

Issue 5, 1997
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Integrity

Special Editorial

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President, *Integrity* Board of Directors

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Reflections on Change

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those of us who cry out for change *must* closely watch our motives and maintain the sensitivity to fellow church members that Christian love requires (Rom. 14: 13-21).

We cannot run roughshod over the feeling of other Christians, no matter what those feelings may be, stubbornly pressing for changes that threaten them—no matter how right we think we are. If we do, then we are no longer “acting in love,” and we tear down brothers and sisters whom we are called to build up (Rom. 14: 15-19).

Donald W. White is a graduate of three restoration heritage schools: Columbia Christian College, Pepperdine University, and Abilene Christian University. He ministers to the Lakeview Church of Christ in southern Oregon. He and his wife have three daughters.

While it is a mistake to allow each member to have veto power over any change he or she feels uncomfortable with, those of us who long for change must be sympathetic and compassionate, humbly considering the feelings of other Christians (1 Peter 3:8; Eph. 4:32). For while there is ample room for different worship styles and Biblical interpretations, there is no room for selfishness in Christ's kingdom: hardened hearts are rejected at the door.

Integrity

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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.

Issue 5, 1997
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Editors

Diane G. H. Kilmer
J. Bruce Kilmer

Layout Editor

Noreen Bryant

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Editorial Advisors

Hoy Ledbetter
Joseph F. Jones
Amos Ponder

Board Member

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Amos Ponder

Editorial Address:

4051 S. Lincoln Rd.
Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858

Dear Readers,

This final issue for 1997 is an especially meaningful one for us. It marks the end of an era for this journal and for us as a Board. It is with mixed emotions that we hereby announce a whole series of changes, some planned and some completely unexpected. With your next issue, you will see a new format and hear some new voices. We know you will miss, as we will, some of the old voices; however, we hope you will be pleased and energized by the new format and look we have planned. But more on that later.

The first news I must share with you is that Diane and Bruce Kilmer have decided to resign their co-editorship of this journal after 68 issues and 11 years of service. It is with regret that we see them relinquish their editorship, which they fulfilled so well and so conscientiously. However, we are excited and happy for them as they begin their transition into new areas of ministry in Christ's body. They will remain active on the Board and will continue to serve as contributing writers. Each has written a special "farewell" editorial to you, which you will find on pages 80-81. Please join us in prayer as we thank God for their hard and dedicated work, and as we ask our Father's blessings on their future endeavors.

Our new editors, Curtis McClane and Noreen Bryant, will be introduced to you this Spring when we resume publication and present to you a new format. With our first issue of 1998, we will assume a quarterly publication schedule. Each quarterly issue will have about twice the number of pages as the issues of the past few years. We hope you will enjoy the new format.

Subscriptions are by written request. There is no subscription charge, but we depend on your contributions, which are tax-deductible. Please send c/o:

Jan Van Horn, Treasurer, 4860 Livernois, Troy, MI 48098.

Back Issues are available from William Palmer, 1607 Rockfield, Troy, Michigan 48098

We know you share our bittersweet feelings about Bruce and Diane's resignation and our anticipation about *Integrity's* future. We must now share some sad news with you. Dr. Brant Lee Doty, a longtime *Integrity* board member and Professor Emeritus at Great Lakes Christian College, died January 23, 1998, while shoveling snow at his home in Lansing, Michigan. Curtis Lloyd, a fellow *Integrity* Board member and a longtime friend and colleague of Lee's, expresses some thoughts about our friend which you will find later in this issue.

We have also had to say goodbye to another dear friend of *Integrity*. Norman Parks, a longtime supporter and authority on women's roles in the church, died this past winter.

Please keep the families of these two godly men in your prayers. We mourn the loss of these two brothers even while we rejoice that they have joined the Father.

Despite all these changes and farewells, we have managed to put some articles in this issue! Appropriately, most concern *change*.

We continue our discussion of women's roles in the church with a fine article by Peggy Sanford, who has spoken with members of several congregations currently implementing some changes in the area of women's roles. Authors Kathy Blakely and Donald White have a few important things to say to us about our motives for change, or, conversely, our motives for resisting change. In this issue you'll also find our index for 1997; how to obtain an e-mail subscription to the journal; and finally, Elton Higgs weighs in with some thoughts about being a grandfather in "Bending the Twig."

As *Integrity* undergoes some developmental changes, please put the Board of Directors and the editors on your prayer list. The Board affirmed in our last meeting our dependence on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to mold *Integrity* into a useful tool in the Master's kingdom.

Thank you for your prayers and support. We look forward to bringing you a revamped journal in the late Spring.

In Christ,
John Van Horn
President, *Integrity* Board of Directors

E-Mail Subscriptions to *Integrity* Available

If you would like an electronic subscription to *Integrity*, simply request one by e-mail from Bruce Bryant at integrit@mich.com. Please include your full name, postal address, and e-mail address.

You will receive the entire issue via e-mail in plain text format. It will be sent at approximately the same time the printed issue arrives. Note: in order to alleviate the burgeoning problem of unwanted e-mail, we cannot accept requests on behalf of others for electronic subscriptions.

You may wish to be taken off our printed mailing list. Whatever form your subscription takes, please consider continuing your financial support of this journal.

It Has Been a Privilege

DIANE G. H. KILMER

The late-night Michigan blizzard Bruce and I drove home through following that January 1986 *Integrity* Board meeting couldn't dampen my elation over the fact that the Board had just asked Bruce and me to co-edit the journal. In the decade since, this fulfilling opportunity to encourage and exhort others through a writing ministry, after having been commissioned by a Board of people who love me and acknowledged and trusted my abilities, and after having been affirmed by many of you readers over the years that what we were doing was helpful to your spiritual growth, has been one of the most positive, sustaining experiences I've ever had in the church. As is usually the case, what I thought was my service to God turned out to be most beneficial for me.

As of January 1, 1998, Bruce and I officially turned the editorship of *Integrity* over to the very capable and Spirit-led visionary, Curtis McClane, our new Editor-in-Chief, and to Noreen Bryant, our Managing Editor, a deeply spiritual woman who is also very experienced in publishing. Several factors came up this past fall which gave Bruce and me a clear sense of closure of our era as editors of the journal, including my volunteer time becoming limited by the need to work full time as our children enter their college years, and the unfolding of Curtis' and Noreen's inspiring leadership on the *Integrity* Board. As Board member Curt Lloyd wisely said when Bruce and I told him of our intention to "retire": "It's healthy for a journal to change leadership every decade or so."

I thank God that I got to encourage you to look for the church of Jesus that is located

within the walls of Stone-Campbell churches and beyond. I'm glad that I got to tell you how dear are the unity principles as presented in Thomas Campbell's "Last Will and Testament" to my view of the family of God. To get to tell you about the contemporary companionship of the Holy Spirit of God within and beyond the inspired Bible has been joy to me. The fact that I got to live out in this editor position what I believe Galatians 3:28 teaches about women has been very important to me. And I am grateful that I've gotten to express to you in writing the little that I know about the huge, loving mercy of God which the grace of Jesus offers to us all.

I've deeply appreciated the magnanimous fellowship which many of you readers have extended to Bruce and me, especially when we've published articles that have made many of us "uncomfortable." Often you have written encouraging messages to us, saying: "Sometimes I don't agree with you, but *Integrity* always makes me think." One time a Church of Christ minister who has known me since teen years said to me, "Oh, you've always been a rebel." No one had ever said that to me before, and I was surprised to hear it. I thought he knew that I have just been trying to figure out how to follow Jesus. You readers seem to have understood this all along about the *Integrity* ministry since the early days with Hoy Ledbetter, and you continue to give our writers the benefit of the doubt and plenty of room to grow and understand in this written open forum.

(please see page 93)

The Power of Grace and Love

J. BRUCE KILMER

After 68 issues, Diane and I are passing the torch of editorship of *Integrity*. We will continue on the Board of *Integrity*. It has been a great experience and opportunity for us. I am thankful for the opportunity to share, communicate, and fellowship with you—brothers and sisters and fellow seekers from throughout this country and the world. I am thankful to have been able to share ideas with you about so many things that have been on my heart: ideas about God's grace, Jesus' example, the Bible, love, pride, prejudice, prayer, the Holy Spirit, baptism, the role of women in the church, politics, evangelism, unity, and many other issues facing the church and each of us today. As I sat down to write this last editorial, I asked myself: What is the one thought I would like to leave with you?

In 1969, Diane and I were finishing our sophomore year at Michigan Christian College and getting ready to transfer to Abilene Christian College when we began reading *Integrity* with its first issue in June of that year. Hoy Ledbetter, who had been the minister at Diane's home congregation in Dearborn, was the editor. I was already reading *Mission* and Carl Ketcherside's *Mission Messenger*. Sometime in high school I had begun to question the absolute answers I had been taught regarding the Church of Christ. I remember a close friend of mine began questioning several unwritten Church of Christ creeds: confession as one of the five steps of salvation, giving as one of the required five acts of worship to be performed each Sunday, and our emphasis on the five steps of salvation in conversion without a clear presentation of these

steps as being a response to Jesus and his death for us.

This started an ever enlarging snowball of questioning for me that still continues to this day. If God's grace could save us despite our moral imperfections, couldn't that grace save us and other denominations, despite our doctrinal imperfections? After struggling for years regarding my understanding of my own baptism and intellectually realizing that neither my understanding of baptism nor my surrender or commitment at the moment of my baptism could ever be perfect, I realized that only Jesus and my faith in him could save me. Carl Ketcherside wrote me a letter that was the beginning of my giving up trying to earn my salvation by a perfect conversion and baptism. He said: "Forgiveness is a judicial act in the mind of God." Somehow that reversed my self-centered perspective on salvation. His words helped take my focus off of me and put it on heaven. But the focus on my understanding or my works is a habit of mind that I struggle with until this day.

The power of God's love and the assurance of his love for me is still distant at times. The legalism I was taught and the need to have the doctrine just right, became a part of my psyche. It is a thorn in my side and a weight to my feet to this day that shows me why Paul said "the letter kills and the Spirit gives life," and why he was so vehement in his condemnation in Galatians:

(please see page 93)

Cookies to Communion: Changing Roles of Women in the Church of Christ

PEGGY SANFORD

In early 1996, a limited survey was conducted of individuals in seven Churches of Christ that were involved in expanding the roles of women. This survey took the form of telephone interviews, and an attempt was made to interview at least one woman and one man (typically either an elder or minister) from each of the seven congregations. The intention of the survey was partially to learn what changes the congregations were undergoing and how those changes were being implemented. More importantly, however, was how those changes were impacting congregational life and individuals within the congregation.

This article is an account of those interviews. I would ask the reader to remember this was a limited survey. It was never an attempt to conduct a random sampling of Churches of Christ to determine where they stand as a whole on the issue of women's roles. Rather, as stated, it was an attempt to learn what effect expanding women's roles has had. Finally, all individuals interviewed consented to inclusion of their name as a resource person. These are listed in an appendix at the end of the article.

Congregations involved in this survey have been involved in expanding women's roles for an average of 10 years, with a range of 2 - 30 years. In some of these congregations, women are teaching adult Bible classes when both men and women are present, serving as ushers, worship team members, ministry leaders, and leading co-ed functions. During worship services, women at some of these congregations are included in serving communion, reading

scripture, leading singing, and leading public prayer. While some roles are currently off limits in most of these congregations, no one stated any role was off limits forever, rather, all were open to study and prayer.

Consistently, the two most controversial areas of service for women were preaching and serving as elders. Despite this, some congregations report changes in women's roles in these areas. At the time the interviews took place, one congregation was considering a woman as candidate for youth minister. Another congregation had a woman preach as a visitor, but stated this was not a typical occurrence, and they would probably have reservations about hiring a woman full time. In a third congregation, a husband and wife team serves as co-ministers. They share all ministerial duties, preaching alternate Sundays. Some people simply don't show up on the mornings she preaches, but no one has left the church over her preaching.

Two congregations have no formal eldership, but do have steering committees on which women serve. One congregation is located in a very transient community, and therefore has a steering committee of elected members comprised of three men and three women. This group responds to administrative issues and the ministers respond to pastoral issues. In a second congregation, the steering committee is comprised of three men and five women. When this congregation decided to expand the roles of women, there was some disagreement about whether women should be allowed to serve as elders. In light of this, the elders at the time stepped down and were

replaced by a church council. A third congregation reported that currently all elders are men, but they would be willing to select a woman as elder if led by the Spirit to do so.

The catalyst for change was consistently said to be the elders, ministers, and the Holy Spirit. Not one congregation instituted changes based on women pushing for equal rights. Three major factors that served as catalyst for change were years of study and prayer, a desire to allow individuals to use gifts given by God, and a fear of losing women.

Often, the beginning of study was the result of an acknowledgement of cultural changes. One individual stated, "We had an array of women in bank leadership, partners in law firms, women running businesses six days a week. But they had no primary role on Sunday. While society does not dictate, it says we need to think about the incongruity of not letting them be a part in church." In another congregation, a man married a woman from a different religious background. She was a corporate executive by profession and questioned the practice of women being excluded from certain activities on the basis of gender. She stated that if the validity of this position could be proved to her she would accept it. This resulted in a study conducted through adult Bible classes, and finally a rethinking of the role of women.

A second catalyst for change was the desire to allow individuals to use gifts God had given. Congregations began by asking why God would select people for certain gifts solely on the basis of gender, race, age, or status. For these congregations, there was a focus on the giftedness of individuals rather than the rights of individuals. Thus, giving women roles in worship was a product of wanting to use the talents and gifts of Christians, not the result of women gaining equal rights.

Finally, these congregations expressed a fear of losing women, especially young women. There was a strong desire for healthy change versus a loss of women with talents. In one congregation the teens had met in an elder's home for devotionals over a long period of time with the older boys taking a lead. A year came when the older teens were girls and they became the leaders. There was a fear of losing these young women if they had no involvement in worship. Another congregation had a youth group of 50 to 60 teenagers a few years previously. As young adults, only two of the young women were active members of a Church of Christ, while nearly all the young men remained active. One young woman, active throughout her life until graduation from high school, wanted to remain active as a leader for young teens. She was told there was no place for her in a leadership role, so she left.

Implementing Change

In order to implement healthy change, congregations engaged in extensive study, prayer, and communication. Most stated change was slow; however, they developed a plan and a timeline for change. One of the first steps actually taken in several congregations was having a husband and wife, father and daughter, or whole family serve communion together. This often became a favorite assignment.

As roles for women expanded only one congregation reported providing systematic training and mentoring for the new roles. This was accomplished through a one-day seminar taught by women for women with some time spent in the sanctuary for practical experience. Consistently, most women required time and encouragement to fill the new roles, and did not initially rush forward to participate; rather they were reserved and timid. In one

instance, the most qualified song leader was a woman, but she was terrified. In another, a woman got up to read scripture and had to sit back down because she was crying. In some cases, men within the congregation were ready for women to assume new roles long before the women were ready.

Some commonality was found among women who initially filled new roles in terms of age, professional background, and a desire to use gifts. Where age was a factor, it tended to be women who grew up in the '60s and '70s. At first, the older women were found to be more uncomfortable, but over time, and with encouragement, they began taking part. Often, women who were leaders in the community and at their place of employment seemed more willing to participate. However, this trend was not pervasive, and homemakers and professional women alike were early participants. Finally, women who stepped forward to assume the expanded roles were described as bright, thoughtful people who were serious about their faith and commitment to God. They were women who wanted to use gifts God had given and expressed a desire to be able to serve.

As with any change, resistance to expanding the roles of women was expressed both from inside and outside the congregations. While there were no consistent characteristics of those who expressed resistance, often they were older individuals or those who were or had been in leadership positions. Men most commonly expressed resistance, but some younger women were also strong in opposition. The most common characteristic of these individuals was fearfulness. Some expressed a fear of being wrong, and a concern for doctrinal correctness. Many, however, had a fear of change in general and a fear of what others would think.

Resistance and dissent from within were often expressed vocally and in letters to the elders and ministers. Many were confrontational and patronizing toward women who would be willing to assume the new roles. Some individuals became angry and distrustful of friends and family. Often, there was a declaration by key families that they could no longer worship with the congregation, and some people left. In some cases, the individuals who left had been "congregation hopping" for several years. However, not all dissenters left. Some stayed and agreed to disagree in an attempt to preserve Biblical unity. Throughout the turmoil, elders and ministers focused on unity and fellowship. They tried to teach, to soothe hurt feelings, and to let everyone know they were loved and cared about. Leaders tried to persuade those who intended to leave to stay and asked dissenters to differ and not divide.

Criticism was also expressed from outside sources. Only one congregation stated they had very little outside criticism as they had always been considered a fairly liberal

Leaders tried to persuade those who intended to leave, to stay and asked dissenters to differ and not divide.

group. However, most felt the sting of criticism from outside. They were openly criticized by other elders and ministers, often receiving letters of disfellowship resulting in isolation from other congregations. They were labeled dangerous, shunned by other groups, and "written up" in journals. One individual stated "nearby congregations think we are going to hell."

Not all responses from outside the congregation were critical, and many sources of support and encouragement were found

both locally and from around the country. Other congregations who had experienced similar difficulties provided encouragement. Some brotherhood journals printed positive articles about the changing role of women. New families began to worship who wanted to be a part of the change, and many members of other congregations expressed the desire for similar changes within their own congregation. While little support was received from area Churches of Christ, leaders and ministers of other churches provided support and encouragement.

Even though there was some encouragement, every individual interviewed stated the turmoil resulted in pain that was pervasive throughout the congregation. This pain could not be dealt with only by the elders and ministers—they could not shield the congregation. Several congregations coasted for a period of time because of the burden of the pain. Ultimately the congregations pulled together and were more united with an overall strengthening. One individual stated, "we just practiced the autonomy the church believes in and went about our business," while another said, "we trusted in the Lord and did what we thought He wanted." One congregation considered dropping "Church of Christ" from their name out of concern for visitors. However, they decided to preserve their name in a desire to maintain their Stone-Campbell heritage. The statement was made, "We don't want to lose our voice, and we want to show healthy changes can be made to keep women and their talents."

Negative Effects

Expanding women's roles affected the congregations positively and negatively. One minor down side was a rocky start because the women were untrained in speaking before the entire congregation. How-

ever, a major negative aspect was associated with the general turmoil created by instituting changes including a feeling of isolation from other congregations, pain, loss of members, and damage to relationships.

Positive Aspects

Negative aspects, while significant, were few in number and there were more positives for the congregation in general and for individual men and women.

Unity became paramount as the congregations learned it was possible to have conflict and disagreement and remain a united, loving fellowship . . .

Congregationally, minor positive aspects included gaining new members and, from a very practical standpoint, a doubling of gifted people who were able to serve. More importantly, fellowship and unity grew, and there was the feeling that the church was more loving and tolerant. There was a stronger sense of being a family where every member was important. Individual families were also strengthened as they were provided opportunities for service together. Children began to see the importance of faith to the whole family. Unity became paramount as the congregations learned it was possible to have conflict and disagreement and remain a united, loving fellowship, even when there was agreement to disagree. There was a stronger feeling of Biblical unity as congregations became more open to individuals from outside the Church of Christ who provided support and encouragement.

Men grew spiritually, gaining new dimensions and insight. One man stated the voices of sisters added a good dimension and depth in prayers. Men also gained new

areas of service. Often, as the roles of women expanded, the roles of men also expanded with men taking a more active part in the nursery, teaching preschool children, serving soup and washing dishes after potlucks. One man whose congregation has been involved in expanded roles for women for many years stated he had become very accustomed to women participating actively in worship. He said, "When I see all those white men lined up in front of a regular Church of Christ, it is disconcerting. It gives you an idea of how we look to someone outside the Church of Christ."

Women grew individually as well. In many instances, expansion of women's roles allowed some women to remain in the Church of Christ who would otherwise have left. Parents were encouraged to realize their daughters felt a stronger sense of worth and value in the kingdom of God. Being able to participate in worship leadership was important for the spiritual health of women. Simply being before the congregation and taking responsibility for wording a prayer, reading a scripture, leading a song, or serving communion impacted the spiritual growth and strength of the women.

Advice from those who have taken the first steps

Individuals interviewed provided advice for others who might be considering expanding the roles of women. The most consistent words of advice were to study, pray and communicate. Be sure to involve everyone in the dialogue, key people, non-key people, teens, and older people—in other words everyone, because the impact will affect everyone. Remember that pleasing God is the most important thing. Make sure your motivations are more than just doing for the sake of doing, but don't approach this half-heartedly—either do it or don't do it. Know your Bible and why you

believe women should be integrated into active worship activities. Be able to communicate what you believe and why, and be able to show you are not twisting the scriptures. Be open to study and keep an open mind. We need to ask if we really understand the truth of God's word. Teach people how to read and study the Bible rather than

Count the cost but don't wait for every last individual to get on board, and don't be overly swayed by a few in opposition.

using the old style literalist approach. Also teach a new security that our salvation does not depend on perfect understanding and knowledge, but on the grace of God. Decide what kind of church you want to be, know your people, what they think, and make sure the leadership is committed. Be sure you have a fellowship that loves and trusts each other. Use outside sources as much as possible, including facilitators who can be objective and individuals who conduct seminars on the topic. Count the cost but don't wait for every last individual to get on board, and don't be overly swayed by a few in opposition. Realize the change may be painful, causing dissent within and without and may cut through families and friends. However, realize change does not have to be negative. When all else was said and done, these changes fostered forgiveness and togetherness, growth, spirituality, and strength. Mentor the women, teach, train, and prepare them. Train them in things such as how to lead singing, how to stand, what to do with their hands, how to project, what it's like to talk in front of an audience, what speaking into a microphone is like so they are successful when they do something. Continue to encourage the women who are the cookie bakers and children's teachers

and let them know the worth and value of these ministries. Most importantly, keep a Biblical vision of unity and concentrate on not dividing the congregation.

Finally, every individual interviewed was asked, "Was the change worth it? Given the amount of individual and congregational

stress, turmoil and pain, would you do it again?" One individual stated, "Now we think so, but at the time we wondered if it was worth it—we were tempted to do the easy thing and abandon it, but did not." In conclusion, the response to this question from all seven congregations represented in this survey was an emphatic, "Yes."

Dr. Peggy Sanford of Louisville, KY, is an Assistant Professor at Eastern Kentucky University.

The Changing Role of Women: Resource Persons

These people have been contacted by the author and are willing to serve as resource persons regarding the practical aspects of the changing roles of women in the Church of Christ.

Ann Bayliss
Bering Drive Church of Christ
Houston, TX
713-579-9854

Elladean Brigham
Columbia Church of Christ
Columbia, MD
410-799-9321

Paul Casner
West Islip Church of Christ
West Islip, NY
516-587-1156

Mark Dauphin
Cahaba Valley Church of Christ
Birmingham, AL
205-823-0275

Edward Fudge
Bering Drive Church of Christ
Houston, TX

Katie Hays
Cahaba Valley Church of Christ
Birmingham, AL
205-991-5226

Robert Randolph
Brookline Church of Christ
Brookline, MA
617-258-5484

Gary Selby
Columbia Church of Christ
Columbia, MD

Debi Shepherd
Troy Church of Christ
Troy, MI
248-952-5262

Sharon Johnston
Stoney Creek Church of Christ
Ontario
905-335-6568

Joseph Jones
Troy Church of Christ
Troy, MI
248-524-2181

Elizabeth Parsons
Brookline Church of Christ
Brookline, MA
617-661-8379

What Needs to Change in *Your* Church?

BY KATHY BLAKELY

It's hard to know what motives people have for wanting change or not wanting change within their congregation, or within the church as a whole. No, I'll take that back. It's impossible to know. Who knows our heart, except for the Lord? Questioning the motives of others, however, is an easy way to discount what they have to offer.

What needs to be changed in your church? At South Redford Church of Christ, there are several things that need to be changed. The minister's office is being moved to the library and the library's going where the minister's office was. It's been 25 years since our building was built, so we're putting on a new roof and re-carpeting. One of our newest members is a good Bible teacher, so we're changing things to make room for him to share his talents: we have a new book study on Sunday afternoons that he will be teaching. We are all looking forward to learning from him and enjoying fellowship together. The treasurer is changing our financial software. And we are constantly looking at our Sunday morning worship service, looking to see if it can be changed for the better. Because this is my direct responsibility (and, under the direction of our eldership, my primary reason for existence on earth), I "tweak" the service constantly. I try different things to see what works. How will the congregation respond to some new choruses? Where should we put the announcements, so that people hear them, but they don't interrupt the flow of worship? How do we get people to acknowledge God's presence and appreciate the presence of the worshippers around them? How can we incorporate more scripture reading and prayer into our service?

Are you uncomfortable with change? If you are, is your discomfort a good enough reason for keeping positive change from happening at your church? Is it important that your opinion is heard on every topic? God has given me gifts that I have developed, and use within his church, particularly in the areas of worship and music. So I have a lot to say about those areas at South Redford. But I find it odd when people think I will want to give my opinion on every aspect of the church's life. I might not like the new decor in the sanctuary, or the schedule for cleaning the kitchen after pot lucks (I don't like the fact that I'm even on that schedule). I don't particularly care for some of the music that the teenagers reverberate throughout the building. Who cares? My heart is more content, because the body of believers with whom I worship is a wonderfully diverse group, and each person is trying to serve the Lord with whatever gifts he or she has been given. I'll not throw a wet blanket on anyone's service just because it doesn't suit my tastes.

I recently went with three of my nephews to pick out videos for a movie marathon. I gave them each permission to select one movie (although I had veto power). Bert wanted to pick *Neverending Story III*. "I'm not going to watch that one," said Mark. "Why not?" asked Andy.

"I won't like it."

"Why not?"

"I don't know, I just won't like it," Mark stubbornly refused to budge.

Mark also said "No" to *Star Trek* movies. "Are they too scary for you?" I asked.

"No, I just don't like them. Well, I liked one I saw once, but I know I won't like any of the others."

We finally talked Mark into trying Bert's choice. And what do you know, he *did* like the movie, after he'd tried it. Mark also likes lasagna, although he sat at the dinner table crying the first time his mother made him try it. Other times, he's so stubborn he makes do with peanut butter and jelly rather than try a new dish he'd probably love.

Are We Nine-Year-Old Boys?

Have we become nine-year-old boys within our church life? Do our leaders have to get our approval to change the number of songs we sing, or to let a woman pass the offering plate, or to rearrange the Sunday School rooms? Is our sense of self so insecure that we will be hurt if our opinions aren't considered on every topic? Do we trust our minister and our leaders enough to "get with the program" and follow where they are leading? Or must we constantly be coaxed into trying something new, like little children whose parents try to get them to see reason without invoking a temper tantrum or a flurry of tears?

Kathy Blakely is the Worship Leader/Planner at the South Redford Church of Christ and a member of the *Integrity* Board. She adores her nephews.

Reflections on Change

BY DONALD W. WHITE

After the morning worship service, Sam Morgan said, "I don't understand these changes lately. Nothing was wrong with our worship service before, and I just can't get used to these new song books." Heads nodded around the table of sympathetic companions.

At the same time in the Parker home, Lynn said, "Chuck and I really appreciate the changes at church these last few months."

"I know what you mean," Susan concurred. Our kids are getting a lot more out of church than we did twenty years ago."

Are these words too harsh for you? As my Dad used to say, "The truth hurts, doesn't it?" Whether you are for or against any particular change within the body of Christ, the Lord knows your motives, and someday all people will, too. You must guard your heart. You must be merciless with yourself and put it all on the altar. I have had to lay many things on God's altar, and let him burn them up. What a fire!

Everything changes. Our bodies change; our relationships change. Our jobs change, as do our political leaders, our neighborhoods. Trying to avoid change is impossible and the attempt will leave you frustrated and bitter. How much better to embrace each day, and what it will bring, with your hand in the hand of the One who never changes, whose faithfulness to you is absolutely trustworthy, and who loves you whatever the circumstance.

Rarely does a week go by these days without the word "change" used concerning the church. Whether it is accompanied by fear, gratitude, or indifference depends on which conversation we overhear. But one thing is clear: throughout the church, change is unfolding.

Changes are Overdue

Those who believe that change is long overdue have several legitimate reasons. To effectively reach people today, the church must acknowledge the changes in Ameri-

can culture since the 1950s. Families now have different needs. People are usually busier; mothers work outside the home, and single-parent households have increased. People also expect more from worship today than the satisfaction of fulfilling a Christian duty. And there is fresh yearning among churches to distinguish between what is truly scriptural and what is merely traditional—a search rooted in the very soul of our movement.

These realities should indeed make a difference in our church programs, Bible class topics, and ministry planning. But there may be other reasons for changes that some Christians, especially us “baby boomers,” are not quite ready to acknowledge.

Two young professionals recently gave an elder a list of changes they want for their congregation. They informed him, however, that “if these changes do not take place, we feel compelled to move on.” Some church leaders, after agreeing to several requested modifications, may only be confronted with more cries for change from church members who will never be satisfied. It seems the mood of discontent that we celebrated in the ‘60s and ‘70s has for some never quite grown into a healthy desire for truly constructive progress. This is often apparent when change itself becomes more important than the real problems we believe we are addressing.

Let's ask ourselves, “Why?”

While many of my generation yearn for change, it must have a purpose more noble than continued rebellion against the church and our parents. There are some, with a calloused desire to shake up “traditionalists,” who hide behind a pretense of Christian freedom and maturity. Their insensitivity to the feelings of fellow Christians, however, unmasks an immature need to do

things their way, a need that collides with real Christian maturity (Rom 15: 1-2).

Change for the sake of change may do more harm than good by needlessly alienating and offending other Christians. Power plays and counter moves may ignite, creating a battle to determine who is “in control” of the church, while brotherly love and unity are eclipsed by self-interest. Allowing too much too fast always invites conflict and controversy. Several simultaneous changes, or a few abrupt changes with little preparation, will alienate many in a congregation. Change must be well-planned, and everyone should know far in advance what to expect.

To change a long-standing practice requires a good reason. Can we clearly identify the specific needs that make change preferable, and can we demonstrate how our particular changes will meet those needs? If we cannot, perhaps change is not as urgent as we thought. Church leaders must find ways to gather input from all parties. Even those who disagree with a particular decision will accept it more readily if they know their views are heard and as carefully considered as anyone else's. No change should ever take place without asking first how it will affect others. As we clamor for change we must also watch our hearts, alert for any thirst for change that is accompanied by the desire to “win” against those who disagree with us.

Temper change with sensitivity

Not every call for change is born of rebelliousness or selfishness. In many places, change is long overdue. There are too many churches where the worship is stale, the preaching is without power, and service and evangelism are ignored. But even in such churches where change is not

(please see back cover)

In Memoriam: Dr. Brant Lee Doty

BY CURTIS LLOYD

Brant Lee Doty was a substantial man from every point of view. Most think of him as student of the Word, master teacher, lover of all peoples, founder (in effect) of Great Lakes Bible College in 1949 (which is now called Great Lakes Christian College). He counted not his own life; rather, as the Apostle Paul, he counted it pure joy to be a servant in the Kingdom. Brother Doty had many academic degrees and many awards and accolades, but you would have had to pull that out of him rather than his volunteering it. To all who believed in the mission of GLCC Brant Lee Doty was “Mr. GLCC!” His faithful wife, Ruth, made more sacrifices than most know, but she was always at his side believing in him and the work he dedicated his life to. Their children pay them tribute as they live their lives.

Personally, I think of Dr. Doty as my long-term friend, Lee. What a friend he is! He will always be that to me. Many saw him as a preacher, a masterful teacher, a prolific published author and he was that and more. Doc, being a baseball fan, became known far and wide for being an incurable optimist as demonstrated in his being a Chicago Cubs fan! Some do not know of his many interests and artistic abilities: at one time a master of the art of bonsai; incredible painter of oil minatures; his romance with various exotic fish that inhabited Lee's spacious aquarium in the Doty's living room. One of his plethora of undertakings was wood carv-

ing. I will never forget a trip in 1984 that several of us made to Kansas City for a meeting. I was driving and Lee was in the front passenger's seat with a towel placed over his lap, upon which a rectangular piece of beautiful mahogany rested. Bumping up and down on the long road, Lee would sort of get his hands and wrists in rhythm with those bumps and with the heel of his hand he would hit the cutting tool briskly, carefully creating the precise cut he intended. Me, I'm thinking one move like that and this piece of gorgeous wood would become kindling. Not so with Lee, for he was carving a majestic eagle landing with wings spread, and talons grasping a high limb for a vantage point. Beautiful!

I recall all of this nearly every day when I arise from bed and look at that very artistic endeavor. I had admired his work on the trip and later he made a gift of his work to me. Thoughtfulness and generosity were key trademarks of Lee. How I treasure that piece—but not nearly as much as my friendship with Brant Lee Doty—one of God's own people!

Many times I heard Lee comment, “When I get to heaven I'm going to ask Moses. . . .” Right now I expect he is watching many “instant replays” of events that happened in Scripture and in the lives of the faithful. God has chosen to call one of his humblest and finest servant-warriors home. He will be missed, but never forgotten.

Bending the Twig

BY LAQUITA AND ELTON HIGGS

The male half of our writing team is taking the lead in this installment, and, accordingly, it seems appropriate to make some remarks on fathering and grandfathering at this time. The latter function has just been highlighted for me by the birth of our first grandson, William Aaron Cryderman, to our daughter, Liann, and her husband, Bill.

From the very beginning, ushering new life into the world is, to some degree or other, a traumatic experience, and that is a catalyst for posing afresh the question of how the baby is to be nurtured to productive maturity, and for considering whether, in this age of “gender” merging, fathers and grandfathers have any identifiable parenting functions connected with their “maleness.” Women have been designated biologically as the incubators and birth-givers in the process, as well as the preferred source of physical nourishment during the first year or so. (My son-in-law commented, after observing the birth of his son, that if it were left to the males to give birth, the population of the world would be considerably less.) But the men are left to non-biological determinants of their function after conception has taken place.

One of the most focused descriptions in the Bible of the duties of fathers (though some popular modern translations change the word to the generic “parents”) is in Ephesians 6:4: “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord” (RSV). The New English Bible reads, “You fathers, again, must not goad your children to resentment, but give them the instruction, and the correction, which belong to a Christian upbringing.” Why is the warning against “provoking” or “goaded” children

to resentment and anger particularly addressed to fathers, and why is it a special obligation for them to give their children instruction and discipline (or correction)? Those of an older generation are familiar with the motherly threat, “Just wait until your father gets home!” The implication is that fathers are especially prone to exercise a heavy hand in dealing with children, and that they must give special attention to holding that tendency in check in order to be able more effectively to instruct and to discipline. But isn’t discipline the exercise of strong control? In a way, yes, but what is advocated here is power clothed in sacrifice and the voluntary curbing of power in order to maintain a relationship of authority exercised in love, not merely indulging a desire to control.

This concept of power clothed in sacrifice is the tenor of Ephesians 5:21-6:20. In their conduct toward their wives, husbands are to reflect the willingness of Christ to die for the church, and His willingness to suffer shame Himself in order to present the church without blemish. The submission of wives to their husbands is not to be forced, for the relationship being described is not dependent on power, but on mutual love and the willing obedience of both parties to the will of God. By the same token, masters are to treat Christian slaves as brothers and sisters, laying aside the absolute power given them as owners, according to law and custom. The famous passage on using the armor of God against the Devil is a contrast in kinds of power: the power of “weakness” submitted to God as opposed to the powers of this world in rebellion against Him.

How are children to be instructed by fathers and grandfathers, then? By the example of men refusing to take advantage of

their power to intimidate or mistreat others; by men who do not consider the servanthood of menial chores to be beneath them; by men so solicitous of the welfare of their wives and children that they will risk being demeaned themselves in order to portray those for whom they are responsible in the best light; by men who will instruct and discipline as the Lord does—patiently, consistently, and with understanding of the intertwining of the welfare of instructors

and instructed. Fathers and grandfathers must be molded by the example of Jesus, “who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant . . .” (Philippians 2:6-7). If Christian men are to exercise their unique responsibilities in regard to children, it must be through the voluntary clothing of their human power in the sacrificial love of God.

Farewell Editorial, Diane Kilmer

from page 80

The *Integrity* Board has asked Bruce and me to continue to serve as Board members and contributing writers, which we gladly plan to do. I look forward to sharing more with you as I learn along the way, “for building up the body of Christ, until all of us come 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. 4:12b-13).

**I know,
my God,
that you test the heart
and are pleased
with *Integrity* . . .**

-1 Chronicles 29:17

Farewell Editorial, Bruce Kilmer

from page 81

“But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed! As we have said before, so now I repeat, if anyone proclaims to you a gospel contrary to what you received, let that one be accursed!”

-Galatians 1:8-9

From the context, the contrary gospel to which Paul refers does not involve instrumental music in worship, or church organization, or the frequency of the Lord’s Supper, or sprinkling for baptism; the contrary gospel is the substitution of the works of the law for faith and trust in the work of Jesus.

If I have helped anyone in these past twelve years, I pray that it is in helping you allow the power of the grace and love of God to be released in your life.

“For freedom in Christ has set us free.”

-Galatians 5:1

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Dr. Norman Parks, 1904-1997

Set Our Women Free!" was the cry of Dr. Norman Parks, as well as the title of a booklet he wrote in the 1970s concerning women's roles in the Church of Christ. A lifelong educator, Dr. Parks championed the cause of women in the church and wrote prolifically on several other issues of interest to Christians. He died Dec. 23 at home in Murfreesboro, TN, of congestive heart failure.

Dr. Parks was the chairman of the political science department of Middle Tennessee State University, and was academic Dean of David Lipscomb University from 1934-1942.

Says Mel Scarlett, former president of MTSU, "He really cared about issues that were important to him and to society, and was extremely influential on everyone who came in contact with him. He was a leader

who thought, studied, and expressed himself. He stood head and shoulders above others and was extremely influential among his students, colleagues, and others."

Dr. Parks also taught at Vanderbilt University and was senior editorial writer for the Nashville *Tennessean* from 1944-1949. He has written extensively for many publications ranging from the *New York Times* to *Integrity*.

Says Bruce Kilmer, co-editor of *Integrity*, "Norman Parks has made an invaluable contribution in particular to *Integrity* with his writings on gender roles in the church. His wise and persuasive arguments have done much for the cause of gender equality."

Dr. Norman Parks was a dear friend and supporter to *Integrity*. We rejoice with heaven that he has joined the Lord.