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MISSION

SEPTEMBER, 1987 JOURNAL

... do not be over-modest in your own cause; for there is a modesty that leads to sin, as well as a modesty that brings honour and favour. Do not be untrue to yourself in deference to another, or so diffident that you fail in your duty. Never remain silent when a word might put things right Do not argue against the truth but have a proper sense of your own ignorance Do not let yourself be a doormat to a fool or curry favour with the powerful. Fight to the death for truth, and the Lord God will fight on your side.

—Ecclesiasticus 4:20-23, 27-28, NEB

WOMEN, POWER, FAMILY, AND CHURCH

Power Issues and Family Theology

By S. Scott Bartchy

Why Do We Tarry?

By Elton Abernathy

Bible Things In Bible Ways—
Is It Possible?
By Michael Hall

Into The Jungles—
The Work of Wycliff Translators
By Ben B. Boothe

Two Churches Unite
By Mark A. Searby

No Business But Show Business
A Review by Dave Bland

Ethical Standards of Editors
By Reg Westmoreland

Reflections on Inerancy
By David Fiensy

VOLUME 21, NUMBER 2 SEPTEMBER, 1987

Encouraging Change

The role and place of women in the church and family structures continues to be one of the critical religious issues of the '80s. Last month we published Part I of S. Scott Bartchy's paper "Issues of Power and a Theology of the Family," and we continue in this issue with Part II. Basically Dr. Bartchy calls for a different hermeneutic for texts dealing with "power" and family life—a hermeneutic that promotes maturity for both men and women, mutual submission, and power for lifting up the fallen, and that sees Jesus operating as a servant rather than out of the "lordship slot." In Part II he deals exclusively with Ephesians 5: its radical message for those to whom it was written and a way of reading it for today. "The sole purpose and force of the daring comparison of husbands to Christ was that of radically challenging and changing tradition-honored, male-dominant behavior."

Almost since its inception, *Mission* has addressed this topic from many perspectives. For the most part, however, the studies wrestled with Scripture interpretation and attempted to build a theology of women. Although little was said about implementation of new understandings, there has nevertheless been some moving and shaking going on among the churches. In some congregations, after prayerful study, the talents and commitment of women have been more fully recognized and embraced in the work and worship of the group. One congregation of the Church of Christ that I know of will have a woman minister beginning in the fall. Yet, such encouraging signs are not wide-spread; the "so-what?" has not really been faced. "Why Do We Tarry?" asks Elton Abernathy. He suggests some very specific beginning steps for a congregation that "feels they have dealt unjustly with fifty percent or more of its members."

Though not dealing primarily with the subject of women, Michael Hall's "Those Vague Biblical Procedures" is applicable in some respects. He probes into the old slogan of "doing Bible things in Bible ways." He finds the "Bible ways" part troublesome, for "the Scriptures hardly mention what would be considered biblical ways." He suggests that we cannot impose a simplistic pattern on methods, styles, and forms.

Among other offerings in this issue, I have space to call attention to only one: "Reversing the Separations—Still Working." Over the last year or so we have run an occasional column under the heading "Paths of Unity." The authors have not attempted to give a formula for "unity," but have either voiced personal perspectives or personal or congregational journeys. Some have worked and some have not. Mark Searby writes of the uniting of a Christian Church and a Church of Christ that is still working after several years. He does not offer a blueprint, only thoughtfulness and encouragement.

—The Editor

"TO EXPLORE THOROUGHLY THE SCRIPTURES AND THEIR MEANING . . . TO UNDERSTAND AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE THE WORLD IN WHICH THE CHURCH LIVES AND HAS HER MISSION . . . TO PROVIDE A VEHICLE FOR COMMUNICATING THE MEANING OF GOD'S WORD TO OUR CONTEMPORARY WORLD."

— EDITORIAL POLICY STATEMENT, JULY, 1967

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Art: Joyce Barton
Dallas, Texas

EDITOR

BOOK REVIEW EDITOR

BUSINESS AND CIRCULATION MANAGER

EDITORIAL SECRETARY

BOBBIE LEE HOLLEY

BRUCE L. EDWARDS, JR.

KITTY JAY

PAM HADDOCK

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Issues of Power and A Theology Of The Family

Part II

Paul conceives of the Church as a human society in which the strong do *not* use their strength to dominate the weak and to seek additional strength for themselves in order to distance themselves further above the weak in a hierarchy that they control.

By S. SCOTT BARTCHY

In Part I of this series, Dr. Bartchy asks a number of important questions. Among them: "Can Christians agree on a hermeneutic for reading those biblical texts that deal with family life, a hermeneutic that will permit each text to contribute to the ongoing 'maturing in Christ' of each family member? Do Christians have the courage to look in these texts for exhortations to think and act in ways that may not be commonly regarded as 'good and respectable' in American culture?" He then discusses the traditional sex-role expectations and suggests that those who rigidly adhere to the hierarchical family structures are convicted that God is above all a God of order, "not the "God of growth and salvation, or of freedom or of love." He affirms a better and higher way: "the power of God available to human beings is available in unlimited amounts! And the evidence for the presence of this power in human life is not first of all order, not even for the sake of 'greater unity' . . . but 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.'" He discusses different kinds of power and points out that "the primary kind of power seen in Jesus of Nazareth was that of his overwhelming capacity to strengthen, challenge, encourage, and forgive, i.e., to love others." We turn now to Paul's understanding of how Spirit-filled Christians would treat each other if they were married to each other.

5. EPHESIANS 5: A GUIDE FOR DECISION-MAKING?

5.1. It could be fascinating to trace the history of the interpretation of Ephesians 5 in relation to the

various understandings of power and authority advocated by Christians during the past two millenia in widely diverse cultures. As a point of reference, a thorough historical-literary exegesis of this text could prove quite useful. In the context of this paper, however, neither of these important tasks can be undertaken. At most, a conceptual path can be cleared that opens up the possibility of a fresh reading of this quite influential text. Keeping in view the analysis presented in Part I of the extraordinarily deep-seated presuppositions about God and power held by all recent interpreters of Ephesians known to me, I employ here two alternative theological propositions as helpful tools for opening fresh access to the intention of this text. I have become persuaded that these tools are not just helpful for understanding Ephesians 5; they are essential for exegeting *any* New Testament text that deals with human behavior.

5.2. The first tool is a Christology that takes seriously the manner in which Jesus treated his disciples and friends, by regarding the descriptions of his behavior as a profound and powerful aspect of divine revelation. The second tool is a hermeneutic that claims that the revelatory intent of any New Testament text calling for a change in human behavior will be found in its capacity to move Christians towards the "full measure of perfection found in Christ" (Ephesians 4:13, NIV). Application of this tool requires the exegete of Ephesians 5 to become quite familiar with the first readers' presuppositions about male/female relationships, so as to be able first to ascertain the extent and nature of the distance between where these early Christians started as pagans and the goal of "perfection in Christ," and then to

discern how the text was designed both to meet them "where they were" and to move them as directly as possible towards this goal. Use of this tool further requires the interpreter to become well acquainted with the presuppositions about male/female relationships prevailing in the time and culture under consideration, for the relation of these presuppositions to the goal of "perfection in Christ" must be analyzed by any interpretation that intends to communicate the revelation made to the early Christians in Ephesians 5.

5.3. The first clues to Paul's intention in writing Ephesians 5:21-33 must be searched for in the richly textured theology and exhortations that precede this passage. His strong urging of all Christians, males and females, to "be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (3:19) and to "become mature . . . in Christ" (4:13) are determiners of the direction and momentum of his thought in chapter 5. Paul has already declared that Christian women and men together are "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance" for them to do (2:10, NIV). Christ's purpose in his death was to "create in himself one new human being (*anthropon*)" out of Jews and Gentiles (2:15, my trans.). In Christ, men and women are "being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit" (2:22, NIV). All these exhortations towards maturity, purposeful activity, unity, and openness to God's Spirit reach a climax in the astonishing words: "Therefore become imitators of God . . . and conduct your relationships with agape-love" (5:1, my trans.).

5.4. Paul focuses this extraordinary admonition in 5:18, making a daring comparison by which he must have intended to acknowledge and reinforce the sense of expanded consciousness in God's Spirit experienced by his readers: "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead be filled with the Spirit!" As Paul's grammar in the following sentences makes quite clear, the fullness in the Spirit is intended to overflow into four closely related channels (the paraphrases are mine):

1. Vs 19a: "Talking warmly *with each other* in terms of the spiritual heritage."

The purpose of this "talking" is not the private pleasure of the speaker. Rather, Spirit-filled conversation is directed so that "the faith, obedience, love, and joy of fellow Christians are stimulated and increased" (Barth 1974:583).

2. Vs 19b: "Singing and playing songs of praise to the Lord (Jesus) from the totality of one's being."

As becomes clear within a few verses, this "Lord" is the one who uses his power to serve, not to control. "The reference to the heart is an appeal to the center of man's intellect and will, even to the total man, and not primarily to emotion" (Barth 583).

3. Vs 20: "Giving thanks always and for everything to God as Father because Jesus the Messiah and in accord with his teachings and ways of doing things."

This "everything" includes the gift of other people (so Theodoret, fifth century) as well as the "provision by uncounted benefits of ever new material for joy and thanks" (J. Calvin in: Barth 585). Such an exhortation is clearly addressed to people who are experiencing a state of mind that is enhanced beyond the normal level of routine living.

4. Vs 21: "Subordinating yourselves to each other in awe of Christ."

This exhortation, in light of verse 25, surely refers to the breathtaking behavior of Jesus, who subordinated himself not only to the will of his Father but also to the needs of human beings as well as to the insults and torture they inflicted on him.

5.5. I choose the term "awe" for this translation of *phobos* in vs 21 not because "awe" might mediate the difference between the familiar "reverence" (RSV, NIV) and the more literal "fear" (NASV), but because experiences of fear tend to stifle a person's spirit while feelings of reverence may not go deep enough to change behavior. It seems clear from the flow of thought in chapter 5 that Paul anticipates that experiencing awe before Christ *will* change human behavior by opening people up and equipping them to risk thinking and acting in ways beyond the familiar and the secure. An example from Hebrew Scripture of such awe and risking is found in Isaiah 6. Isaiah is granted a vision of the Lord "high and lifted up," causing him to cry out: "Woe is me! For I am lost!" But Isaiah is not paralyzed by fear. Rather, the Lord's forgiveness permits Isaiah's profound awe to result in a new sense of increased personal possibility and a readiness to risk: "Here I am! Send me!" (Isaiah 6:8).

5.6. My goal in presenting this contextual and somewhat detailed approach to the familiar words in verses 22 and following ("wives subordinate yourselves to your husbands . . .") is to highlight two critical aspects of Ephesians 5:1-33: (1) These words are not being spoken to Christians who are in an everyday, "worldly" state of mind, but to those who have been empowered to do extraordinary things by

the Spirit they have permitted to fill them. Paul does not expect that human beings who were not filled with God's Spirit would be able or willing to respond to any of the four exhortations. (2) The model for the subordination that is called for in vs 21 and following is Jesus himself. Thus the self-subordination that is called for is not just a lightly "baptized" version of the kind of submissive human relationships with which Paul's readers were quite familiar in a patriarchal culture under Roman rule. It is a bold, positive self-subordination that permits Christians to share their Lord's Spirit and manner of treating others.

5.7. In contrast to the impression left by so many interpreters of Ephesians 5, verses 21 and 25 are not the only Pauline texts that present Jesus as a model for each Christian's self-subordination to every other Christian. For example, when he seeks to resolve major tensions in the Philippian congregation, Paul admonishes:

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who although He existed in the form of God . . . emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant" (Philippians 2:3-7, NASV)

When writing to the Corinthian Christians, Paul exhorts: "Even as I try to please everybody in every way . . . I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. Follow my own example, as I follow the example of Christ" (1 Cor. 10:33-11:1, NIV). And he surely has the behavior of Jesus in mind when writing to the Roman Christians: "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves" (12:10, NIV).

5.8. Now when Stephen Clark, author of a 753-page book on *Man and Woman in Christ*, comments, "It may surprise some that I do not discuss mutual subordination," the texts just cited suggest the reply: "It is not just a surprise; it is a suppression of fundamental evidence that speaks against his conclusions." Clark, nevertheless, does present a long footnote (74-76) in which he elaborates on four reasons for rejecting the idea "that Eph. 5:21 is urging mutual subordination." All of them arise from Clark's apparent inability to comprehend that the phrase "mutual subordination" makes any logical sense.

5.9. Fundamental to his incomprehension is Clark's observation that behind the phrase "sub-

ordinate oneself" is "a spatial image with someone over and someone else under" (75). He permits his imagination to be dominated completely by this spatial image without observing the radical reversal of its logic that is stated in the primitive Christian confession: Jesus is Lord! For to acknowledge Jesus as Lord meant not only excluding the claims of any other lords; it meant embracing an apparent paradox: the One who is "over" has made himself "under," not just for a few years but for eternity (see Part I, 4.9-4.19). For even when God raised Jesus from the dead, Jesus did not therefore begin acting like an oriental-style monarch. Rather, by exalting Jesus, God confirmed the eternal validity of Jesus' claim that the way to life required becoming permanently the "someone-else-under" in every human relationship. Among Christians this would mean "regarding one another as more important than oneself"—i.e., *mutual* subordination.

5.10. Clark does not seem to have grasped that Jesus' own use of his power to serve and to sacrifice opened the way for those who would follow him to do the same. Paul understood this reality quite clearly, as is evidenced both by his readiness to sacrifice his life if necessary to serve "dirty Gentiles" as well as Jews and by his vision of the Church as the Body of Christ in which its weakest members are given the greatest honor (1 Cor. 12:22-24). That is, Paul con-

The second tool is a hermeneutic that claims that the revelatory intent of any New Testament text calling for a change in human behavior will be found in its capacity to move Christians towards the "full measure of perfection found in Christ."

ceives of the Church as a human society in which the strong do *not* use their strength to dominate the weak and to seek additional strength for themselves in order to distance themselves further above the weak in a hierarchy that they control. Rather, the strong are to pay special attention to the weak, gently empowering them to become strong. Paul exhorts the Corinthians to give greater honor to those in the Body of Christ who lack honor so that "the members should have the same care for one another" (12:26, NASV). Paul envisions a human community in which the strong use their strength to strengthen the weaker members, thus creating a dynamic "horizontal" network of exchanges of spiritual power and material goods rather than a fixed hierarchy of any

kind. Thus Paul admonishes those who could have sought with their strength to dominate the congregations in Rome:

We who are strong ought to bear the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself . . . May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus.
(Romans 15:1-3, 5)

According to Paul's vision, this "spirit of unity" must be expressed in "horizontal" closeness of the strong to the weak. For when the Body of Christ functions properly, "if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. 12:26, NASV).

5.11. Once again it is particularly striking that in a major-length book about men and women in Christ who ideally will live together in Christian community, Clark considers none of the New Testament texts quoted above except to attempt to limit 1 Corinthians 10:32 ("I am not seeking my own good but the good of many") to "missionary adaption," rather than allowing it to be a basic guide for the life of the Christian community. Neither does he examine the central Christological text in Mark 10:35-45 or its parallels in Matthew and Luke. To be sure, Clark does refer to Luke's parallel (22:24-27) at two points in this book. But in the first passage (p. 34) he calls on Luke 22:24 to indicate that "there is a right kind of government and a wrong kind," without in the least suggesting that Jesus was stressing human relationships in which the "greatest" person is the one who serves. In the second passage (p. 270) he cites Luke 22:24-27 among other texts that he claims intend to show that "early Christians saw pagans as unable to judge well about what is true righteousness." I suggest that Clark's inability to comprehend the "logic" of mutual subordination among Christians is the direct result of his ignoring or missing the point of such critical Christological texts.

5.12. By ignoring the rich Christological basis for all human relationships Clark is able to claim regarding Ephesians 5 that "the husband's care for the wife . . . involves no subordination" (76). This neglect further permits him to argue that the word translated "to each other" (*allelais*) in the phrase "subordinating yourselves to each other" does not have to contain the idea of mutuality or reciprocity. He proposes a new translation: "Let each of you subordinate himself or herself to the one he or she should be subordinate to" (76). Clark correctly claims that the

exhortations about how Christians are to treat each other that precede Ephesians 5:21-33 contain "the bulk of Paul's instruction to married couples and everyone else" (74). Yet such a novel and distorted rendering of *allelais* indicates that Clark has not permitted the direction and momentum of Paul's thought in the entire letter up to that point to be fundamentally important for his understanding of Ephesians 5:21. Nor does he consider the sociopsychological situation of the first readers who needed to be challenged by the verses that follow 5:21 (see 5.18. below). Further, this twisted translation is a good measure of the extent to which Clark's commitment to the "God of order" prevents him from grasping

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ing the "logic" of Jesus' self-subordination and of the power to serve others (including those regarded by the world as one's "inferiors") that the risen Jesus can supply to those who surrender to him as their paradoxical Lord.

5.13. If Clark were reading my argument he would probably object: "Christ did not *subordinate* himself to the Church or to any other group or person." If so, Clark would be attempting to establish in Christ's behavior the distinction he tries to make between the husband's "service" and the wife's "subordination." Yet, this distinction seems to be on very shaky ground in light of the fact that Jesus used his power in human relationships in such a self-subordinating manner that he finally "gave himself up" (Eph. 5:25) for his Church. Clark might well reply: "Be that as it may, the critical issue here is: Who makes the decisions?" If so, questions must be asked: Did Jesus make decisions for his disciples, and does he make decisions for the Church today?

5.14. All New Testament evidence points to a negative answer to both questions. Jesus' self-restraint and loving care in his use of his own power has been dramatically demonstrated by his obvious and concerned patience in response to the Church's various decisions *not* to remain without "spot or wrinkle" or "holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). "That is, his leadership of the Church has not been expressed by using power to control or coerce the

Church 'for her own good' or 'for his own good' (Bartchy 1984:3b). Christ has been consistent in using his power as either non-manipulative "nutritive" or "integrative power."

5.15. Furthermore, in contrast to the idea that is conventionally brought to the reading of Ephesians 5, Jesus did not use his power or authority to make his disciples' decisions for them, nor did he seek to protect them from the results of their own bad decisions—such as those of Judas or Peter. Rather, Jesus proclaimed God's Rule as the only sphere of authentic Reality and then called those who would listen to make responsible decisions in light of that Reality. "Jesus never encouraged his disciples to escape personal responsibility for their lives by turning over the task of decision-making to him" (Bartchy 1984:3b). Would Jesus have been able to attain his own goal for his Church—"attaining the full measure of perfection found in Christ"—if he had made decisions for his disciples "for their own good"? What kind of maturity would that have been? The kind of maturity and human community for which Jesus "gave himself up" could not have become possible through Christ's

not "lordship" language but "sacrificial servant" language. That is, the only point at which the husband is encouraged to identify himself with Christ's behavior or role is the extreme extent of Christ's love for the Church: "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy . . . In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies" (5:25-28, NIV).

5.18. Now this exhortation stood in direct conflict with the expectations of both men and women in the Mediterranean world of the first century. It was the women who had been socialized to make the sacrifices for the men in their lives: fathers, brothers, husbands, and sons. The men, on the other hand, had been socialized to dominate women and to expect to be served by them, whether mother, sister, wife, or daughter. Furthermore, it was customary for a man to marry a woman both substantially younger and less educated than he. Men looking for a wife were not looking for a genuine partner but for someone whom they could control. Their advantage in age and education made their controlling their younger wives seem quite natural and appropriate.

The self-subordination that is called for is not just a lightly "baptized" version of the kind of submissive human relationships with which Paul's readers were quite familiar in a patriarchal culture under Roman rule.

"loving domination" or his benevolent "having-the-last-word" either for the world or for the Church. Rather he called and calls human beings to make their own decisions in light of the new Reality, God's Rule, that he was and is making possible in their midst.

5.16. The authority attained by Jesus among human beings was not based on his success in controlling them, as he did the demons. Rather it rested on their perception of his radical integrity: his astonishing teachings and his breathtaking behavior agreed with each other, clarified each other, and reinforced each other. And it rested on his ability to *empower* human beings to "become mature"—not in his compelling them to do so.

5.17. With this Christology clarified, it now seems difficult if not impossible to read Ephesians 5:18-33 as either permission or demand for Christian husbands to conclude that they are "in charge" of the family or that they are the God-ordained intermediaries between their wives and God. Quite to the contrary, the daring comparison between the Christian husband and Christ has as its middle term

According to the relatively progressive first-century popular philosopher, Plutarch, a husband would be wise to educate his wife so that she might conduct domestic affairs in a manner to make him proud of her. But the wife was urged to follow her husband in all his decisions, including that of which gods to worship ("Advice to Bride and Groom"). In short, the first readers of Ephesians 5 were socialized in an exceedingly patriarchal culture that still surrounded them as Christians with its male-favored expectations of what was respectable and desirable behavior for married men and women.

5.19. Now with a broadly-based New Testament Servant-Christology in place, with the line of Paul's exhortations prior to Ephesians 5:21 in view, and with the first readers' patriarchal expectations for male/female relations in mind, we are prepared to ask, What will be Paul's strategy for motivating his married readers to modify their "power up"/"power down" behavior in the direction of "attaining the full measure of perfection found in Christ"? As noted above, he begins to focus the issue with his exhortation for all his readers to be filled with the

consciousness-expanding Spirit of God, who makes it possible for Christians in "power-up" positions to overcome their culturally-legitimated desire to control others and to live with them in paradoxical mutual self-subordination. As the entire text of Ephesians makes clear, this Spirit is also seeking to strengthen and mature those in "power-down" positions. Thus it may be concluded that when they are called to subordinate themselves, Paul anticipates that they will respond not according to their culture's expectations for them to be submissive but rather from their growing strength in Christ. As such, their response could be a true *self*-subordination rather than a submission to the demands of either husbands or society. The Spirit makes it possible for both "power-down" and "power-up" Christians to act with a new source of strength when they choose to subordinate themselves to each other in "awe" of Christ's own behavior.

5.20. Apparently taking for granted that an erotic relationship existed between the couples who are addressed in Ephesians 5 (see 1 Cor. 7:3-5), Paul three times urges Christian husbands to agape-love their

dominant behavior.

5.21. But Clark might well object: "If Christian wives accept the admonitions directed to them in Ephesians 5:22-24, will their husbands not be forced to make the decisions? For the wives are urged to subordinate themselves to their husbands in everything as the Church subordinates itself to Christ (vs 24). There is no question that this passage has been used quite often both to warn Christian wives against wanting too much "say" in decisions about themselves and their families and to grant these women permission to avoid responsibilities usually associated with adult life. Running parallel to the "compensatory machoism" discussed in Part I (3:18-20), many women seek to maintain a kind of "compensatory childhood" that is characterized by protection from the "bad world," from adult competition, from the need to negotiate rather than manipulate, from the need to make decisions or to deal with either men or women in any professional-type relationship. Included in this "compensatory childhood" is the feeling that a woman as a wife has the *right* to be cared for, financially supported, and

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wives—i.e., to use their intelligence to discover their wives' needs and to meet them. They should agape-love their wives: (1) as Christ loved the Church, i.e., at the cost of his life; (2) as they do their own bodies (no one hates his own body but rather feeds and cares for it); and (3) because one who loves his wife loves himself. These words express Paul's great concern for subordination and loving service, but nothing about who should make the decisions. As has been shown above to be typical of Pauline exhortatory passages, Jesus' amazing agape-love and self-sacrifice provide both the model and the motivation for the husband's treatment of his wife. Central to Paul's strategy, as he sought to appeal to men who acknowledged Jesus as their Lord, is his invitation to such patriarchy-oriented men to identify themselves with their Lord. Jesus' kind of lordship created the paradox that undermines patriarchy and its fundamental claim of rights and privileges for the oldest male in the family (*patria potestas* in Roman law). Thus the sole purpose and force of the daring comparison of husbands to Christ in Ephesians 5 was that of radically challenging and changing tradition-honored, male-

protected. Also included is the feeling that it is appropriate to talk "baby talk," perhaps using a "fittle girl voice" in order to remind the husband that his wife looks up to him as she once did to her father.

5.22. From what we know about the feelings of women in the ancient world, the immaturity just described would have been even more characteristic of their society than it is today of ours. From what we have noted about Paul's concern for the maturity in Christ of every Christian, especially as expressed in the total text of Ephesians, it seems *most* unlikely that he intended his words in 5:22-24 to encourage any of the aspects of "compensatory childhood" just described (see also Barth 613). There is no way in which these women would be able to "attain the full measure of perfection found in Christ" if they simply continued the attitudes and actions with respect to men that they had been taught since their childhood. What, then, could have provoked him to write such sentences?

5.23. Early Christian history yields a variety of evidence for the fact that a significant number of women who became Christians valued the new

freedom that they experienced in the Spirit more highly than their pre-conversion family relationships. That is, it appears that at least some Christian women drew the conclusion that since their relationship to Christ gave them an identity apart from their husbands and children; and since the Christian communities gave them families apart from their husbands or parents, these women could appropriately reject the submissive role into which they had been socialized. For example, when writing to the Corinthian Christians in response to their questions about the place of sexual relations in a truly spiritual marriage, Paul admonishes,

But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband (but if she does leave, let her remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not send his wife away. (1 Cor. 7:10-11, NASV)

Throughout chapter 7 Paul regularly addresses both men and women in turn, mentioning the men first. Only here does he reverse his order; and it seems plausible that he had a reason for doing so: some Christian women no longer felt that they needed a husband. In contrast to their peers who became "women" by marrying and "total women" by bearing children, these Christian women felt free and strong enough (were not Jesus and Paul both unmarried?) to leave their husbands. Paul urges those who are still with their husbands to remain with them and those who have left their families either to remain single or to return to their husbands.

5.24. Perhaps these women in Corinth had been influenced by the kind of false teaching that is reported in 1 Timothy 4:1-3: "Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods" (NIV). For these teachers, their conviction that "the resurrection has already taken place" (2 Tim. 2:18) seems to have functioned as the fundamental paradigm in which a kind of individual freedom became more highly valued than family relationships (see J. Crouch 1972). Such teachers seem to have become especially effective among the women in Ephesus (2 Tim. 3:6-7; Bartchy 1978: 70-74). Also on Crete such "deceivers" were "ruining whole households" (Tit. 1:10), by teaching that "nothing is pure" (1:15) and by rejecting family life. For in response, the older women in that congregation are urged to teach the younger women "to love their husbands, to love their children . . . subordinating themselves to their husbands, so that the word of

God not be slandered" (Tit. 2:4-5, my trans.).

5.25. In contrast to the impression created by some English translations (e.g., RSV, NIV), the term in Titus 2:5 translated "subordinating themselves" is the same verb (*hypotasso*) in the same basic grammatical form (participle, middle voice) that we find in Ephesians 5:21 and by logical extension in 5:22 (which lacks a verb in Greek). It seems, therefore, highly likely that the two exhortations are given for the same reason: to urge women who were experiencing new personal identity, freedom, and power in Christ not to believe or act like those who taught them that their marriages were hindrances to their attaining true spirituality. Rather they are to subordinate themselves to their husbands in all things—not because the husband as a Christian has the right to demand such subordination, but because the wife as a Christian has been called to subordinate herself to her husband "in awe of Christ" (vs 21; see the parallel phrase in vs 22: "as to the Lord").

5.26. Perhaps these women were finding such self-subordination particularly difficult in relation to husbands who had been socialized to expect that their wives would serve them just because they were women. The difficulties such Christian women must have had maintaining relationships in which they *chose* to be servants in a society that had *trained* them to be servants have not even been mentioned in the literature known to me. How delicate their situation was. For they were being exhorted to *continue* to

Paul's strong urging of all Christians, males and females, to "be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" and to "become mature . . . in Christ" are determiners of the direction and momentum of his thought in chapter 5.

serve the members of their family, but now with a new identity and a new motivation. Whereas they had routinely subordinated themselves for psychological and physical survival, as well as for attaining their own ends by subtle means, now as Christians they are called on to subordinate themselves in imitation of Christ and as a result of acknowledging *him*, not their husbands, as lord. In order to grow out of such a delicate bind, these women surely needed to have Christian husbands who would agape-love them "just as Christ loved the Church." Attaining "the full measure of the perfection found in Christ" was surely no easy process for

either women or men who had begun their marriages with the assumption that the sex roles that were traditional to first-century cultures were intensely correct and socially most respectable. The fact that more than eight of the eleven verses in Ephesians 5:22-33 are directed to Christian husbands suggests that the difficulties a Christian wife must have had in sorting out her reasons for acting as a servant and in

Jesus' "leadership of the Church has not been expressed by using power to control or coerce the Church 'for her own good' or 'for his own good.'"

re-parenting herself to be self-motivated out of the strength of Christ were at least matched by the strains involved in the profound re-parenting required of a husband who needed to learn to relate to his wife as Christ did and does to the Church.

5.27. But Stephen Clark might regard all the above as quite interesting yet thoroughly misleading because I seem to have given insufficient weight to the "key" term *kephale* in Ephesians 5:23: "For the husband is the head (*kephale*) of the wife as Christ is the head (*kephale*) of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior" (NIV). Clark remains unimpressed by recent scholarship that has demonstrated that in Greek usage the metaphorical range of the term translated "head" rarely included the idea of "being in charge of something" and most frequently referred to the "source of something." The Greeks had other, more direct ways of designating a "boss" or "decision-maker" (Bartchy 1978: 76-80). David M. Park, in an unpublished paper on *hypotasso* and *kephale* in Ephesians 5:21-33, states, "Surprisingly, few references ascribe this definition ['one entrusted with superior rank, authority or power'] to *kephale*, indicating that the metaphor was new in Paul's day" (Park 1982:8). Because of its newness, Park suggests, this metaphor "may well have had a shock effect upon the recipients of Paul's Ephesians letter, captivating their attention" (9). Ultimately, however, Park fails to demonstrate that Paul's readers would have been aware of such a purported "new" meaning for *kephale*. According to popular psychology and physiology among both Greeks and Hebrews, a person reasoned and purposed not "with his head" but "in his heart" (see Barth 187-192). By using the term *kephale* Paul could hardly have anticipated that his readers would have understood him to mean that either Christ or a Christian husband was a "head" in the sense of a center of intelligence or a decision-maker. "Source," then, is the meaning that led the list

of *kephale's* possible metaphorical references in the first century.

5.28. To be sure, Stephen Clark does observe that Paul uses *kephale* as a metaphor for Christ in Ephesians 4:15-16 to express the idea that he is the "source": "From him the whole body . . . grows and builds itself up in love" (NIV); but Clark remains eager to find what he calls "the 'governing' connotations of *kephale*" (84 note). Nevertheless, Paul's usage of *kephale* in Ephesians is paralleled by Colossians 1:18: "He [Christ] is also the head (*kephale*) of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything" (NASV). This text helps to clarify the relation to each other of the rich images in Ephesians 1:22-23, according to which God by exalting Christ "has appointed him source (*kephale*) for all things for the Church which is his body, the fulness of him who fills all in all" (my trans.). The "fulness" language clarifies how *kephale* functions in the sense of "source" even when used adjacent to the phrase "and God placed all things under his feet" (vs 22a). That is, the metaphors are mixed. Even in the famous text in 1 Corinthians 11:3, part of a difficult passage that has proven to be an exegetical "mine field" (11:2-16), the term *kephale* functions not in the sense of "boss" or "decision-maker" but of "source." In the words of a native Greek-speaker who was an important Christian teacher in the fifth century: "Thus we say that the *kephale* of every man is Christ, because he was excellently made through him. And the *kephale* of woman is man, because she was taken from his flesh. Likewise, the *kephale* of Christ is God, because He is from Him according to nature" (Cyril of Alexandria in: W. Lampe 1968:749).

5.29. Thus when Paul uses the term *kephale* in Ephesians 5:23, his readers, both male and female, most probably heard the idea "source." But what

The daring comparison between the Christian husband and Christ has as its middle term not "lordship" language but "sacrificial servant" language.

meaning would that have conveyed and why was it important? Taking a clue from 1 Corinthians 11:3-12, where Paul explicitly plays on the double meaning of *aner* ("man"/"husband") and *gune* ("woman"/"wife"), I suggest that the phrase in 5:23a refers first of all to God's creation of woman from man according to Genesis 2:23: "she shall be called Woman because she was taken out of Man" (RSV).

The fact that the word *aner* appears without the definite article supports such a proposal; the word thus refers to generic "man" not to specific husbands. The translation then would read: "For man is the source of woman, as also Christ is the source of the Church."

5.30. That Paul was thinking in terms of Genesis 2 while writing Ephesians 5 becomes explicitly clear in 5:31, where he quotes the well known words from Genesis 2:24, the verse immediately following the one just noted above: "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and will be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." How this quotation fits into Paul's strategy for challenging Christian husbands seems clear enough. And his strategy for challenging Christian wives may seem equally clear, if we keep in mind the rejection of sexuality and marriage that typified the kind of Christian "perfectionism" that I have already (see above 5:23) proposed as the reason Paul first applies his exhortation about mutual self-subordination to Christian wives in verse 22. For by insisting in verse 23 that "man is the source of woman," Paul stressed God's initial action in creating the two sexes and strongly reaffirmed the goodness of sexuality. In contrast to the "false teaching" described above, Paul stressed that nothing about human existence "in Christ" rejects the basic male/female model for that existence. Even though as Christians neither men or women must be married to become real persons (see 1 Cor. 7), sexuality is still very good; it must not be rejected even when sex *roles* are challenged by the Spirit (see 1 Cor. 11:3-10); and it remains the basis for family life.

5.31. Thus we may conclude that Paul's first word to Christian wives who were tempted to reject sexuality and leave their husbands is an exhortation to act toward their husbands in the manner modeled by Jesus for all Christians in their relations with all other Christians—self-subordination. Hurley shows quite clearly how Paul intends his general exhortation in Ephesians 5:21 to apply specifically in verse 22, which has no verb of its own (1981:139-141). Paul's second word, then, is a strong affirmation of sexuality that parallels his admonition to husbands in vss 28-31: "Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies (vs 28, NIV). "As Christ is the source of the Church, his body, being himself the savior" so "man" is the source of "woman"—in both cases God intends the most intimate connection to prevail (vs 23). Then in verse 24, Paul's third word presents the self-subordination of the Church to Christ as a model for Christian wives to follow in

relation to their husbands. As Markus Barth expresses it: "Examples of how the church subordinates herself to her Lord and Savior by faith and confession, love and unity, hope and testimony, missionary action and ministerial endurance, are spread all over Ephesians" (619). All of these expressions of self-subordination are to be given freely out of the strength of those who are becoming mature and attaining "the full measure of perfection found in Christ." The frequently overlooked fact that there is once again no verb in Greek for "self-subordination" in verse 24b (as in vs 22) makes it very clear that the relation of the wife to her husband is to be characterized by the same spirit of freely given service arising out of the strength of her growing maturity.

5.32. The fact that the large majority of exhortations in Ephesians 5:21-33 are directed to husbands rather than wives may suggest that Paul perceived that the then current circumstances in his congregations especially called for the modification of Christian husbands' beliefs and behavior in relation to their wives. In any case, the comparatively brief exhortations directed to wives, whether needed in the immediate situation or primarily part of Paul's tradition, have overshadowed the exhortations directed to their husbands—especially during the post-Constantinian period of Church history, when "power" has meant primarily "the ability to control." How could Paul have anticipated that his use of term *kephale* would create so much confusion when translated into some other languages, such as German and English? To be sure, translating this term with the word "source" does not in itself eliminate the possibility that *some* kind of priority for the man might be in view. But *nothing* in the context of Ephesians 5:18-33 suggests that this reference to Genesis 2:23 could have been understood as a basis for husbands to regard themselves as *the* decision-makers for the family or the lords of their wives. To the contrary, the context strongly calls for non-manipulative "nutritive" and "integrative" uses of power by Christian wives and husbands.

5.33. May Ephesians 5, then, be used as a "guide for decision-making"? In sharp contrast to what has been taught so widely, nothing is said or implied in this text about *who* should be the family "decision-maker." But a great deal is implied here about *how* Christian husbands and wives who are attaining maturity in Christ should go about the process of making decisions in their lives together (see J. Scanlon 1979).

MISSION

Why Do We Tarry?

Reconciliation and Equality between Men and Women in Christ



By ELTON ABERNATHY

In the latter part of 1978 and the first months of 1979, Roy Willbern, Houston attorney and a member of *Mission's* Board of Directors, wrote a series of three articles dealing with the general theme of women in the church. They were published in *Mission*. The first article (November 1978) was called "Scripture's Restrictive Strand." The author introduced his subject by noting that members of Bible-oriented churches generally hold one of two attitudes toward women in the church. The first, based on a literal interpretation of certain verses written by Paul the Apostle, is that Christian women should be veiled, silent, and submissive. Though the ones who hold this view generally see no harm in a hat being substituted for a veil and are willing to relax the command of silence to allow women to sing in church assemblies and to teach other women or small children in the Bible School, they tend to take the "submission" to husbands, preachers, and elders very literally.

Willbern suggested that those holding the second attitude believe that the term "submission" is really the operative word. Of course, they say, women can wear hats, or scarves, or go bare-headed for that matter. Furthermore, they can sing, give oral reports, make oral requests for prayers or participate orally in any other way as long as they do so under the direction and supervision of and do not usurp the authority of men.

Willbern expressed dissatisfaction with both attitudes, partly because "submission" of women to men is diametrically opposed to currents toward ab-

solute sexual equality in modern society and partly because of the related fact that a growing number of young men and women see any effort to keep women in an inferior role as contrary to the spirit of Jesus Christ. The author then proceeded to the theme of the first article, pointing out that certain statements made by Paul and Peter did indeed bring to Christians an echo of the Hebrew belief that because man was created before woman all males should, by the nature of things, have a superior role in all things religious and social. Willbern suggested that all these passages represented one strand in the complex weave of the Holy Scriptures.

The second article (December, 1978), entitled "Equality, the Second Strand," introduced readers to another strand of Scripture expressing the theme of equality of the sexes. This strand also arose in the creation story, illustrated by the fact that God sent both man and woman to "have dominion over the earth" because both man and woman were created in the image of God. There is no suggestion that man had any hand in creating woman, nor any hint of male superiority. God created both. In fact, Willbern noted that only after sin came into the world did the concomitant notion of women's inferiority also appear. The author believed that the sin that separated man from God also separated man from woman.

Willbern then traced in the New Testament the efforts of Christ to bring together things that had been separated. He reminded us of Paul's admonition to the Ephesians that men should love their wives to the extent that the two should become "one flesh." Jesus brought salvation, including the Holy Spirit, to both Jews and Greeks. Presumably the same salvation was also brought to women! Brother Willbern observed that for any man to bring down, sub-

Elton Abernathy is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos, having been Chairman of the Department of Speech for 29 years. A recent publication is *The Cross to Now!*

ordinate, oppress, or condescend to one who has been justified, reconciled, and transformed by the blood of Christ is indeed a serious thing.

The author noted that the New Testament iterates that "all (no doubt including women) are joint heirs of the Grace of God." He pointed out that during His lifetime Jesus invariably treated women with dignity and respect. He discussed theology with Martha, Mary, and the Samaritan woman. He rescued women from illness and from prostitution and in no way ever showed a hint of condescension toward them.

In his third article (January, 1979), entitled "Rethinking the Alternatives," Willbern began by reviewing the "order of creation" Scriptures dealt with in the first article and the "joint heirs with Christ" passages he treated in article number two. How can one understand strands of Scripture so diametrically opposed in spirit?

First, the author pointed to such passages as 1 Corinthians, Chapter 7, where Paul wrote that the wife does not rule over her own body, but her husband, nor does the husband rule over his own body, but the wife. Such language would seem to indicate Paul's revised view that in this new Christian age there should be absolute equality between the sexes. In the 11th Chapter of the same letter the Apostle seems to return briefly to his "order of creation" argument in saying "woman is the glory of the man, for man was not made for woman, but woman for man;" but then he apparently caught himself and

"Submission" of women to men is dismetrically opposed to currents toward absolute sexual equality in modern society, and a growing number of young men and women see any effort to keep women in an inferior role as contrary to the spirit of Jesus Christ.

parenthetically said, "Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man nor man of woman." In Chapter 3 of Paul's letter to the Galatians he nailed it down by writing, "In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God . . . There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Willbern then gave as his judgment that Paul, realizing that all battles could not be carried on at the same time nor by the same generation, decided that the most important war he could wage would be

against the Judaizing teachers who were trying either to exclude non-Jews from Christianity or else to force them to become Jews before they could come to Christ. Paul argued with great success that Jews and non-Jews were equal before God. Before Paul's death so many Gentiles were in the Church that the influence of the Judaizers was much weakened.

The other two great battles, to free slaves and to liberate women, Paul dealt with only in generalities. Willbern observed that perhaps there is only so much

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good that can be done by one generation. It took 1800 years to abolish slavery in most countries. Is now the time to face the problem of liberating women?

He devoted the latter part of this third article to a discussion of the dilemma in which this leaves a Christian who looks to the Holy Scriptures for guidance. Could Paul have been mistaken in some of the things he wrote? Did his experience as a Jewish rabbi color his judgment; or, to the contrary, was the great Apostle adapting what he wrote to the culture and spirit of the times? What about the "Restoration Theology" principle of trying to build twentieth century congregational duplicates of those of the first century? What about the more commonly accepted principle that if one takes into account the circumstances under which a passage was written, he has adequately interpreted it?

Willbern expressed his own belief that when modern man reads the Scriptures the Holy Spirit is with him, helping, in the light of 1900 years of human experience, to interpret God's will for us. He concluded the final article by expressing the hope that men and women will soon be reconciled, that they may truly be "joint heirs with Christ."

The purpose of the above brief review is to bring back to those who read Roy Willbern's articles about nine years ago some remembrance of what he said, as well as to furnish some background for those new readers of *Mission* who did not read the material at all. Recently our adult class enjoyed studying these articles. At the conclusion of our study, I suggested that Roy did not quite finish the job. His analysis was excellent; the theories he advanced were very good. But, so what? What next? If a congregation feels that they have dealt unjustly with fifty percent or more of its members, what should they do? What are some

beginning steps?

I was rather adamant in my argument that another article was needed—so much so that someone challenged me, “Why don’t you write it?” I discussed it briefly with Roy; with his encouragement, here is my response to the challenge. It represents some views of a layman about how congregations could begin righting wrongs and taking advantage of that vast reserve of talent that is wasted when church women are allowed only to bear children, clean the building, prepare for any “dinner on the ground” that men may schedule, teach small children, and be submissive to every man and teenage boy.

Let me begin by considering some of the things that happen in a church congregation. One of these is the handling of moderately large sums of money. Generally, decisions are made at meetings of elders and deacons, then relayed to members of the group as a whole. No women serve as elders or deacons. Normally, discussions by this group of men are not questioned.

In contrast, in the outside world it is estimated that women control fifty percent or more of the money in the United States. On a personal level, we know families in which wives have more financial acumen than their husbands. In fact, there are cases where the only thing that keeps a couple solvent is the tight rein that the wife keeps on the purse strings.

This loss of feminine wisdom in the money-handling work of the congregation is illustrated by a situation with which I am well acquainted. A lady has made substantial (a sum well over six figures) contributions to several congregations, to church-supported orphanages, and to religious schools. Yet not once, to my knowledge, has any group of elders and deacons, or any board of trustees consulted with her about how the money she contributed and that contributed by others should be spent. Simply because she is a woman.

This leads to a very obvious recommendation. In the self-interest of the entire congregation, every committee set up to plan a new building, maintain a building, set the rate of salaries to be paid, plan contributions to missionaries or orphanages, or handle money for any other purpose should be constituted regardless of the sex of the members. This would mean that half or more of the committee membership would be female, and in many cases the group would be chaired by a woman. Do we dare attempt to do the Lord’s work in an inefficient manner?

What else happens in local congregations? Many things, varying widely from one to another. There are preachers to be employed, retained, or released.

There are missionaries, orphanages, and old-age homes to support. There are decisions about “meetings,” workshops, or retreats. There are decisions about joining with other like-minded churches in certain joint efforts to oppose pornography or counteract drug abuse. Perhaps a hundred different problems and decisions in any active congregations could be listed, but to what end? Does any one of us honestly believe that as a participant in making such decisions every man is more qualified than any woman? It probably is true that in the first century most women’s experience was limited to baking bread, carrying water, washing clothes, and bearing children. If that were true then, how times have changed! Women in the twentieth century are not like that. They are secretaries, doctors, teachers, and presidents of corporations. The talents they have developed not only may exceed that of *some* men but often that of *any* man. Why then do we refuse to draft such skilled women to head up committees or task forces to deal with some of our problems? Surely men do not have such a poor self-image that they fear the use of capable women would in some way give them the “upper hand.”

Then there is the teaching ministry of the church. In many conservative churches no woman is invited to teach any children past the age of puberty, for fear some of those older children might be young males. Of course, women teach science, literature, and mathematics to grown boys and men in high schools and universities; but if they taught them religion in the church school, how could they still be properly submissive? Actually, women can be excellent teachers of tolerance, love, hope, and the other weightier matters of Christianity.

Then we turn to the Sunday morning service.

Surely men do not have such a poor self-image that they fear the use of capable women would in some way give them the “upper hand.”

Perhaps that was what Paul and Peter had in mind when they warned that women should be veiled, silent, and submissive to men. Certainly most opposition to female participation today concerns Sunday morning. Churches of Christ, Southern Baptist, Anglican, and Roman Catholic Churches in the 1980s have leaders whose hair stands on end at the thought of a woman standing in the pulpit or taking any other role except singing on Sunday morning.

A great many other things happen in a typical service of worship besides a sermon. For example, there is the music. By *carefully selecting* the Scriptures to

follow word by word, virtually no congregation enforces the "women keep silent" rule during congregational singing. Instead, music is written for soprano and alto voices; and females and males together are urged to sing. But what about when the regular music director or song leader is absent? Do we ask the woman who teaches music in the local high school; or do we turn to Brother Joab, whose ignorance of pitch is as great as his unfamiliarity with melody and rhythm? It never occurred to the regular

Generally the bread and wine are passed from one row to another by men or boys. Theirs is not a position of leadership or authority. Why, then, couldn't women or girls do it as well?

song leader that he was exercising dominance over the singers, so why would we fear asking the lady to take that position?

What else happens on Sunday morning? There are public prayers. No man who voices such a prayer has domineering thoughts. Rather, he is trying humbly to verbalize the thanks, needs, and wants of the other members. Is it far-fetched to think that a soft feminine voice might be very appropriate in voicing cries, tears, and joys?

And there is the Lord's Supper or Communion. Generally the bread and wine are passed from one row to another by men or boys. Theirs is not a position of leadership or authority. Why, then, couldn't women or girls do it as well? Think for a moment about the institution of the Lord's Supper. Had a maid been present, does anyone really believe that Jesus would have hesitated to say to her, "Miss, hand this to John" simply because of her sex? He would have known that such an act would in no way be an act of turning over authority to her.

In their Sunday morning service many churches have one or more passages of Scripture read aloud. Oral reading of what someone else wrote is neither easy nor trivial. In many universities "oral interpretation" or "oral reading" is taught as a major field of learning. There may be one (or more) in the congregation who has studied oral reading, and occasionally a person is naturally talented in reading lines written by someone else. If the congregation is fortunate enough to have one or more persons who can read the Scriptures so that the thoughts and emotions are passed on to listeners, such individuals by all means should be used. The Scriptures are much more than dull words strung together. If the gifted person is a woman, should she, just because of that, not be asked to read aloud? (For several years I knew a

university professor, a Ph.D., who, because she was a woman, was never invited to share the Scriptures with the congregation).

Now we turn to the possibility of a woman preaching, the most controversial topic of all. Would a congregation ever, ever, be justified in asking a woman to deliver a sermon? Interestingly enough, in churches that come out of the restoration tradition the preacher is not looked upon as "the pastor" or the authority figure. Instead he is employed, then retained or fired, by the elders. In almost every congregation it is assumed that the elders have that authority. Therefore, if they should choose to employ a woman to preach, she still would not be placed in position to "exercise authority over men." The New Testament speaks of it as "prophesying"; today we refer to it as "preaching." The preacher, the prophet, has a spiritual message he wishes to pass on to the assembled saints. Note the pronoun "he" in that sentence. Is it barely possible that a scholarly woman in the group might have a spiritual message that would likewise benefit the saints? Even the Apostle Paul spoke highly of certain women who prophesied and taught.

Thus ends the sequel which I wrote to Roy Willbern's three articles. In it I have tried to emphasize that we should no longer tarry in attempting to right the centuries-old wrongs that have been done to Christian women. I have suggested numerous steps that would allow us to share their talents and at the same time give them our encouragement.

When Brother Willbern read a draft of this sequel, he suggested some needed changes in the conclusion. Pursuant to his comments, here is a Willbern/Abernathy concluding statement:

Any one or more of the preceding suggestions may be a good place to begin using the talents of female Christians in today's congregations. However, we should remember that, insofar as we can understand God's reconciling purposes, they are inexorable, not to be altered by pleading or compromise. Paul's campaign for unity between Jews and Gentiles was not satisfied by such half measures as allowing non-Jews to sit quietly and humbly in the back of the church. Only when Gentiles participated fully were they and Jewish Christians "one in Christ." Slaves are not really free so long as their masters retain any vestige of supremacy or control. In like manner, full reconciliation and complete equality between the sexes in our local congregations will be reached only when all indications of dominance and assumed superiority are erased. Therefore, why do we tarry? _____MISSION

Those Vague Biblical Procedures

Part I

The Problem With Doing Bible Things In Bible Ways

By MICHAEL HALL

Having long cherished the idea of "*Doing Bible Things In Bible Ways*," I now wonder how helpful that idea is. This restoration idea animates many Bible-oriented churches; it's certainly not an exclusive idea to the Stone-Campbell Movement. But it no longer seems a viable or practical idea to me. The longer I look at it and try to make sense of it, the more it seems fuzzy, controversial, unbiblical and unworkable. It seems only to lead to divisiveness and rigidity—not to a situation in which the spirit of Jesus prevails.

Let me explain. After years of approaching the Bible with *the desire* to do Bible things in Bible ways, I find that it's the last part of that slogan that's ridiculous! The problem isn't with **BIBLE THINGS**; what the Bible prescribes is obvious: Bible reading, commitment to Jesus, baptism, communion, the Christian community, leadership, evangelism, grace, faith, the return of Jesus, the Christian ethic, etc. What is troublesome is **BIBLE WAYS**. What does that mean? The Scriptures hardly mention what would be considered biblical ways, i.e., methods, styles, forms, and "wineskins."

PROCEDURES are simply *not given* concerning how the Apostles and the early church organized, evangelized, disciplined, worshiped, structured their community life, and performed their leadership roles. (Deacons are mentioned before elders in Acts.

James the brother of Jesus comes across as the "main man" in Jerusalem instead of the Apostles or elders!) **HOW** did the twelve apostles baptize 3,000 people on Pentecost? Did they make a little talk (as we do) at each dipping? Did they themselves baptize or did they commission the one-hundred and twenty disciples to do that? Or did they let everybody dip everybody else? **WHERE** did that early Jerusalem church assemble? Did they meet in one large gathering or did they divide up into a hundred small churches with elders over the whole thing? **HOW** did they distribute the food in the daily ministration to the widows? Did they set up a "chariots on wheels" program? **WHAT** liturgy style did they follow? **HOW** did they determine what aspects of the synagogue were to be adopted and which were not? There are so many unanswered questions, and that poses problems for us. Why wasn't Dr. Luke more informative?

In the twentieth century some see procedural patterns where others see no pattern at all. For example, some preach that Acts 2:42 presents a catalog of acts that must be performed when Christians come together: first teaching, then fellowship, then breaking of bread (meaning communion), then prayers. Others take it less rigidly, merely as an agenda list. All must be done, but not in that particular order. Others of us take it merely as a statement about the church at Jerusalem during that first month. As the Jerusalem church, the church at Troas met in an upper room. Must we also meet in an upper room? Is an upper room the best and most holy place for Christians?

Even though realizing that churches have divided

Michael Hall, of Grand Junction, Colorado, is a graduate of the Memphis School of Preaching. He is director of Goodnews Encounters and conducts Life Affirmation Seminars as an outreach to the unchurched and for retreats with churches. His book *Emotions: Sometimes I Have Them/Sometimes They Have Me* is a recent publication.

over these matters, that brethren have turned on each other in anger, that Holy Wars have ensued from them, I'm going to jump right into the fray! I've analyzed the procedures that we do find in the Scriptures by putting them under four rubrics, chosen quite arbitrarily. My intention is simply to offer an overview of the few procedures mentioned in the Scriptures and try to understand the principle or principles that they exemplify. How did Jesus and the early Christian believers choose their procedures?

THEY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF CIRCUMSTANTIAL SITUATIONS AS THEY AROSE.

Jesus innovated a new style of preaching when he used the fishing boat as a pulpit, staging it so that the people sat on the hillside on the sand overlooking the lake (Mark 4:1). An amphitheatre with a mobile pulpit! I like that. That was pretty inventive. Jesus should have patented it. Later, when several thousand people engaged in a foot-race and met Jesus with his Twelve in the wilderness, He utilized the hillside for His sanctuary and fellowship room! First there was a three-day seminary on the Bread of Life, then he fed them in the sanctuary (Mark 6:39-40)!

When Paul was kicked out of the synagogue at Ephesus, he jumped at the opportunity to move his discipleship school into the School of Tyrannus. There he taught from the fifth to the tenth hour every day of the week (according to some versions of Acts 19:9). What a procedure! No wonder "all Asia" heard the Word!

Jesus and Paul seemed to be "walking circumspectly," i.e., keeping their eyes open to all around them and redeeming all of their moments for the sake of Jesus.

The most frequently used place for outreach and worship in Acts was in the jails (Acts 3-4, 5, 12, 16, 21-28)! The early Christian preachers went to jail more frequently than they went to church meetings according to the Book of Acts! Once, when an earthquake interrupted the "special music" of that dynamic duo Paul and Silas—which they were presenting to the Prison Convention—Paul not only stayed put himself but somehow kept the other prisoners within the jail! Why? Because he wanted to utilize the opportunity before him for Earthquake Evangelism—that is, ministering to the earthquake victims (the prisoners and the jailer). What others might have read as an open door for escape, Paul saw as an opportunity for the kingdom!

All of these procedures were *circumstantial*. Other

circumstances were passed over, but Jesus and Paul took advantage of these and used them without making institutions of them. They seemed to be "walking circumspectly," i.e., keeping their eyes open to all around them, and redeeming all of their moments for the sake of Jesus (Ephesians 5:18). They were *ad hoc* procedures, used temporarily and then discarded.

THEY ADOPTED AND SANCTIFIED CULTURAL STYLES AND PROCEDURES

Notably, early believers accepted and Christianized first-century Mediterranean styles in dress and greetings, in language and hospitality. That's why they kissed each other on the cheek. Paul wrote on five separate occasions telling believers to Christianize that custom: "Greet one another with a *holy* kiss" (Romans 16:16). Did eastern people in that day wear tunics and sandals? Did they gird their loins with belts? Then such styles of dress were simply accepted and Christianized (1 Peter 3:4-6).

Did the men in the orient then wear beards? Did the women in Asia Minor veil their faces in public? Did men's hair styles generally adopt a style shorter than women's? Then such customs were sanctified and made to serve the new Christian ethic (1 Cor. 11:1-14). Did they express their hospitality by washing feet (John 13:1-13, 1 Timothy 5:10)? Did they speak Greek? Then that language was accepted as the communication method for conveying the Good News.

Obviously then, the early disciples of Jesus Christ felt free to bring in many of their cultural styles and procedures. They Christianized them, sanctifying them to fit the new way of life in Christ, and thus made Christianity a dynamic reality that could leap across cultures with ease. It was not bound to one culture. A person didn't have to become Jewish to accept the Messiah, who was a Jew and who lived in a Jewish culture. The transition, however, was not always a painless one. In Rome, as probably in other metropolitan areas, believers sometimes got into quarrels about cultural issues concerning eating certain meats, observing special days, and violating customs of another's cultural background (Romans 14).

THEY BROUGHT OVER RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS WHICH THEY CHRISTIANIZED.

To a large degree, the early Christians (being Jews) structured their leadership, worship, meetings (synagogues, James 2:1), and liturgy on the synagogue model. Perhaps that's why they opted for vocal music, a tradition which lasted for almost eighteen centuries in most churches. As the synagogue leaders were elders, so the Christian community had elders. As the men and women sat on op-

posite sides of the meeting house, so the Christians did (at least in some places, 1 Cor. 14:34-35).

Many early Jewish believers in Christ followed the clean-unclean rules which had been such a dominant feature in their religious heritage (1 Cor. 8). In Jerusalem, as late as Acts 21, pillar-of-the-church James recommended that Paul take a Jewish vow and offer the appropriate sacrifices in the Temple so that he would not offend the conscience of many thousands of Christian believers there.

There was also the custom of saying "The Amen" (1 Cor. 14:16). And since Jesus had instituted the Eucharist in the midst of the Passover Meal, many early believers celebrated the Supper of the Lord while breaking bread, thus combining what we'd call a basket dinner with the religious rite of Holy Communion (1 Cor. 11, Acts 20:7-11). Later the two feasts were separated, in part because of the abuses evidenced among the Corinthians.

Procedurally, then, they felt within their rights to bring over into their Christian experience *some* of their former religious traditions but *not all* of their old customs. The Gospel of Jesus itself eliminated some customs and disqualified others. It eliminated, for example, the idea of a separate priesthood—since Jesus made all believers kings and priests unto God. It also eliminated the need for a physical temple since

It almost always takes a long time for the leaven of the Gospel to sanctify and judge and purge the spirit of the age from those who are being disciplined to Christ.

the bodies and souls of disciples were the new sanctuaries for God's Holy Spirit. It also disqualified animal sacrifices since Jesus was the ultimate Passover, offered once-for-all to bear the sins of many.

In post-apostolic times, following the ascension of Christianity to the throne of Rome with Constantine's public affirmation of the Christian Faith, other religious traditions were brought over, e.g., ecclesiastical buildings. While there had been a few attempts at building special church structures prior to Constantine, after him many of the empty pagan Temples were given to the Christians for their meeting places. With such newly acquired ecclesiastical property and the cathedral style of architecture, the worship of the believers tended toward more and more formality. New "priests" were found to conduct solemn meetings. The problem wasn't so much that believers brought in a pagan religious custom as much as it was that they didn't

Christianize their use of the temples enough! Eventually the Gospel became subservient to the physical structure instead of the other way around. The community itself as well as its practices were slowly altered by the architecture.

Old pagan holidays were also assimilated. My own personal opinion is that there's nothing inherently evil about that; the problem rather was that they did not Christianize the celebrations *enough*. As a result, there was too much paganism left in them; but the same problem always exists in bringing the Christian faith into a new culture. It's easy to bring in too much of the local nationalism and indigenous celebrations and prejudices. It almost always takes a long time for the leaven of the Gospel to sanctify and judge and purge the spirit of the age from those who are being disciplined to Christ.

THEY CREATIVELY INVENTED BRAND NEW CUSTOMS AND STYLES.

At Corinth, for example, when the assemblies became chaotic, Paul instituted a new assembly rule: let there be two or three speakers in tongues and then two or three prophets in your assembly (1 Corinthians 14). Now where did he come up with those particular numbers? I don't know, nor have I read of anyone who identified the source of those numbers. Could it be that he just arbitrarily took them off the top of his head? Would the Corinthians have been amiss to have only one speaker of each? Would they have sinned if there were four speakers on a given Sunday? Must we follow this injunction as an everlasting pattern?

What about the apostolic practice of holding church court to deal with problems among members that would otherwise end up in a civil or domestic court (1 Cor. 5-6)? Churches used to hold such courts frequently. That's where the inquisitions in former ages came from. Must your local church hold some church courts to be a "New Testament Church"?

Then there's Paul's teasing statement: "The rest will I set in order when I come" (1 Cor. 11:34). What did that consist of? What structures and procedures did he set up? Do we have *all* the "pattern"?

"The very silence of the Bible concerning specific structures," writes Howard Synder in his book *The Problems With Wineskins*, "should alert us to their subsidiary and culturally bound nature and remind us that constant re-evaluation in the light of the Word of God is necessary if the mind of Christ is going to become a reality" (p. 125). Sometimes we must use our freedom in responsible concern to come up with practical styles that will be winsome to the people we're trying to win. We must work creatively in such a way as to translate the Good News to the

cultural situation we face (1 Cor. 9:20-23). That means we have to use our heads and imaginations to clothe the message with new wineskins so that the structural style (including procedures, methods, and language) is in tune with where the people are we're trying to touch!

Are you disappointed with this analysis of biblical procedures? I was when I first made this study several years ago. I felt deeply disappointed that I could not find more specific guidelines. I had assumed that there would be detailed BIBLE WAYS for accomplishing BIBLE THINGS! I had been nursed on pattern theology; therefore, having expected a divine blueprint for the "how to," I found my mental expectations severely jolted when I couldn't find the divine law for the "ways and means" for carrying out God's will!

The methods of the early Christians are, for the most part, simply *not given* to us. How they carried out (procedurally) the task of evangelism and discipleship and how they conducted their group worship and community life is simply *passed over* by the writers. When methods are mentioned, fre-

quently they are but the cultural norms that have been redeemed for Christian use.

This leads me to conclude that it is oversimplistic and erroneous to quote old cliché formula about "divine commandments, approved examples, and necessary inferences" as the hermeneutic key for discovering the biblical procedures. The Scriptures *command* kissing as a greeting, foot washing as a form of hospitality, and wearing of veils for acknowledgment of headship. The Scriptures offer *examples* such as the observation of Jewish feasts, attending synagogues, and even taking vows of purification that are clearly approved. And what shall we say about necessary inferences? What one man assumes is inferred, another doesn't; and what one man believes is most necessary in the inference, another thinks is only incidental!

However we analyze the procedural strategies of the early Christians, we should give up trying to cram them all into one simplistic formula. They seemed to have felt quite free to use their creativity and imaginations so that they could *accommodate* themselves and their Christian style to their immediate situation! _____MISSION

Bible Story Book

Dad's illustrated Bible story book
sententious primer for unfledged belief
had once revealed to my susceptible look
stern patriarchs revived in bold belief
engaged in mortal combats temporal
interpreted across these centuries
as mirroring dim battles spiritual
faiths won in furthestmost localities
but now its pages musingly reviewed
describe a different distance painfully
between a childhood's awe-filled certitude
and present thoughts of truth's contingency
a mystic longitude as measureless
as my desire to span that emptiness

—Stacy Obenhaus

Stacy Obenhaus is an attorney in Kansas City, Missouri.

A Word For Our Times

**a column for
opinion and
personal
reflection**

Reflections On Inerrancy

By David Fiensy

Of all the present doctrinal disputes the Church endures, none poses so great a threat to unity as the debate over biblical inerrancy. The issue has already swept through many Evangelical churches where those that espoused non-inerrancy—that Scripture accommodates [itself historically or scientifically to its age—have been censured or disfellowshipped. Now that same wave of tragic controversy is swelling among the wing of the Campbell-Stone movement called the Independent Christian Churches [and among Churches of Christ—ed.]. Although no one has the power to excommunicate in this brotherhood, other types of censure are possible. One can demand that ministers and college teachers accepting non-inerrancy be dismissed; and one can smear parachurch organizations employing such people, thereby diminishing the financial support of those institutions. Such a campaign—especially if it is well organized—to weaken the support of any institution comprises incipient division. One naturally fears that the movement is about to split again.

I have little hope of convincing either side to change its mind on this issue. I do hope, however, that both sides will change their attitude toward each other. Each side must try to understand the mind of the other.

On the one side, the non-inerrantists complain that most of those crying the loudest about inerrancy have little experience working with the Bible in its original languages, manuscripts, cultural environments, and historical settings. Thus, those that do not study Scripture on a scholarly level nevertheless dictate what those that do must find in their research. To the non-inerrantists, it is like children that will not play a game but want to determine the rules for those that do. Such behavior seems unfair.

Non-inerrantists say they are only

trying to be honest. To them Scripture really does contain historical and scientific problems. What should they do? Should they deny what their eyes see? But all their education has been geared toward looking, searching, and probing.

Yet these same non-inerrantists also claim reverently to preach and honestly to believe in the authority of Scripture. It does no good for inerrantists to maintain that one cannot believe in the authority of the Bible if one also believes it may contain historical errors. The non-inerrantists will still continue to maintain both beliefs.

On the other side inerrantists are becoming alarmed at a growing sense of *deja vu*. Maybe most of them are not biblical scholars, but many of them are educators and some of them are systematic theologians. The majority of them certainly are intelligent. They are by no means obscurantist and unscholarly.

What inerrantists have been reading lately disturbs them. They know about the liberal incursion that stagnated and divided the movement in the early part of this century and they fear another such movement. They fear that rejection of biblical inerrancy can only lead down the slippery slope to complete rejection of historical Christianity. No amount of reasoning, no assurance, no creedal statement on the part of the non-inerrantists will assuage that fear. They feel called to oppose a cancer growing on the church of Christ, to stand up for the faith, to imitate the great reformers. One can write books defending non-inerrancy, attempting to demonstrate in detail, case by case, why one believes it is impossible to em-

brace inerrancy, but stating repeatedly that such conclusions do not destroy belief in inspiration. The inerrantists will not be convinced. They will only grow more frightened at these "attacks" on God's word.

Unity then seems rather hopeless. I suppose it is hopeless unless both sides can accept each other in spite of their disagreements. Inerrantists must accept that non-inerrantists have arrived at their positions honestly and after careful and serious exegesis. They are not crazed radicals out to destroy the Christian faith, but only seek to understand Christian faith. They do not attack the Bible, but endeavor to explain it.

On the other hand non-inerrantists must stop accusing all inerrantists of being anti-intellectuals and obscurantists. They must see them as concerned, godly people.

Those on either side of this issue should do what is always hardest in any threat to unity: accept the other person as he/she is. One must realize that those espousing views that one does not hold will probably never change. But at the same time, one must also understand that since those on both sides have accepted Christ as Lord and Savior we all have more in common than we have differences.

I honestly do not know if we shall demonstrate such love and acceptance. The history of the movement reveals that we often have not. Nevertheless, a few times our people have shown themselves capable of great understanding and patience toward those with whom they did not agree. I pray that this will be one of those times.

SPEAKERS OF A WORD FOR SEPTEMBER: David Fiensy is an Institute Scholar at the Institute for the Study of Christian Origins, Tuebingen, West Germany. Bert Mercer ministers to the Crestview Church of Christ, Waco, Texas, and serves on the Editorial Board for *20th Century Christian*. Gary D. Taliaferro ministers to the Friendswood (Texas) Church of Christ and is on the Board of the Friendswood Independent School District.

To Celebrate Excellence

By Bert Mercer

In *Lake Wobegon Days* Garrison Keillor tells about a local resident of the little Minnesota town in which he grew up who owned an old model Chevrolet automobile which had very few miles. He drove it carefully and slowly and with an over-protective reverence. He delighted in showing the interior of the car and the engine area, which were spotless and like new. The owner was especially happy to show the very low mileage on the odometer. Keillor comments perceptively, "he seemed proud of never having gone very far."

The man in Keillor's story reminds me of people who brag about their disabilities. Of course, bragging is not

virtuous even in areas of positive accomplishments, but pride in a disability is a strange snobbery indeed! When I was a young minister, one of my members told me that "people could just get too much education." He seemed in no danger to me, since he carefully stayed on the leeward side of the self-imposed ignorance. A kind of sour grapes mentality was at work here, as if he were saying, "If I cannot speak Greek or even the English language grammatically, if I cannot play the French harp or make a hula hoop go, this must not be regarded as important—while the things that I can do are the only things of intrinsic merit."

The healthy attitude is to enjoy and

celebrate the strengths God has wrought in us and celebrate with equal joy the comparable gifts of all others. If we allow ourselves always to diminish the gifts of others and celebrate our weaknesses as virtues, the human race will return to live in caves, wear animal skins and live in a generally uncivilized and unchristian state. A celebration of excellence is the hallmark of civilization, the Christian personality, and Christian groups. Paul advises ". . . whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things" (Phil. 4:8).

What To Do When You Are Shaken

By Gary D. Taliaferro

There is an Old Testament story in Isaiah chapter 7 about King Ahaz of Judah and his fears of invasion. Information had come to him that the Kings of Israel and Syria were preparing to attack him in mass. The Scripture says that he was shaken as a great wind shakes a great tree. He was afraid in his heart. Often it seems we too are shaken by a variety of evils that come against us:

1. War, death, destruction, misery, and hunger.
2. Loss of job, business failure, bankruptcy.
3. Family problems, adultery, divorce, disobedient children.
4. Bad health, heart attacks, cancer, birth defects.
5. Broken things, costly repairs.
6. Resentment, anger, irresponsibility.
7. Eroding values in society.

8. Death or personal tragedy.

When we are shaken as King Ahaz was, what do we do? Where is help? Chapter 7 of Isaiah tells us. Consider the following:

1. **Be Careful:** Be watchful and vigilant for what the Lord has for you in the middle of trouble.
2. **Keep Calm:** Take a deep breath. Don't take yourself or your situation too seriously. Take only God seriously.
3. **Don't Be Afraid:** Fear is dangerous. It will cause mistakes and hurts.
4. **Don't Lose Heart:** Take hold of your courage. Believe that God will deliver and help.
5. **See Things In Perspective:** The thing you fear is only a smoldering, burned out piece of firewood . . . not a raging fire as you

thought.

6. **Stand Firm In Your Faith:** Always trust and believe God no matter what happens.

Ahaz was given a warning: "If you don't stand firm in your faith, you won't stand in anything."

Ahaz was asked to look for a sign. The sign was that "a virgin will give birth to a son and you will call him Immanuel."

We often want an earth-moving, emotionally packed sign to tell us we will be okay. But as with King Ahaz, the sign we have is Jesus. He is our Saviour, helper, and comforter. He is there to help and deliver. We must, however, stand firm in our faith and trust in Him. All is lost and we cannot stand except by His power.

Have you looked everywhere but to Jesus for power and stability in your life? Isn't it time to look to Him?

The religious gathering ought to be the place where the shaking issues of the day are faced in an interpersonal setting. Yet many members of such communities report that they must park their deepest questions and most passionate convictions at the door when they come into a church or any kind of Christian circle. The great issues of the day are discussed everywhere but in the churches.

—Martin Marty, *The Search for a Usable Future*

Faith Of Our Fathers...Living Still

By BEN B. BOOTHE

I want to tell you about Gary.

As a ministerial student twenty years ago, I was enthralled by the works and commitment of the great "faith missionaries" of the 1800s. These men of God went to Africa, China, the world over with little or no support but with faith that God would provide. And he did. And their efforts have inspired mission-minded Christians for a hundred and fifty years. And yet it seemed to me that these were times of some romantic past. Indeed as I looked to modern mission programs, it appeared that their sophisticated approach often took faith out of the mission-effort equation.

I was forced to reconsider this point of view when I learned of Wycliff Bible Translators and the International Linguistics Center. Wycliff is the American fund-raising and promotional arm for this work. The international center is the arm in charge of some 5800 members who are stationed in 50 nations worldwide. These members are well trained linguists, pilots, and support staff often with Masters or Ph.D.'s who have gone through special intensive training from learning wilderness and jungle survival to advanced linguistic studies. I.L.C. members have been honored by heads of state and ambassadors and even have been nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize for their contributions to humanity.

In my opinion I.L.C. and Wycliff are engaged in the purest form of Christian service to humanity I have ever observed.

Let me give you a general scenario. People of all denominations may join Wycliff/I.L.C. After completing several years of training, they then select a language or tribal group somewhere in the world which has no written language. They then, on faith, travel to that land, discover the tribe (which often entails weeks of hiking or canoeing through untamed wilderness), and locate in the tribe. They are trained to live on a standard compatible with the tribe, dress and eat by tribal standards. If the tribe eats grasshoppers, snakes, or boiled monkeys, so will the I.L.C. volunteers.

As they gain the trust of the people, they show them basic hygiene, give them medical treatment, and often teach them farming techniques. They may build schools and churches and sometimes clinics. Because Wycliff owns over 1800 specially equipped

Ben B. Boothe is President of Western National Bank of Texas.

airplanes, the volunteers must sometimes build airports deep in the jungles. And they begin, one letter at a time, one sound at a time, creating an alphabet. *The average volunteer spends 10 years on one tribal language group alone.* One word at a time, one person at a time, they bring progress, literacy and Christian love. The first priority and most important book they prepare, indeed the very heart of Wycliff/I.L.C., is the Bible. Can you imagine the impact upon a primitive people when they are given the gift of literacy? And then the further impact of using that literacy *first* in reading God's word?

When the I.L.C. volunteer has completed the Bible, it is sent to be printed and bound at the Dallas I.L.C. campus and, with great ceremony and joy, is delivered back to the tribe. Many times the tribes people weep with wonder and gratitude when they receive God's word, the first written book, in their own tongue.

Subsequently, Wycliff/I.L.C., in sheer faith, deeds back to the tribes people the houses, schools, churches, and clinics they have built. And they, in faith, leave. In most cases an entire language group is left with a new Christian society. Terrorists and communist groups have been totally ineffective at rallying support in tribal groups where Wycliff/I.L.C. has worked—because the people are now literate, educated, progressing and because they have seen the Christian ideal!

But now let me tell you about Gary.

Gary Shepherd worked in the Himalayas for 10 years. He became lost in the mountains, while first seeking a tribe; and after weeks of wandering found his party out of provisions and lost in a snowstorm. One morning, they read Psalm 91:

There shall be no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone . . . because He hath set His love upon me, therefore will I deliver Him; I will set Him on high, because He hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer Him; I will be with Him in trouble; I will deliver Him and honor Him.



Translation of the Word of God into the language of the heart is the motivation of S.I.L., W.B.T., I.L.C., and all of our partners throughout the world.



*With long life will I satisfy Him and show
Him my salvation.*

Later on that cold morning they found footprints in the snow and followed them. They followed through the mountains, across old, creaking rope bridges thousands of feet above crevasses, and after 18 hours walked into the very village they were seeking. The people were astounded.

"How did you cross the mountains? The pass has been closed for months!"

Gary said, "We followed one of your people's tracks . . . those tracks . . ."

The tribesmen frowned and shook their heads. "No one has been this way in months, my friends . . ."

Gary couldn't explain the tracks. But he knew one thing: as far as he was concerned, miracle or not . . . it was God's answer to prayer.

After years with these tribesmen, last year they were given the Bible. The people were so excited and happy. "Oh, how much does it cost? We will pay!"

The Wycliff/I.L.C. spokesman said, "There are 280 pages in this book. For every page it cost us 3

hours in jail. For every page we suffered 6 hours without food. For every page it cost us 30 miles walking on foot. For every page it cost us 61 miles by mule and 290 miles by airplane. It cost God His Son. It cost Jesus His life. To you, it is free!"

I have never seen such people of faith as the Wycliff/I.L.C. volunteers. They live the courage of the martyrs of the early church. They are completely undenominational and will not entertain sectarian discussions or disputes. Their faith is in God. Their message is simple: translate His word, and trust His Holy Spirit to work in the lives of people.

Their charter is pure and simple. Their results overwhelming. Their faith has been rewarded by God's promise.

We can learn much from them.

MISSION

For further information contact Berney May, Wycliff Bible Translators, Huntington Beach, California 92647, or Thomas Werkama, International Linguistics Center, 7500 W. Camp Wisdom Road, Dallas, Texas 75236, phone 1-214-296-7227.

BOOKS

Bruce L. Edwards
Book Review Editor

Amusing Ourselves To Death: Public Discourse In An Age Of Show Business

By Neil Postman
Viking Press, 1985, 184 pp., \$6.95
Reviewed by Dave Bland

George Orwell in 1984 prophesied that what would bring about our society's downfall would be outsiders who would tyrannize us with powers we hated. Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World* prophesied that our society would come to love our oppression and that would be our downfall. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information; Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity. In 1984 people are controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World* they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. So begins Neil Postman in his most recent book *Amusing Ourselves To Death*. He states, "This book is about the possibility that Huxley, not Orwell, was right." This is an important and significant book for anyone involved in religious communication, from preachers to teachers to those whose ministry includes the broadcast media.

Postman traces how America has changed from a society that was dominated to print during its beginnings to the mid-nineteenth century to a culture that is now dominated by television. "We are in the process of converting from a word-centered to an image-centered culture." He says his purpose is to demonstrate how the content of public discourse has changed because the medium has changed. "Under the governance of the printing press, discourse in America was different from what it is now—generally

Dave Bland is minister for the Eastside Church of Christ in Portland, Oregon.

coherent, serious and rational. Under the governance of television it has become shriveled and absurd."

Colonial America was committed to the printed word. These were people who were dedicated and skillful readers. From its beginning until well into the nineteenth century, America was as dominated by the printed word and an oratory based on the printed word as any society of which we know. Public discourse thus had content. But with the invention of the telegraph and photography in the mid-nineteenth century there was generated an abundance of irrelevant information. And television has now enthroned irrelevance.

A REVIEW ESSAY

Postman's point is not that the content of television is corrupting us but that the nature of the medium has changed our perception of reality. The medium awakens an insatiable thirst for more images, more entertainment, which in turn numbs our desire and capacity for reasoned public discourse.

He maintains that television is devoted entirely to supplying its audience with entertainment. There is nothing wrong with that. "But," he says, "what I am claiming here is not that television is entertaining but that it has made entertainment itself the natural format for the representation of all experience." The problem, then, is not that television presents entertaining subject matter but that all subject matter is presented as entertaining!

Even at its most serious moments, with politics, news, religion and teaching, television is entertaining. And television becomes a model, then, for how all public discourse is shaded. Postman concludes, "There's No Business But Show Business."

Postman's book is especially important for religious communicators to consider. In a chapter entitled "Shuffle Off To Bethlehem," he comes up with two conclusions from watching religious television programs. First, religion on television is presented as an entertainment. "On these shows, the preacher is tops. God comes out as second banana." Second, "Though it may be un-American to say it, not everything is *televiseable*." There are simply some experiences that cannot be transferred from one form to another without losing much of their meaning. We know, for example, that poetry does not translate well from one language to another.

As entertainment, television must give people what they want, not what they need. And that is a foreign religious belief. "No religious leader ever did that. . . . Television is not well suited to offering people what they need. It is user friendly." Postman rightly concludes, "I believe I am not mistaken in saying that Christianity is a demanding and serious religion. When it is delivered as easy and amusing, it is another kind of religion altogether."

There are some important implications for preachers in Postman's observations. First, rhetorical and

homiletical theory demands that we understand how our listeners hear and understand. And if they are to hear God's word, then our method of communication must be adapted to them. The inductive and narrative approach to preaching seems to be fairly close to the way people, conditioned by television, listen and understand. Craddock, Steimle, Long, and Lowry have all provided a valuable service by helping us to develop this homiletical form.

But our religious conviction demands that we not accept entertainment, which seems to be the overarching model for our culture, as the model for the church. At what point does the inductive approach lead to this acceptance? Biblical preaching would require that we help our people revive their capacity to think and reason for themselves why they believe what they do and to understand the demanding nature of Christianity.

There are also some important implications for those who are involved in the teaching profession. (Postman deals more in detail with television's

role in the teaching profession in a former book, *Teaching As A Conserving Activity*, Delacorte Press, 1979). In a chapter entitled "Teaching As An Amusing Activity," Postman argues that there are three commandments that form the philosophy of the education which television offers. First, thou shalt have no prerequisites. Every television program must be a complete package in itself. It does away with the idea of sequence and continuity in education. Television is a present-centered medium. Second, thou shalt induce no perplexity. A perplexed learner is one who will quit. And third, thou shalt avoid exposition like the ten plagues. Arguments, discussions or reasons, turn television into "third-rate printed matter." Thus television teaching always takes the form of story-telling, conducted through dynamic images and supported by music. The result of all this is that education is turned into an entertaining activity. And it is this model that is being used in the classroom. It seems to me that to whatever extent we have

allowed television to shape classroom instruction, teachers must teach students to think and reason and know how to research, which means at times the students may be perplexed and yes even grow weary of the work and effort involved.

Though at times one might think that Postman overstates his case and becomes too harsh and sarcastic and that he makes too much of a generalization in arguing that *everyone* gets his or her model for speaking and preaching and teaching from television, his is an important book to read and seriously consider. While Postman spends most of the book warning us about the dangerous model television sets for public discourse, he spends only a few pages talking about solutions (pp. 158-163); and only one of those he says would really be effective: to rely on schools to educate people in how television is used. Despite its weak ending and a nostalgic portrayal of the past, the book deserves attention because of the distressing view that it offers.

T.V. Tonight

Enervated, shrunken, sucking at the atmosphere—
He sits alone, attached to succulent fantasies.

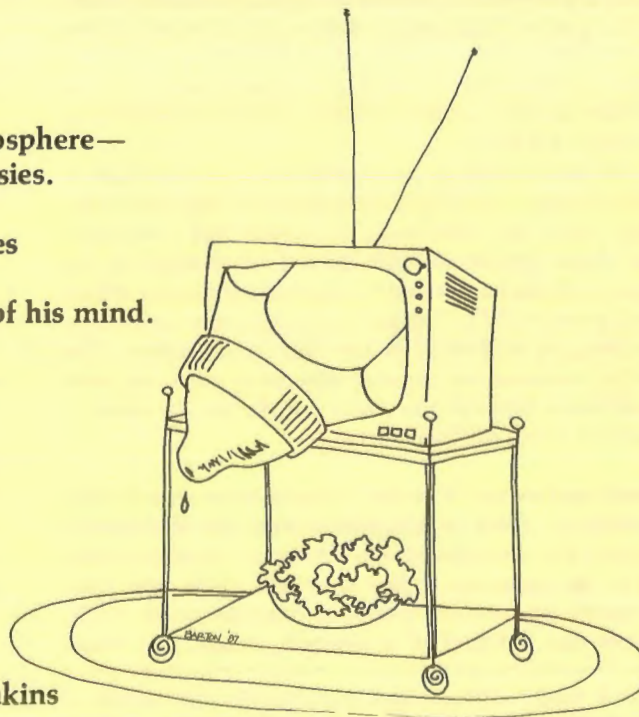
Screaming at his conquests, smudged faces
Caren down blank halls and rooms
Finally embedding themselves at the end of his mind.

Marooned in time he smiles.

His favorite shows provide the worries,
The crimes, the flesh . . .

Condensed into a manageable lust
The leavings from the entertainment
Supply him for the near future.

—Bill Jenkins



Bill Jenkins is currently working on a doctorate at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

PATHS OF UNITY

Reversing the Separations—Still Working*

By MARK A. SEARBY

MUCH praise has been given to the "restoration summit" held at Ozark Bible College in August of 1984. This meeting was called for the purpose of building bridges between Christian brothers/sisters from the Christian churches and churches of Christ. We would add our voice of support concerning this historic gathering.

In light of the renewed interest in unity among the various "branches" of the restoration movement, we would like to share an update concerning the union between a church of Christ and a Christian church which occurred in March, 1971.

The CHRISTIAN STANDARD printed an article about it (June 27, 1971) written by J. David Lang, then campus minister at Illinois State University. The article was entitled, "Reversing the Separations." It outlined the process undertaken by the Emerson Street Church of Christ and the Sunset Christian Church to establish one congregation from the two. After a two-month period of open, in-depth discussions, a new congregation known as "Emerson Street Christian Church—A Church of Christ" was formed. After a relocation in 1979, the congregation is now known as the "College Park Christian Church—A Church of Christ."

We are pleased to announce that this marriage is still working. As would be expected in any marriage, there have been problems to be met and overcome. But these problems have served to strengthen the resolve of the leadership to maintain the unity which God gave in 1971. The past fourteen years have been challenging and exciting for this congregation. The initial commitment to make this union work has been reaffirmed through the years and helped us make it through some difficult times.

Music and more—The new congregation was quickly rejected by sister congregations from the churches of Christ. The attitude among Christian churches seemed to be cautious, if not skeptical. This new congregation was indeed unique in practice and in spirit. There was a blend of a cappella music and music

which was accompanied by an organ (a piano was added some years later). There still remains a desire to be sensitive to both backgrounds regarding this issue of music. Almost every Sunday, one song or part of a song is sung a cappella. Some services are done completely a cappella. The different backgrounds also have brought about an appreciation for various styles of music in worship.

The music issue was not the only one that required a lot of discussion before the union could take place. Many relevant concerns (heritage and identity, advantages of uniting, vision for the future, financial situation, leadership, ministry, and role of women) were shared and discussed by the nucleus of leaders chosen from each group. Out of the discussions, which took place over a period of two months, came a sense of agreement on the basic matters of faith and practice.

One strong point of this congregation has been its diversity. To some, this may be viewed as a weakness. To us, it is a definite strength. The result of this diversity is a body of believers that encourages personal expression of faith and of service. The underlying basis for unity is our faith in Jesus Christ. This has allowed Christians from various backgrounds to feel comfortable in the congregation. We believe this to be consistent with the freedom we are to have in Christ.

The leadership of College Park is a blend of individuals from various church backgrounds. There are four elders in addition to the preaching minister. Two are from church of Christ backgrounds and two from Christian church. The preaching minister is a graduate of Lincoln Christian College and Seminary. Of the eight deacons/deaconesses, two are from the church of Christ, four from the Christian church, and two from other groups prior to their involvement at College Park. This also speaks of the "unity in midst of diversity" which is a part of our witness to our community.

Growing on—After several years of experiencing slight growth while the two partners of this marriage were getting acquainted, College Park has been experiencing more substantial growth the last three years. We believe the uniqueness and warmth of this

(Continued on p. 30)

Mark A. Searby ministers with College Park Christian Church—A Church of Christ, Normal, Illinois. *From *Christian Standard*. © 1985. The Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati, Ohio. Division of Standex International Corporation. Reprinted by permission.

A Study of the Ethical Standards of Church of Christ Editors

By REG WESTMORELAND

Editors of Church of Christ-related publications have high ethical standards for their editorial practices, a spring 1987 study reveals.

Questionnaires were sent to 38 publications in April 1987 asking editors about their editorial and advertising practices. Twenty-nine editors/publishers replied, an excellent 76 percent return.

Responses indicate that editors generally have high standards about accuracy, balanced reporting, fairness in opinion writing, attacks on individuals, stirring up controversy, and taking advantage of their positions as editors. A few problem areas do exist, however, and more needs to be done in the area of advertising standards.

Compared to a 1963 survey of 83 church of Christ-related publications by a student at Abilene Christian University, the 1987 results show significant improvements in reporting and editorial standards. Several questions from the 1963 study were repeated in the 1987 survey, and responses to those questions revealed improved editorial standards and practices.

Eleven of the publications surveyed in 1987 have been founded since the 1963 study, and a number of these are more news oriented than opinion or doctrine oriented.

Secular journalists believe accuracy is vital in their profession—despite what some readers may believe. Religious editors in the 1987 study agreed. Only 7 percent of the editors thought inaccuracies in news stories and in editorials or essays are not at all serious. In fact, 67 percent said inaccuracies in news stories are most serious and 78.5 percent said inaccuracies in editorials or essays are most serious. In the 1963 study, 38 percent said that inaccuracy in publication is not at all serious or only slightly serious.

Zero percent of the 1987 editors said that

plagiarism is not at all serious, while in the 1963 study 42 percent said that plagiarism is either not at all serious or only slightly serious. In the 1987 study, 89 percent said plagiarism is most serious. Since plagiarism is theft of another's ideas or writing, it is difficult to understand how a single Christian editor could believe that it is not serious.

What about correcting errors? Thirty percent in the 1963 study said that "when convinced of an error failure to admit and correct it" is either not at all serious or only slightly serious. Not a single editor in the 1987 poll took that position; 100 percent said that when convinced of an error, failure to admit and correct it is most serious.

Zero percent in the 1987 study believed it is not at all serious to publish someone's name with the deliberate intent to harm him, while 31 percent in 1963 took that position. In fact, 100 percent in 1987 said it is most serious to publish someone's name with the deliberate intent of harming him.

In the 1963 survey, 61 percent said that it is not at all serious or only slightly serious to state one view and exclude all others. The 1987 study split this question into two questions, recognizing the difference between news and opinion articles or essays. In the 1987 study, 62.9 percent believed it was most serious to state one view and exclude all others in a news story. Zero percent thought that practice not at all serious. Giving all sides in a news story is important in secular journalism.

In the 1987 study, 29.6 percent of the editors believed that stating one view and excluding all others in an editorial or essay is not at all serious, while 33 percent thought it to be most serious. The respondents to this item understood that essays or editorials are opinion matter, but also seemed to recognize the importance of not misrepresenting a situation.

In the 1987 study, 32 percent said that publication of evil reports, though true, that will not serve any good purpose, is not at all serious, while 34 percent took that position in 1963. Eighty-five percent of the

Reg Westmoreland is chairman of the Department of Journalism at North Texas State University and is a former member of the faculties at Pepperdine University and Abilene Christian University.

1987 editors thought that practice to be most serious.

Zero percent of the 1987 editors believed that stirring up controversy to increase circulation is not at all serious, while 40 percent in 1963 took that position. In 1987, 92.6 percent thought that to be most serious compared to 48 percent in 1963.

While having these high standards individually, the 1987 editors believe that such standards are not universally practiced among Church of Christ publications as often as they should be. For example, 22 percent thought plagiarism is either very prevalent or most prevalent, 38 percent thought that correcting errors is not very prevalent, and 30.7 percent believe that publishing someone's name with the deliberate attempt to harm him is either very prevalent or most prevalent in Church of Christ publications.

The 1987 study also revealed that 56 percent of the editors believe that stating one view and excluding all others in news stories is either very or most prevalent. Sixty-one and a half percent think that stating one view and excluding all others in an editorial or essay is either very or most prevalent, and 48 percent think that making a personal attack upon a brother without fair investigation is either very or most prevalent.

Unsolicited comments on a number of the questionnaires indicate that only a few publications may be responsible for these beliefs about objectionable periodical practices. Here are a few comments inserted in that part of the questionnaire about such practices: "(Name of publication) fits most of these bad practices." The same editor wrote, "I hope you can get (editor's name) out of the publishing business." Another wrote, "Only a couple of small insignificant papers do so." Still another said, "I hope your report of these findings will include the exceptions and a disclaimer for the professional journalists and quality publications. I would detest having our (name of publication) newsletter—an award winner—lumped together with (name of publication)."

The 1987 study included four "situation" questions and asked editors how they would handle these situations.

Situation: You receive an article accusing a minister or church of "unsoundness." Sixty-seven and eight tenths percent said they would refuse to publish the article, while 28 percent said they would either call the accused parties and include their reply in the story, or would investigate, or would "try to be fair."

Situation: You are concerned about what you consider to be a trend toward doctrinal error among certain congregations and/or ministers. Fifty-seven and seven tenths percent said they would research all aspects of the situation before writing and 26.9 percent said they either would not write the story or that

this type of article was not usually carried in their publication.

Situation: You receive several stories from missionaries or churches reporting great success in their missionary efforts or special programs. Thirty-five and seven tenths percent said they would check to see if facts are correct, 14 percent said they would edit to tone down what may be exaggerated claims, 25 percent would publish as received, and 7 percent would refuse to publish the item.

Situation: You receive stories from churches and/or individuals appealing for financial support. Forty-two and eight tenths percent said they would check on the reputation and purpose of individuals or sponsors before publishing, 17.8 percent would refuse to publish, and 7 percent would publish as received.

These responses to situation questions show that today's editors generally want to protect readers from what may be questionable or inaccurate information.

A problem area among Church of Christ publications is advertising. Of the 29 responding publications in 1987, 13 accept advertising, but only 3 of these have advertising codes or standards of acceptability. The problem is probably related to lack of time and staff, but this information alone does not necessarily mean that editors or publishers are not concerned about questionable advertising, because 92.8 percent strongly agreed with the statement: "A Christian publisher should never print an advertisement he suspects of containing misinformation or that is trying to sell products or service of questionable integrity or quality."

The editors/publishers who responded in 1987 had been in their positions from 1 to 34 years, with an average of 9.67 years on the job. Only 16 had taken any college courses in journalism (from 2 to 15 courses). Twenty-three are ministers (16 full time and 7 part time). Fourteen graduated from a Christian college and 20 had attended a Christian college from 2 to 5 years.

The 29 publications had a wide range of content and purpose. Nine emphasized news content, 2 news and opinion, 3 opinion only, and under "other" the following responses were received: forum 1, devotional and devotional essays 3, scholarly 1, biblical teaching and Bible correspondence course 1, teach 2, information clearing house 1, doctrine 1, biblical studies and current controversies 1; articles of fact, opinion, features, biblical studies, fiction, poetry 1; restoration history 1, perspectives on beliefs of church of Christ people 1.

Editors said the purposes of their publications were inform 24, exhort and inspire 24, expose error 7, and restoration unity 1. _____ MISSION

Of Interest

COMPUTER BULLETIN BOARD FOR CHURCHES: The Parkway Church of Christ in Sacramento, California announces the establishment of a computer bulletin board service to encourage and facilitate the free exchange of information and ideas. The system allows for posting not only messages for other board users, but also sermons, book reviews, resources, databases, and personal computer software in the public domain. Messages concerning "positions wanted" and "help wanted" may also be posted as well as general announcements of major events of significance, appeals for help, and in general all kinds of information-sharing. With a designated board user as coordinator, special message areas may be established for dialog regarding a specific subject or coordinating or planning for major events. The board is in operation seven days a week, 24 hours per day. For further information, you may write George Steinert, c/o Parkway Church of Christ, 5511 Tangerine Avenue, Sacramento, CA 95823; or you may call him at (916) 427-5937 after 5:00 p.m.

SURROGATE CONTRACTS DENOUNCED AS BABY-SELLING: Surrogate contracts, such as the one that forced Mary Beth Whitehead to turn over her infant daughter to William and Elizabeth Stern in March, should be condemned on the same order as black market baby sales, argue civil liberties lawyers with the Rutherford Institute.

"Some things should be viewed as too important to be sold as commodities," Rutherford lawyers John Whitehead and David French insisted in a brief filed June 29 with the New Jersey Supreme Court.

"People are not property. They are not slaves who can be bought and sold," the brief argues.

The Rutherford Institute, a nonprofit legal defense organization, submitted the brief in the controversial case involving Mary Beth Whitehead, who refused to give up her newborn daughter after contracting to be artificially inseminated with William Stern's sperm, give birth, then relinquish the child to Stern and his wife. In March a New Jersey superior court upheld the surrogate contract and terminated Whitehead's parental rights to her child.

Rutherford lawyers liken surrogate contracts to black market baby sales, which have been outlawed on the conviction that "people should not be treated as chattels," the brief states.

In the surrogate relationship, the brief argues, "the equation is simple: the child (a human being) is sold for money."

Whitehead contracted to receive \$10,000 upon giving up her baby, a fee ostensibly paid for performing the "services" of conceiving, carrying and bearing the child. The brief contends, however, that the payment was also for the child itself, since a clause in the contract stipulated that Whitehead would be paid only \$1,000 if the baby were stillborn, and paid nothing at all if she miscarried while less than five months pregnant.

The contract also specified that if amniocentesis indicated the baby was "abnormal," Whitehead was required to abort the child at Stern's demand.

"The law cannot tolerate, indeed it must expressly forbid, that human beings . . . be treated at objects of experimentation . . .," the brief argues.

In addition to treating the child as a commodity, surrogate contracts treat the woman as "the factory which produces the product," the brief adds. Both mother and child become "non-persons" under the arrangement.

The brief also denounces surrogate contracts on grounds that they threaten the "integrity of the family unit" by ignoring the natural bond between mother and child, and permit "an elite economic group" to exploit poor women by enticing them with large sums of money to bear, then give up, their babies.

"Like prostitution, surrogate motherhood makes one of the most intimate acts a commercial and, therefore, impersonal transaction," the brief states. "Like slavery, it permits people to barter away their personal autonomy."

Thus, Rutherford lawyers argue, the court "must condemn it now."

DISCIPLES PREPARE FOR THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: More than 525 persons gathered March 29 through April 1, 1987, at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, in a gathering of leaders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) to begin the process of preparing the denomination for the twenty-first century. Most participants were Disciples clergy, but there was a visible lay presence as well. Most were members of the Disciples of Christ, but a few from the non-instrument Churches of Christ and from the in-

dependent Christian Churches and Churches of Christ were also present. This was not an official denominational conference but a free-wheeling discussion for laity, pastors, scholars, and executives of the church. Because the response was far greater than had been expected, the facilities of North United Methodist Church in Indianapolis were borrowed for the opening worship, dinner, and first plenary session on March 29. The conference began and concluded with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

Besides daily plenary sessions during which scholars and denominational leaders addressed the group on themes chosen to spur thinking, there were smaller working groups discussing seven general topics: evangelism, structure, ministry, authority, social transformation, global mission, worship, and congregational life and discipline. In these working groups, the diversity of individual faith and thought, which has been characteristic of Disciples in this century, became a valuable asset in considering the needs and strengths of the denomination as the twentieth century wanes.

Expected conflicts in the working groups dealing with evangelism and with structure did not materialize; instead, both groups presented final reports which affirmed the need for energetic activity and decentralized authority. The working group on ministry reaffirmed the lay-eldership as a very important part of Disciples ministry and urged the development of a form of ministry focusing on teaching. The working group on authority sought a balance between the Disciples passion for freedom and the church's need for the authoritative proclamation of the Gospel; a minority report urged the development of a confession of faith, not as a test of faith but as a tool for authoritative teaching. The report of the working group on social transformation reaffirmed the need to change social structures which enforce injustice, both within the denomination and in the political life of nations. The global mission report highlighted the reciprocal nature of overseas missions, with the American church receiving as much as it gives in relation to growing national churches abroad. Those considering worship presented a long report reaffirming Disciples in the centrality of the Lord's Supper and encouraging innovations designed to heighten the experience of the mystery of God; the report further emphasized the continued practice of believer's baptism by immersion while accepting into full membership persons whose baptismal experience was by infant christening (open membership). On congregational life and discipline, the working group's report identified worship as central to the life of the church.

This conference is expected to be the beginning of many such "futuring" conferences in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) over the next decade, to work for a strong consensus for the next century in the life of the denomination and beyond. (By Daniel Griggs, Minister of the Parma Christian Church (Disciples) in Parma, Ohio and a member of the Council on Christian unity.)

HAS THE GARDEN OF EDEN BEEN FOUND? According to the *National and International Religion Report*, "archaeologist Juris Zarins of Southwest Missouri State University believes he has found the Garden of Eden. By examining satellite images of the Middle East, Zarins believes he spotted a 'fossil river' which could be the Pison River referred to in the book of Genesis." he reasons that "Genesis states that a river flowing out of Eden parted 'into four headwaters'—the Gihon, the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the Pison, which no longer exists The fossil river that could be the lost Pison lies under the mouth of the war-torn Persian Gulf between Iraq and Iran. Though neither a biblical literalist nor a professing Christian, Zarins believes there is some truth to the Genesis account.

RELIGION IN THE CLASSROOM: "Religion in the Curriculum," a report by a professional group of 80,000 American educators, calls for an end to "the curricular silence on religion" and lamented that "the role of religion in shaping the United States, and its impact on world history and culture, from classical music to current Middle East tensions, is all but absent in textbooks." Their call for the return of religion to textbooks in various disciplines is also endorsed by many opposed to school prayer and the teaching of creationism.

(Continued from p. 26)

congregation will provide an atmosphere for continued growth.

It is our desire to encourage our brothers and sisters from Christian churches and churches of Christ to consider this matter of unity. It can happen in a very practical way if believers are willing to

study, discuss, and pray with one another. There will be difficulties, but these can be overcome if a spirit of love and unity prevails. Flexibility by both parties is essential.

We pray that our example may be an encouragement to others. We would gladly share in more detail about our merger and subsequent church life with those who are interested.



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RULES

ELIGIBILITY

1. To be eligible, the article must have been published in a secular non-religious publication, as determined by the Awards panel.
2. The article must have been published during the year defined by the dates given as the Amy Foundation writing awards year: January 1, 1987 through December 31, 1987.

CONTENT

1. God's word must be quoted directly from the Bible.
2. Such quotations must be acknowledged as coming from the Bible.
3. Biblical quotations must be taken from an accepted and popular edition of the Bible, such as the New International Version, The Living Bible, The King James, or the Revised Standard Version.
4. The article must present God's position on an issue as relevant, timely and deserving of thoughtful consideration.
5. Examples of issues for consideration, but not limited to these, are family life, divorce, value trends, media and entertainment character, pornography, political morality, U.S. National Interests, abortion,

religion and addiction to drugs and alcohol. The Biblical impact on individual character and outlook are also appropriate issues.

JUDGING

1. Qualified articles will be judged on the following basis of primary and secondary considerations:
 - a. Primary Considerations
 - (1) Persuasive power of the article
 - (2) Author's skill in relating God's word to current interest issues.
 - b. Secondary Considerations
 - (1) Circulation size of media in which article was published.
2. Decisions by the Judges and Awards Panel will be final.

SUBMISSION

1. The entry must be in the form of an actual full page(s) or tear sheet(s) that accurately identify the publication name and date.
2. There is no limit to the number of qualified entries that may be submitted by a single author.
3. All entries must be postmarked on or before January 31, 1988. Winning articles will be announced on May 2, 1988.

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Wealth From an Empty Purse

(Acts 3:1-10; 4:22)

I walked today down to the Beautiful Gate
And forced myself to lie
Down in the very spot where
I, so long, so helpless, lay,
Where first I found my gait of Life.

I've tried to walk as much, or more,
In these last thirty years,
As others have their whole three score and ten.
I cannot move as briskly as I did—nor leap—
And yet my age-paced hobble
Can bear to that same place the burden
Others bore that day.

I used to watch the children playing tag
And making laugh-filled leaps across my bed.
I missed the games of childhood, but I feel
More satisfaction in a single, conscious, step
Than others know through years of wandering.

Today I felt once more that old stone floor
And wondered where I'd be
If those two men had had a dime that day?
I never would have known the joy of legs
Made aching weary by long hours of toil—
The glory of a hard day's work for pay
That I could share!

I learned a lot about myself and wealth
The moment that I knew
That they had nothing more to give than Life!
I wonder how they'd feel if they realized
I've always prayed that they would stay so poor
That earth-bound wastes like me
Could walk the Way.

—George Ewing

George Ewing is a Texas poet and hymnodist. One of his hymns was selected for the newly revised *Great Songs of the Church*.

MISSION

JOURNAL

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