spread?
10. How do you read and interpret the following scriptures in regard to the Christian life and politics: Romans 13;

I Peter 2:13-17; Titus 3:1; Jude 8-10; Acts 23:1-5; and David's attitude toward Saul in I Samuel 13-31 and in II Samuel 17:11. How do you read I Corinthians 5 regarding the responsibility of the Christian community toward the conduct of persons both inside and outside the body of Christ?

## What Is The Kingdom's Function?

At this point, let me say that I present the following ideas to you in a spirit of love and respect. My constant prayers are that God's grace and peace will be with everyone who labors to advance the gospel of Christ. My very deep concern is the trend toward mixing secular moral political issues with Christianity and making these political struggles a function of the Kingdom of God. For the reasons I will list, I believe that this trend goes against Scripture and the examples of history.

My reasons have nothing to do with whether I agree or disagree about the particular secular moral and/or political issue involved. Nor do these reasons have anything to do with a person's absolute right as an American citizen and Christian to participate in the political process. My concerns center completely on the practice of bringing these secular moral political issues into the church and making the church a tool of local and national political/religious groups for political purposes.

Reason #1: I find no examples in Scripture of Jesus, or the apostles, or any disciples being involved in partisan negative attacks on the secular Roman government of their day. Nor do I find them encouraging the bringing of any secular moral political issues into the Kingdom of God. The history of the Roman Empire tells us there were many very evil practices that could have been attacked. The only example of the apostles or disciples participating in

disobeying government or religious authorities was when they were told not to proclaim the news that Jesus was the Son of God (Acts 4:19; Acts 5:29).

But, on the other hand, we have several examples given that show what a Christian's relationship to the secular world and to governments should be:

a. The best example is Paul's statements in Romans 13, where he plainly says, "Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, because the authorities that exist have been established by God." Paul also said that Christians should pay their taxes, and he states the reason for doing so. (See also: I Peter 2:13-17 and Titus 3:1.)

b. There is no example of Jesus ever speaking against the secular Roman government and its many evils and issues. He, too, said that his followers should pay their taxes (Matt. 22:15-21).

c. I Corinthians 5 is a key chapter in summing up the responsibility of the church authorities to those both inside and outside the body of Christ. The responsibility of Christians, according to Paul, was not to regulate the conduct of those outside the body. It was their responsibility to exemplify the ideal of Christ and to proclaim the gospel. Should the church blame government institutions for societal problems while it falls so short itself of the ideals of unity and Christ-likeness?

d. Several New Testament writers encouraged Christians to pray for all authorities. I know of no scripture which would indicate that solving secular moral political issues through political process was the function of the Kingdom of God.

Reason #2: Mixing political issues with Christianity is basically divisive. With all the divisive doctrinal issues that already exist within the Kingdom of God, is it wise to bring into the equation very divisive

secular moral political issues? It is an amazing irony that segments of the Christian community which have been bitterly divided for centuries and could not unite on the basis of Christ's prayer in John 17 or on the great power of the gospel are now able to unite on the basis of certain secular moral political issues that make institutions like our government and our schools the enemy!

Reason #3: History teaches us over and over that the old saying is true, "The only thing we learn from history is that we never learn." Some of the greatest tyrannies of history were produced by combining religion and politics. Our own nation was founded by people escaping from Christian/political tyranny. The hundreds of years of tyranny by the religious inquisitions, the bitter hatreds that exist in such places as the Middle East, Northern Ireland, and Yugoslavia--all of these are produced by centuries of religious/political power and dogmatism of various groups who all claim that God is on their side. No matter how good our intentions may be, to think that we can mix politics and Christianity and produce something good is absolute folly.

Reason #4: Of all the reasons I have given, here is the most important one: *These issues take the focus off the gospel as the only solution to human problems.* God's power to save is the gospel. God's power to change people's hearts is the gospel. God's power to help his people mature in his type of love is the gospel, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The gospel is also our unity. Here is where the total commitment of the church should be!

Secular moral political issues cannot save, they cannot change people's hearts, they cannot help people mature in God's love or become more united. No matter how vital one believes these issues to be, resolving them could never accomplish God's purpose, which is to make believers and change hearts. Only the

gospel can do that! As far as I can determine, Jesus, his apostles, and his disciples were wholly committed to one thing, and that was advancing the gospel in a very sinful world. In my opinion, this should be our total commitment as a body of believers.

Reason #5: Look at the greatest example we have, the Christians of the first century. What was the situation? The Roman Empire was the most powerful government in the world. They dominated the then-known world. They looked totally indestructible.

On the other hand, the spiritual Kingdom of God looked totally defeated. Jesus had been crucified, and the apostles, except for John, were all eventually killed for proclaiming that Christ was the Son of God. It appeared that this small rag-tag group of people would have no effect on the world.

Today we have the great privilege of seeing what happened. Where is the Roman Empire? Where is the Kingdom of God? The Roman Empire is gone! But, in spite of all its problems and divisions, the spiritual kingdom of God continues to influence the world as no other kingdom can or ever will.

## God Gets His Way

God can and will accomplish his purposes, no matter how bad the human situation looks to us, but he accomplishes his purposes in his way by the power of the gospel, which is Jesus Christ and him crucified--the perfect replica of the spirit of God.

As far as politics are concerned, in my opinion, we as citizens in this great country have the right and the privilege to participate and vote. As Christian brothers and sisters, we also have the right and the privilege to discuss secular political issues if this can be done fairly and in love. If we cannot keep this attitude, we only show our carnal immaturity and produce more bitterness

and division. If in the spirit of prayer and love we could discuss political issues maturely, we could enjoy the benefits of each other's knowledge. Also, our mutual love would not allow us to divide even though we might have honest disagreements.

In conclusion, I want to say again that I present this material in deep love and respect, because we are brothers and sisters in Christ. I also represent this with deep humility, because I am a sinful man when measured against the true standard--Christ my Lord. James tells us

in James 5 to confess our sins one to another and pray for one another that we may be healed. In this spirit, I ask you to pray for me.

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Pete Ragus has been a member of the Church of Christ since 1945, and has served as a deacon, elder, and Bible teacher over the years. He holds degrees from Abilene Christian University and Texas A & I University, and recently retired from serving as Athletic Director, teacher and coach in the public school system.

## Dinner With Matthew, Dinner With Simon

ELMER PROUT

*While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" Matthew 9:10, 11.*

Why would anyone criticize Jesus for eating at Matthew's house? Wasn't where he ate Jesus' own business? The Lord was free to pick his own dinner companions, wasn't he?

No, not if Jesus wanted approval from the religious leaders. For the culture in which Jesus lived, a person's standing in the community was directly connected to that person's choice of dinner companions. In the eyes of the Pharisees, Matthew and his other dinner guests were "sinners." They were untouchable religious and social outcasts. When Jesus joined that group at Matthew's house, he crossed the line from acceptable to unacceptable in the eyes of the religious establishment leaders.

But Jesus was not a social climber. He did not crave the approval of the religious elite. Jesus was sure of his mission in the world. He answered his critics in terms of that mission:

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. Matthew 9:12, 13.

A doctor who steers clear of sick people is a disgrace to his profession. A Savior who kept away from sinners would have aborted his redemptive mission long before he reached Calvary.

That seems to settle matters, doesn't it? Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (I Timothy 1:15, 16). The Pharisees and other first century religious leaders looked upon themselves as morally and spiritually healthy. They felt no need of healing from Jesus, the Great Physician. So, Jesus wrote the self-righteous folks off. From that point on he turned his attention to Matthew and his "sinner" friends. Jesus had no time to waste on Pharisees and other critics.

Right?

Not quite. The redemptive fact is that Jesus did not only eat with people like Matthew and his "sinner" friends. Jesus also ate in the homes of the very Pharisees who criticized him.

### Dinner With Critics

Jesus had dinner with Matthew. He also had dinner with Simon:

Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. Luke 7:36 (see also Matthew 26:6-13).

At first glance it rubs me wrong to see Jesus at table with Simon or any other Pharisee. With their self-righteous snobbery, the Pharisees, in my opinion, are not in the least worthy of the Savior's attention. If they think they are so fine and pure, let them try to stand before God in their human righteousness! That's what I say!!

But, thank the Lord, that is not what

## Response To: "Grace Or Antinomianism At Pepperdine"

F. LaGARD SMITH

Thank you for inviting me to reply to Jim Whitfield's review of my presentation at the 1994 Pepperdine Lectures (July/August issue).

If I knew nothing more about my presentation than what I had read in Whitfield's review, I must confess that I myself would be put off by "the likes of F. LaGard Smith!" I would be wondering what there is about "the fearless exposition of the gospel of grace" that Smith could possibly be so worked up about. Is he a legalistic scaremonger of the highest order? Does he really believe that the road to hell runs through Pepperdine's Malibu campus?

Jesus Christ says..."I came to seek and to save the lost." "The lost"--ALL of them--are who the Lord Christ seeks to save.

Therefore, the Christ dines at both tables, Matthew the tax collector's and Simon the Pharisee's. He who knocks at the door does not say "I will come in if you are a friend of Matthew's." Nor does he say "If you stand with Simon I'll join you." Jesus says, "If any one will open the door, I will come in" (Revelation 3:20).

The need for salvation is the great leveler. In that need we all stand together. While we stand in our need we hear a voice. It is the voice of the Son of God inviting us all:

Come, join me at my table. You, Matthew, and you, Simon, come...whosoever will, let that person come. At my table none are turned away.

---

Elmer Prout, a minister and missionary in the Stone-Campbell movement for many years, presently ministers to the Church of Christ in Shafter, California.

It was not, of course, the fearless exposition of the gospel of grace to which I made objection, but rather the misuse of the gospel of grace in furtherance of unwarranted doctrinal accommodation being urged by some of the featured speakers. Unfortunately, Whitfield's review included neither my affirmation of the dangers of graceless legalism, nor, more importantly, the basis for the caution which I urged regarding antinomianism (where grace transforms biblical doctrine into man-made rules which are expendable).

My comments about antinomianism were prompted particularly by one

speaker's observation that "our identity markers"--including such things as a cappella music, weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, and even baptism--are pharisaical legalism, which, by implication, must not be allowed to stand in the way of evangelism. Is baptism nothing more than one of our fellowship's "identity markers?" Is baptism the kind of "rule" that must not be allowed to stand in the way of evangelism?

What I tried to point out was that, using a similar grace-based "accommodation" approach to evangelism, the Lutherans have now found themselves facing a struggle over the legitimacy of homosexual relations. (If hard teaching against homosexual behavior stands in the way of evangelism, what the Bible teaches about it must be played down.) Hopefully, our fellowship will never venture forth on that same slippery slope. But we can ill afford to ignore the tie between a perverted gospel of grace and the acceptance of pro-gay theology which we can already observe in other churches.

Then there is the matter of pro-gay hermeneutics. From my reading of previous articles in *Integrity* urging the elimination of all gender role distinctions, it is obvious that my suggested linkage between a wider role for women and pro-gay theology would not be appreciated. And, in truth, one must be careful here to distinguish between two types of approaches to Scripture. I have never suggested that everyone who calls for a wider role for women is thereby pro-gay. There are biblically-neutral areas which allow for legitimate differences of understanding among those whose shared view of Scripture could never endorse homosexual relations. By contrast, if one's hermeneutical approach to Scripture permits the viewing of Paul's gender restrictions as merely cultural or

situation specific, then the door is opened for others to take the same approach in nullifying Paul's condemnation of homosexual behavior.

It is not enough to say, "But I would never use the same approach to Romans 1:24-27 that I use to I Timothy 2:11-15." Others already have, and a younger, pluralistic, non-judgmental generation is culturally primed for "justice-love" acceptance of practicing homosexuals. All they need is a hermeneutical vehicle to make it biblically legitimate. Call it a hijacking if you will, but the same kind of textual analysis used in this publication to render I Timothy 2:11-15 situationally restricted will suit their purposes perfectly. If you have any doubts about that, you would do well to sink your teeth into current pro-gay theology.

Far from straying from my assigned topic, my caution about antinomian grace was right on point. If we ever, even unintentionally, allow ourselves to use grace as a rationale for doctrinal slippage, it is but a short step to moral compromise as well. Justification and sanctification are the twin progeny of grace. If our understanding of grace goes askew, both doctrine and morals are at risk.

About that road to hell: if I believed that it ran through the Pepperdine campus, I would have left years ago. The road to hell that I'm concerned about is the one which runs through the hearts and minds of each of us, tempting us at every turn to take doctrinal detours into the unknown. It was that temptation to which my remarks were addressed, not a campus full of God's people who come each year to attend the finest Bible lectures in our fellowship.

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F. LaGard Smith teaches at the Pepperdine University School of Law in California. He has authored several books and is in demand as a public speaker.

Reprint From November 1978:

## We Need Integrity

W. CARL KETCHERSIDE

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

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

I am happy to say the brethren have succeeded to a remarkable degree in progress toward their original goal. The articles have been challenging. Some of them have been daring. The stance of the editor has been non-sectarian. This is evidenced in the fact that the paper is read across many lines. It is regarded as

fair and honest even by those who disagree with its general thrust. Minds have been changed. Hearts have been enlarged. Lives have been enriched by reading it. That it should accomplish this in such an abbreviated amount of space is proof that "diamonds do not come in piano boxes."

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

Justice Robert Jackson wrote in 1943: "Freedom to differ is not limited to things that do not matter much. That would be a mere shadow of freedom. The test of its substance is the right to differ on things that touch the heart of the existing order." We need honest dissent. Without it our ignorance will be frozen at its present level. Our brethren need integrity. They also need *Integrity*.

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Although W. Carl Ketcherside left to be with Jesus on May 24, 1989, his writings continue to exhort and encourage! In his younger years Carl was a "wing commander," as he put it, of one of the most legalistic sects among Churches of Christ. Half way through his life he changed course and became, in his words, "a peacemaker and no longer a piecemaker."

## Readers' Response

I was greatly disappointed in the article "Grace or Antinomianism at Pepperdine?". It was unworthy of *Integrity*. LaGard Smith may well deserve criticism, and certainly Jim Whitfield has every right to question Smith's teachings, conclusions and even whether his lawyerly tactics are fair. But the implication that Pepperdine should not permit such a one to speak is precisely the sort of thinking *Integrity* in the past has so well opposed. Whitfield's musings as to "why he chooses to remain at a university where the faculty of the religion division does not share his theological viewpoint" is no different than the "love it or leave it" mentality that has attempted to force more progressive brethren to leave the Church of Christ. While many of our colleges have been just this narrow-minded in the past, Pepperdine fortunately is not one of them.

Larry C. Jackson  
Wharton, Texas

I am writing in response to Jim Whitfield's article in your July/August edition of *Integrity* entitled "Grace or Antinomianism at Pepperdine?". I am very thankful that godly men like Jim are responding in such a powerful way to LaGard Smith's self-serving tirades at last year's lectureship. Jim's article articulated exactly what I have been feeling ever since I listened to the tapes of LaGard's three day class. I appreciate the thoughtful, intelligent and biblical way in which Jim approached his rebuttal. It was hard-hitting but I think the things LaGard said invited this kind of response and I hope LaGard has the chance to read this article and will respond with a repentant heart for what he did. It is my hope and prayer that LaGard will discover the true wonder of grace and allow it to fill his heart and his mind until it overflows onto others.

Mark Turner  
Bakersfield, California

Notes From Survey Responses (most sent in anonymously)...

Thank you for the blessing of a publication that came into our lives at just the time we needed it. When we were struggling with our need and desire to accept all other Christians and were still held back by our old judgmental sectarian teachings, there it was! I'm sure the Spirit was instrumental in leading us to it!  
Ohio

When we first started receiving *Integrity* in the 60's, we considered ourselves progressive and we were delighted with topics of grace, women's roles, etc. Now, we have become more conservative and feel like some in the church are going in directions we don't like--modern church music, the lack of respect in worship, informality in worship. Our class just finished the study of "The Worldly Church."

Texas

A professor at Johnson Bible College encouraged us to take your publication. He promised it would be for us a source of growth and learning. He was correct and I appreciate your magazine and welcome it as a well-worn and used companion. Press on!

North Carolina

Would appreciate articles defining what worship is. Am grateful that *Integrity* does not judgmentally condemn people and other faiths. Feel that you have a good balance.

Texas

Maybe I have not been in contact with *Integrity* long enough (thus my view is somewhat skewed), but *Integrity* seems to be a forum for Church of Christ issues and concerns, more than for the Church's issues and concerns.

West Virginia

Thanks for being there! We are very much alone. It's a loving group, but absolutely no spiritual discussion, or small study groups.

Tennessee

*Integrity* is a clear beam of light in a dark world. Thanks be to God for you.

Texas

I realize *Integrity* has always been an open-minded voice of the Church of Christ/Christian movement but for people who are searching for truth, these inane controversies apparently are over. Hopefully, you will now concentrate on topics of more depth or you will die. We should strive for oneness in Christ instead of defending a "splinter" of a "splinter."

Tennessee

We are currently in search of a congregation. We have been unsatisfied with the Churches of Christ in our area. I believe articles emphasizing what one should look for in selecting a church and articles addressing baptism would be most helpful. It appears that the doctrinal issue of baptism is the great divide between those in the Church of Christ and others who profess Christ. More articles such as those by Cecil Hook would be greatly beneficial.

South Carolina

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## EDITORIAL

to publish topical and exegetical articles that: (1) discuss cultural challenges we face in society, (2) encourage believers toward spiritual growth and service, and (3) promote the Restoration goal of unity

Keep up the good work. I read *Integrity* cover to cover as soon as I get it. I want to know more of Christ and you help me do that. Thanks. For years the Church of Christ has denied that the Holy Spirit works in our lives anymore. We're beginning to look at scriptures and re-evaluate that stance but I, personally, am desperate for any information I can learn about the Holy Spirit. Please write more articles. Lots of them!

Louisiana

Keep on keeping on! I think the tide is turning. You folk, Leroy Garrett (Ouida, too) and Carl Ketcherside are to be commended for your faith!

Texas

Thank you for providing this area for writers and thinkers in the spirit of Love.

Florida

I believe *Integrity* has a vital place within the journalism components of the Stone-Campbell movement. We no longer have *Mission*, *Mission Messenger* or *Restoration Review*, so I feel we need one or more publications which are independent and which permit an open forum for writers and readers.

Arkansas

Thanks again for your concern for our spiritual growth and maturity.

Michigan

Diane and Bruce Kilmer  
Co-Editors

## The Intrepid Dodge

### HOY LEDBETTER

While I was watching television during the recent holiday, two words repeatedly popped up on the screen and grabbed my attention--even with the sound muted. They were DODGE and INTREPID. Since my theological reflection rarely takes a day off, it occurred to me that the adjective "intrepid" ("unshaken by fear") and the verb "dodge" (to avoid by moving aside quickly) together might project a useful admonition to me and my congregation.

By the time the creaky wheels of recollection had finished turning several Biblical facts had come to mind. For instance, King Jehoshaphat was a model for all leaders; of him it was said that "his heart was courageous in the ways of the Lord," and he sought to clean up his country. We can surely use such intrepid people in government today.

Barnabas went to Antioch and "began to encourage them all with resolute heart to remain true to the Lord." Peter told his readers not to fear what their adversaries feared, "and do not be intimidated." He also told the women that they could be daughters of Sarah "if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear." And Paul asked for reassurance from the Philippians that they would be "in no way intimidated by your opponents."

Obviously, in spite of (and we might say, because of) numerous Biblical exhortations to fear, intrepidity has an important place in the religious life. There are times when we must resist pressures from others and try to correct opponents regardless of the consequences.

Just the other day I heard someone say of another, "He hates confrontation." Many of us do, but confrontation is often necessary, and the congregation which refuses to confront problems and problem people will allow itself to be destroyed by those to whom the whole body is compelled to give way.

The church can get used to people quickly stepping aside when they ought to face up, and it can become so much a norm that they do it without apparent fear. We might call that an intrepid dodge, but it is really misplaced fear and, at bottom, sinful dereliction.

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Hoy Ledbetter, founding editor and Editor-in-Chief of *Integrity* for 15 years, has served as minister to several a cappella Churches of Christ during his years of ministry. He presently serves First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Albany, Georgia, with his wife, Jary.

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