

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

Integrity

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the wilderness, it had looked within itself, and, by heavens! I tell you, it had gone mad.

There is a common anti-intellectualism among the cults. Perhaps this anti-intellectualism made the Peoples Temple colony more susceptible to the continuing pattern of intellectual control which Jones practiced — behavior controlled by intimidation and threat of force. Cult converts were told to turn off their minds, to relinquish rationalism, and to follow the leader instead of thinking for themselves.

Quite different, I am convinced, is the New Testament perception: Turn on your minds, embrace rationalism, and think for yourselves. Jesus not only wanted his hearers to believe, he wanted them to think — to know *what* they believed and *why* they believed it.

If the deaths of over 900 lost souls are to mean anything for us, may they be a challenge to think and question what we believe. For we know that creative, enriching, alive faith comes because a life is truly open to grow in the knowledge and expression of what it means to serve Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

January 1979

Integrity

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A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

The year ended on a down note for me. Although Jimmy Carter is reported to have sent out 100,000 Christmas cards, my name was not on the list. It seems that if I am ever to be a big duck, the pond will have to be very small.

Nevertheless I am not discouraged by the realization that my circle of influence is quite small, and probably always will be. Of course, all of us who are confidently religious would like for the whole world to lean forward a little whenever we speak, but actually it is not our business to determine the bounds of our ministry. Certainly we should be ready to cooperate fully when God calls us, seizing all opportunities, but the only basis of his final judgment will be our faithfulness in administering our peculiar endowment. And we should remember that the besetting sin of those who appear to have little opportunity to serve is that of burying their talent.

So we should plant and/or water with patient faithfulness whenever we can, never forgetting that it is God who "gives the increase." Long ago I arrived at the conviction that most people do a lot more good than they think, and certainly God does not look down his nose at those who are "faithful in that which is least."

This is the first issue of *Integrity* to be printed by professionals — a move our board thought necessary. Whether or not we can maintain this approach will depend to a great extent on our readers' confidence in their power to participate, who will not only see potential in this modest work and in their particular ability to share it, but who will also wait for God to provide the harvest. Our November issue provoked a thrilling response in contributions and helpful comments, and although we are not yet assured of sufficient monthly support, we are confident. We thank you all — and hope you will bear in mind that it is not all that hard to be a big duck on this pond. □

"We Despaired of Life Itself"

2 Corinthians 1:8

A Letter to a Friend

BRUCE EDWARDS, JR.

Manhattan, Kansas

Dear Jim:

Your letter happened to come during the worst sickness of my life. All of us had been sick to one degree or another during the month, but Wednesday night I came down with some kind of flu and a severe fever. The fever broke eventually, and by Friday afternoon I was feeling my "old self." Then, at 4 a.m. Saturday morning, I woke up with the most unbearable pain in my head — not a normal sinus headache but a pulsating, throbbing, piercing pain that would not let up despite every combination of home remedies.

Finally, Joan talked me into going to the doctor (you know how sick I must have been to relent to that!). He didn't know exactly what it was except some kind of severe inflammation of the brain. I talked out of my head, little noises gave me unbearable irritation, and I wondered whether this was the end. At least it was the end of my rationality. The doctor prescribed phenobarbital to stop the pain, but it didn't help, so Joan called him for something even stronger. Finally, with the doc's help, 13 hours after the pain started, it began to reside. Slowly. Right now I'm about as stable as I have been for the past few days.

During all this yesterday morning, I got to read your letter. I just did reread it to make sure I remember it correctly. You talked of *wanting to die*. Yesterday I thought I *was* dying. And I didn't want to. I thought of a thousand reasons why I didn't.

And I don't think you really want to either. Somebody said, "People who say they want to *die* really mean they wish they could *live*." What the world has shown you so far hasn't impressed you much; you can't change the world, so, your logic goes, it's just as well to bypass it altogether.

Well, isn't that what Jesus and His apostles have been trying to tell us, Jim? That the "world" isn't worth it — that is, that we're living on a fallen planet? That things aren't the way God planned it? Because of Adam, and Eve . . . and *us*? Christians ought to have their eyes wide open, Jim. And for that reason they should be better prepared to "handle" the frustrations and disappointments of this world more realistically than anyone else.

What unrealized teenage dreams do you have, Jim? What hopes, pleasures, joys have eluded you? Make a list. Then offer them to Jesus and say, "Here, Lord, these are the things I think would make me happy." Then ask Him to give you the things that will *really* fulfill you. You know Jesus came preaching, "I came to give you life and more abundantly." What was He saying there? Isn't it something like, "I came to give you something more than bare *existence*, to teach you that *life* is more than what you eat and drink, how many women (or men) you have, how many degrees you have, how much power you have . . .?"

I'm 26 now, but I can still remember being 17. I don't think it is strange

at all that you should have such extreme feelings about life . . . and death. I remember well the uncertainties, the anxieties, the apprehension. No, you don't hate *life*, Jim, what you hate is the *emptiness* of what the world itself has to offer. Perhaps it could be said that you haven't really tasted life yet, or have tasted it in such fleeting circumstances that you didn't have the time to savor it for what it is or could become. That's not surprising. What *is* surprising is that you are such a sensitive observer of life at such a tender age. But it is a turning point. Some people don't reach it until they're 26 or older. Some never do — they're content to drift through life never asking any hard questions, content to fill their stomachs with God's daily bread, never pausing to thank or praise.

You know what happens? When we're children we have lively imaginations. We like stories and colors and dreams. We wonder at the world. That butterfly. That train. How fish breathe. Then something happens. The world becomes too familiar. We take things for granted. Our science teachers imply they can explain everything. The TV set becomes our parents. We trade our real selves over to the world to be remade in the false images they sell us: the beauty queen, the sports hero, the scholar, the power-monger, the religious fanatic.

CORRECTION

We regret that F. L. Lemley's "How the Bible Says" in the December issue was marred by editorial error. The third paragraph (p. 94) should have ended with: "Not all plain statements [not *commands*, as we had it] are imperatives." We are sorry!

But what Christ offers us is this: to be born again, to "become as little children." Do you see why so much of Jesus' teaching was couched in such concepts: children, birth, milk and meat? We need to recover the wonder and mystery of life that we all knew as children. To begin the *adventure* of life again. We Christians have been missing the point, it seems, for a long time. Instead of seeing the world for what it is, we tend to align ourselves with it: with its means, its power, its tactics. Slowly Christians gravitate toward the category of "church members." From "church members" it is a quick slide to "respectable citizens." Soon, Jesus, the Scriptures, and heaven hold slight motivation — they're/we're *sold* on the world.

Possible Responses

You've seen a lot of religious misery in your time: church squabbles, "brotherhood scandals," and the like. It's unfortunate and depressing, but really it's good that you've seen it and know it's there. Now you can get down to business. Not only is the world imperfect, but so are Christians — you and I included. Jim, there are at least three possible responses you can make: (1) you can ignore it all, like the priest and the Levite in the Good Samaritan parable, going your own way in indifference and resignation; (2) you can give up, become cynical and resolve never again to risk trusting people, living a walled-up life in isolation from relationships with others; (3) you can acknowledge the imperfections of the world and your brethren and most importantly your own and set about to do what you can to make it a little better. You can guess which one is the best, yet I have tried all three, and I too am often

saddled, as you seem to be, with the second. I guess there are only so many times a person can endure having his heart stepped on before he recoils in despair. For a time. But only for a time. And sometimes it takes a facing death, however fanciful it may be, to get your thinking straight.

I always thought I had a high threshold of pain . . . until this weekend. I was crying, literally crying out, because of the pain. I can't imagine what it would be like to live in the kind of relentless pain endured by some of those described in the book I sent you, *Where Is God When It Hurts?* But my weekend of pain serves as a forceful reminder that once upon a time a certain Person took my place on the most painful cross, undergoing the most humiliating execution anyone has ever devised.

We Were There

Joan was by my side yesterday when I cried out for comfort. When *He* cried out, there was no one at home in the universe, not even His own Father. When Jesus of Nazareth hung on that cross with all my sins and all the sins and sicknesses of the world, He was all alone, surrounded by hundreds of snickering, slandering cutthroats laughing and leering at Him; that is to say, *we were there*. When you think of that kind of love, that caliber of commitment to our lives, don't talk about wanting to die, Jim. Jesus didn't die so we could die; He died so that you and I could *live*.

I think I probably know the answer to the next question intuitively, but let me ask you: how much time have you spent in prayer and Bible study in the past month? The past week? Today? Whatever your answer is, I'm

sure it's not enough. If we would fill our minds and hearts with the wondrous words and deeds of the Lord Jesus, if we would talk with Him daily as with a close friend and not a dead hero, I don't think we could stay cynical and self-pitying very long.

I know that's easy to say, but understand now, I'm not talking about some kind of formality intoned over dinner or mumbled half-attentively at bedtime; and I'm not talking about the cliches of public prayer — the "ready recollections" and the "no-fears - of - molestation - in - our - respective-humble-abodes." I'm talking about a personal sense of Jesus' presence and, what's more, His personal care. Prayer is more than asking for things. Remember Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*? When he talked to God, that was a good picture of what prayer should be. Talk to Him. When you're angry, heart-broken, excited, depressed, lonely, sad, hopeful — any time for any reason. He's there. He hears. He answers. I know. I try to tell Him everything, not because *He needs to know*, but because *I need to tell Him*. I ask for help, for strength, but I also thank and praise Him for what He's already done.

I don't scoff at what you call your "unbearable pain," Jim. I just know you could deal with it so easily, if you would. In some ways your retreat into isolation is a shirking of responsibility. I think you probably know that. A responsibility to whom or what? Well, first, obviously to Jesus, your Master and Benefactor. But also to yourself. In humility, face yourself and ask: what sinful attitudes or behavior am I refusing to give up? That's a starting place. If nothing stands out, then consider: Am I just being lazy and stubborn? Or are you being paralyzed by fear of failure?

Jim, don't feel sheepish about facing and admitting your imperfections; you have them like all of us rebels. The difference is some of us are saved: we know Jesus the Liberator. You *will* fail — many times. At least I have. And there is, regretably, a sad trail of such failures back there in the darkness. Every once in a while the Devil rattles that chain of failures and I cringe. But the Lord delivers me when I call on Him. He silences that Prosecutor every time from His throne on high.

Well, I'll quit this sermonizing now, but one or two more things. "Trust in God" means exactly that. Trusting Him means daily you'll seek your life from Him; you believe, you expect that He will take care of you in all circumstances. That doesn't mean no sickness, no wants; it doesn't mean you'll live in luxury (who knows, you might); it doesn't mean you won't have problems. But it does mean that He will be with you every step of the way to support you and bless you. When mankind fell in the Garden, we had no idea where or whether our help would come; God supplied it. Trust means you will have a sense of God's presence wherever you are, whatever you are doing. And that means work.

Do you think Abraham felt God's presence so easily, driving those tent pegs day in and day out traveling those dusty byways through Canaan? Do you think it was easy for Moses to claim God's care when he faced that Red Sea with thousands of Egyptian charioteers at his back? Do you think it was automatic for Paul to sense God's protection when he survived that stoning at Lystra? No, Jim, trusting God isn't pretending that He might be there, but the conviction that He *is*, and that He will be there beside us from the day we ask Him into our lives. That means dedicating to Him whatever you're

doing: playing your oboe, eating strawberry shortcake, rounding third base — everything. Every simple, mundane affair of life can be given to Him, to His glory. That's worship. And trust.

I know it sounds a bit silly, especially since we're used to thinking that such secular things are "worldly" and not "spiritual," that the really important stuff — true "worship" — takes place inside buildings with pews in hushed silence. But that's the whole point, isn't it? Jesus comes into the world to make life more abundant and part of that mission is to break down the barriers between secular and sacred. Jesus wants the world to be holy; He wants to start with you.

Well, I've said enough. We love you, Jim, and we care deeply about your feelings, goals, and outlook. When you're troubled, we are too. Jesus calls us to be salt, light and leaven — cities set on a hill that can't be hidden. We need to prepare ourselves for the task. With a quiet, persistent faith we can lead many of the people we meet out of the misery you've described. We can show them that mankind was meant to be more than a faceless mass of consumers. What a shabby, overrated vocation compared to being Children of the King!

Don't be embarrassed about being one of His; we're the only ones who have any real Answer, and we need to share Him with the world. The bankers can't raise us from the grave; the scientists can't tell us why we're here and what we're supposed to do; the intellectuals can't tell us where we're headed; the Eastern mystics can offer only an inaccessible, unpredictable deity; drugs and sex and worldly pleasures can offer only momentary escape from the issues at hand. Only Jesus frees. He frees us to see the world and ourselves the way they/we are and to see what we can be

come . . . in Him. He gives us a way out. Take it.

Love always,
Bruce

P.S. Jim, I know how letters like this can sound so simplistic at a time of self-doubt and self-pity, Forgive me if I have reduced faith to an easygoing formula. I didn't mean to. I know faith

isn't that. It's hard. That, I think, is how God intended it. After all, it was no fast-talking media man who sought followers by proclaiming, "He who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for my sake will find it." □

We Are Protestant and Catholic and Jew

DAVE HUDDLESTON

Milford, Ohio

"In Him were you also circumcised, in the putting off of your sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ. In baptism you were buried with Him and raised with Him through your faith in the power of God, Who raised Him from the dead.

"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; He took it away, nailing it to the cross."

— Colossians 2:11-14

Over the years many have given the terms "Protestant," "Catholic" and "Jew" negative connotations, just identifying them with movements of theology or politics with which we may have some marked differences. I have seen countless tracts and heard numberless sermons emanating from

within the "movement" which were titled "Neither Protestant, Nor Catholic, Nor Jew!" While basically correct in many points, they smacked of a negative tone and purpose, emphasizing essential differences which existed and concentrating on what we *aren't*.

Regretting this negative tone and not being convinced that there were really very many people in the least interested in what we aren't, I proposed to search the scriptures for what they have to say about the matter when these terms are defined in the light of their etymology and history. I discovered a wealth of scriptures teaching what the New Testament Church *is*; and it is, in a sense, Protestant *and* Catholic *and* Jew indeed.

Protestant

The apostolic Church was most definitely a protestant church, repro-

ducing itself at a fantastic rate as a result of that fact. The usual brotherhood cliché maintains that we are not protestants because we aren't protesting anything, assigning a pejorative sense to the word. It has appeared to many, however, that the people most frequently reciting this hackneyed canard are those who also most predictably and routinely *do* protest. It may be that they protest the policies of the National Council of Churches (and not always without good reason) or the practices of the United Christian Missionary Society. They have protested "Restructure," denominationalism, instrumental music, etc., ad infinitum. Again, some of the protests are definitely justified and perhaps even commendable. But let's not say we aren't protesting anything, when we are at the forefront today and have nearly a century's heritage to account for our expertise.

But the significant point is this: "Protest" originally did not mean to speak or stand against, but to speak or stand *for*. Of course, the former is easier than the latter. Consider the vast number in any congregation who "humbly" say they lack the courage or ability to witness, testify or teach, yet seem to have no difficulty criticizing or gossiping about those who will try to witness, testify or teach.

In its positive and original sense, protestant accurately describes the first century saints. No, they weren't members of an anti-Romanism denomination (since there was no Roman Catholic church at that time, or denominations as we know them). They were protestant in the sense that they stood for something; they spoke out. Their standing forth for the word of truth turned communities upside down. They evangelized their neighbors; they evangelized their world. They took the gospel everywhere, even though their lives

were at stake (no pun intended).

Likewise, New Testament Christians today should be protestant. Again, I do not mean that they should be members of some political amalgamation existing for the purpose of speaking as an ecclesiastical authority or purporting to represent all non-Roman-Catholics, but that they should be a voice for our Lord, protesting in the sense of standing for, speaking and holding forth the Word of Truth.

The adage may be somewhat worn by time and use, nonetheless it remains true: "He who stands for nothing will fall for anything." Perhaps this is why many who have claimed in past years to represent Protestants and yet have found themselves unable to stand for the virgin birth or divinity of Christ have fallen for the fads of the "radical chic" which have come and gone in the world of contemporary (you may pronounce that with the emphasis on "temporary") theology.

It is hard for the Christian, who would be moderate in all things, not to be intimidated by the extremes on either side. He wants neither to condone forcing Christian schools to hire practicing homosexuals as teachers nor to be identified with hate-wrenched bigots who would form lynching mobs for any who would not support their efforts to legislate their particular religious or cultural lifestyle. Therefore, he succumbs to the so-called "eleventh commandment" — "Thou shalt not make waves" — and remains mute.

Perhaps we cannot help but sympathize with such reticence. But before we congratulate him on his ability to get along and decide to take the same course of action, let us consider our reaction to the New Testament verses recording similar vacillation twenty centuries ago (John 12:42; 9:22). Is our silence golden or merely "yel-

low"? Has "the salt lost is savor"? Is the gospel story no longer burning in our hearts to the extent that "we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20)?

Catholic

The New Testament Church was and should be Catholic. "Catholic" means "universal." Church historians often refer to the church in pre-papacy days as the Old Catholic Church, which is a fairly accurate description.

Roman Catholic, however, might appear to be a contradiction in terms. Yet the Roman Church has made a number of efforts to be universal — theologically, culturally and even politically. Historically it has been, in varying degrees, syncretistic. Today it is apparently elastic to the point of virtual absurdity, or at least to the extent of the imagination. The different schools of thought represented therein (Family Life Renewal, charismatic movements, Jesuits, etc.) run the gamut from the extreme left to the extreme right.

A catholicity upon the basis of accepting mutually exclusive and heretical doctrines without regard to logic or scripture is not desirable, nor does it follow after the New Testament pattern. The first century church was universal in that it was characterized by one body and by tolerance. The inspired apostles taught that divisions and labels were to be eschewed; yet they did not hesitate to correct doctrinal error or to indict heretics.

Galatians 3:28 teaches that Jesus has broken down the walls and barriers that man has erected. Surely God has intended his Church to be cross-cultural, to span any gap between ages, races, or social, economic, intellectual, regional and geographical

groups. I even wonder if Paul would have written that Galatian epistle today without perhaps adding to "There is neither Jew nor Greek . . . bond nor free . . . male nor female . . . for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" the phrase "neither clergy nor laity." Unfortunately, in many congregations the preservation of cultural customs, dress, music, etc., takes precedence over unity.

Jew

Finally, New Testament Christians are Jews. This is figuratively or spiritually speaking, of course. It doesn't mean that we are bound by Old Testament Laws (Col. 2:14; Gal. 4:3-7; 5:1-6). Nor does it mean that it is incumbent upon us to support the government of the political nation of Israel, whether right or wrong, or to show a superstitious favoritism to an ethnic group. Nor does it mean we are bound to endorse Zionism or the multiple branches of Judaism.

What it does mean is that we are "fellow citizens and of the household of God" (Eph. 2:19). We are also fellow heirs: ". . . through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise of Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:6). Now we are God's children (Jn. 1:12) and His "chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, *that you may declare the praises of Him Who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light*" (1 Pet. 2:9).

And now we're back to where we started: Declaring the Good News, "speaking forth" the greatness of the above privileges that are ours in Christ, along with the unity of the Spirit and the freedom from the Law which are found in Him alone. □

Life More Adventurous

TOM LANE

Cincinnati, Ohio

A new convert was comparing his past life of beer parties and pool halls with his new pattern of abstinence from questionable indulgences. "Really," he concluded, "there's so little to do when you're a Christian." His lament echoes the objection which many people have been heard to make when pressed to declare themselves for Christ: "Look at all I'd have to give up!"

One evening while a student in New Orleans, a friend came to me and said, "Let's go out tonight and look for adventure." We hopped the electric streetcar and rode into the French Quarter. Both Christians, we were not much attracted by the night clubs and bars, but contented ourselves with admiring the Old World architecture, browsing the shops, standing on the levee watching barges on the Mississippi, and dining on French donuts and chicory coffee.

Then, heading back to the streetcar stop, we began conversation with an old man who beckoned to us from his seat on the sidewalk. The three of us shared our plans and goals and philosophies of life. We shared our views of Christ -- an experience which should not be uncommon for the Christian, but which is always exciting. Tired but exhilarated, my friend and I returned home, and he commented: "Tom, I said we should go out tonight looking for adventure, but adventure is right here, wherever we are, with Jesus." Delighted we were, then, a few days later, to spot an auto bumper sticker

that read: "Life with Jesus is high adventure."

Jesus' call to discipleship requires that we shun the present corrupt world-order and live on a different moral plane. But our lives do not become boring just because we cannot participate in the ways of the world. Jesus calls us to a thrilling style of life, full of drama and fulfillment. Life with Jesus is high adventure.

The Elements of Adventure

Three elements typify life styles that people consider adventurous. Each of these elements is an abundant ingredient in the Christian life.

1. *Conflict* spiced with some degree of danger is the foremost element of adventure. The requisite conflict and its attendant danger may take place between man and outside forces, or between a man and his own inner limitations, ideas, and self-concept. The struggle of man against forces outside himself -- of man against mountain, man versus wild beast, man against man in armed combat -- gives us the greatest gut-level, spine-tingling, we might say animalistic or creaturely thrills. But the conflict of the individual within himself is a no less awesome phenomenon. We admire, for example, the politician who "comes clean," or the academician who confesses to have held false theories and bows to the weight of the evidence; for each has confronted a *moral* dilemma. Each is an adventurer.

It is in this realm of moral conflict, of man versus himself, that Christians become adventurers. We are soldiers in conflict with powerful influences bent on the decimation of God's order. What more colossal danger could we confront?

Our battlefield is the human personality. Our weapons are ideas and attitudes. The gospel message that God works with those who commend themselves to Him, a message imbued with moral and intellectual appeal, is a weapon containing "divine power" to "destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4-5, RSV). The attitude of humble submission to a forgiving God is an effective weapon against guilt and sin (Jas. 4:6-10).

In the cosmic conflict of good against evil, we venture our patience and courage, our sensitivity to right and wrong, our compassion for sinners and our uncompromising hatred for sin. Danger is present: the danger that we may be overwhelmed by that which we fight, that our idealism may flag when persistent effort sometimes fails to bring results. That is the challenge of the fray. But God who captures us in this warfare is also our source of inspiration, the assurance of victory.

2. Adventure involves the *exploration of uncharted territories*. The voyages of Jacques Cousteau and the Apollo astronauts are prime examples of the adventure of the unknown.

Christian adventure consists in our work to apply age-old standards of right and wrong in our lives today. Here we steam boldly into unexplored waters. Each of us is a one-of-a-kind personality. How can each of us apply God's universal summons to purity and love to his individual circumstances? Moreover, how do we answer the moral issues of our day with the timeless principles of love and

justice which the New Testament puts forth? That the church offers a divided opinion on many contemporary questions does not prove the poverty of our faith. Instead, it points out the depth of our adventure. Rather than becoming upset with one another because of our varying interpretations, we should forebear to work in harmony. We're all members of the same crew, after all. Equipped with the examples and illustrations provided in the Bible, with reasoning minds and sincere hearts, we can chart a safe course through the moral whirlpools of our age, to a glorious reception by the Father upon our voyage home.

3. Adventure means *surprises*. Uncertainty is always implicit in conflict and in exploration. Accordingly the Christian life has a great measure of the unusual.

God proves Himself to be, sometimes perplexingly, but always in the outcome delightfully, unpredictable. C. S. Lewis in his famed *Chronicles of Narnia* pictures Christ as a magic lion, of whom Lewis' characters observe, "He is not a *tame* lion." God is the nemesis of all our preconceptions and neat formulas. Of the disenchanting youth, His word requires involvement in constructive labor of love, rather than escape into quiet mysticism. To the person who has "made it" in the world, who "has it all," and is self-satisfied in his material comfort and social standing, God's word says, "Go, sell all you have, and give to the poor." To the Christian activist expending himself in service to fellow men, God breathes a balancing hint of mysticism: "Be still, and know that I am God."

When we genuinely resolve to follow God wherever He may lead, we may discover ourselves in unexpected places. One talented young man found himself persuaded to abandon a scholarship in science to enter a

seminary. An adventurer from a staunch high economic and social background found himself led into inner city mission work. Many a sinner has found himself compelled to discard the habits of years.

Dare To Try It!

Life with God is an adventure. Why, then, do many believers take a ho-hum outlook upon their Christian lives? Perhaps because so much preaching and teaching fails to point up the challenges of godly living. Preaching, as someone has said, must not only "comfort the afflicted," it must "afflict the comfortable." Then, too, while adventure is still an ideal in our society, the trend more and more is to

take it vicariously, through televised sports and fiction, through the cinema, and the dangerless titillations of Disney World rides which the ticket books, interestingly enough, call "adventures." But the Christian life cannot be lived vicariously. To enjoy its adventure, we must be willing to *venture*.

The adventurous character of Christian living is well expressed in that hymn which portrays the Master calling to the "sturdy dreamers": "Are ye able to be crucified with Me?" No less does God ask. But in return He offers the thrill of unrivalled adventure, the joy of giving ourselves in sacrifice to the One who sacrificed Himself for us, and His welcome in glory for a job well done. □

Are We A Church?

W. CARL KETCHERSIDE

St. Louis, Missouri

Modern sectarianism is a post-apostolic development. It did not spring up overnight and will not be eliminated in a day. It is true that believers in the Sonship and Messiahship of Jesus had problems while the apostles were still among them, but the idea of separating and forming distinct sects seems never to have occurred to them. The political and religious sects among the Jews met at one temple. They did not set up rival establishments. Synagogues were places of prayer, study and discussion, and were not involved in sectarian exclusiveness.

As badly as Corinth was divided

they all met together in the same place, although their abuse of the *agape*, or feast of love, made it impossible for them to eat the Lord's Supper which was an expression of *koinonia*, the sharing of the common life. Those who "went out from among us" as mentioned by John were "not of us." They did not believe that Jesus had come in the flesh. They denied both the Father and the Son. John declared that if they had been of us, that is, if they had shared the conviction that Jesus had come in the flesh, "they no doubt would have continued with us."

It is probably making a use of this which the apostles never intended,

and would even repudiate, to apply it to brethren who leave a "Church of Christ" and move to another part of the city and plant another "Church of Christ" using instrumental music or deprecating the use of classes or individual cups. As sad as this is, because it makes something besides Jesus a test of union or communion, it is not in the category of those who deny that Jesus came in the flesh. Besides that, the restoration movement left the Redstone and Mahoning Valley Baptist Associations to open up as "The Church of Christ," so the Baptists could tar us with the same stick with which we seek to besmirch others.

The problem we face is that it probably never occurred to Peter, James and John that believers in the central truth of the ages, all of whom made the "good confession," would ever crystallize around the observations and deductions from what they wrote, by Huss, Calvin, Wesley or Campbell, and form separate parties to protect their conclusions. Certainly it never occurred to them that such believers would call their parties *ecclesiae*, or be transmuted into what we call churches. Accordingly, there are no real guidelines for dealing with the matter, and we are left with the expedient of confronting the situation by application of general principles enunciated in conjunction with other conditions not parallel to the present.

It would seem that a primary step to the unity of all who believe in Christ on the basis of apostolic testimony would be to quit thinking of them as forming churches. If we are to use the word church at all, and there are a good many grave reasons why we should not, there is but one. The *ekklesia* is a divine organism, and not a human organization. There never was but one. There never will be another. No man can-

call another man out of the world. No man can call us together into one body. That is the work of the Spirit.

There is no such thing as a Methodist *Church*. There is a Methodist party consisting of believers in Jesus who ostensibly crystallized around the teachings and deductions of John Wesley. The Methodist *Church* is perpetuated today by its traditions, its forms and structures, and not by peculiar belief. John Wesley would no more recognize it as something he is alleged to have started than Alexander Campbell would recognize "The Church of Christ" as something growing out of "The Declaration and Address." There is no Presbyterian *Church*, but there is a party of believers in Jesus which collected around the philosophical rationalization of John Calvin.

There is no such thing as "The Church of Christ" in the eyes of God. This was a creation of men growing out of a movement to unite the Christians in all of the sects and projected to gain a special and separate listing in the United States Census of "religious bodies." But there is only one body. Every saved person on earth is in it. That body is no sect, and no sect is that body. It is not a coalition of sects or a composite of them all.

We were all baptized into one body by one Spirit. The Holy Spirit never immersed anyone into any party or sect, whether ours or that of others. We can help to further the eternal purpose of God if we quit thinking of "other churches," and if we start treating all believers as believers, not as unbelievers or pagans. In the new covenant sense a believer is one who assents to the great proposition that "Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Many believers are wrong about a lot of things, and many are currently wrong about who believers are. □

LETTERS

Baptism and Brotherhood

John Smith's article (Sept., '78) seems little more than the declaration, "Without baptism, one is lost, and if you don't agree, you're wrong." I would really like to see a more detailed and documented statement of Smith's point of view.

I am convinced that 1 John 5:1 requires me to recognize as brothers, and love, all those who have vital faith in Jesus as the Christ, regardless of other disagreements in doctrine and practice. Having seen and felt the vivid faith of unbaptized believers, I find it easy to take John 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 12:3 at face value.

It is ironic that Smith's main reference is to Romans 10, a chapter which contains several bold proclamations by Paul that faith in the resurrected Lord, and not "doing something," is the sole criterion for salvation (vv.4, 11, 13).

Wayne Wiese
McGregor, Texas

On Understanding

Having been accused of begging the question, I can't help but respond to the non-answer of Barry Graham's letter (*Integrity*, Sept., 1978). His solution of simply "surrendering my problems and disappointments in the things I don't understand to the Lord" is the epitome of blind faith. This does not beg the question; it says there is not answer.

In John 1:1, the writer declares that: "In the beginning *there was meaning [logos]*." And later, in verse 14, that this "meaning" became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus is the full and complete revelation. It is only the scar tissue of sin in our spiritual eyes that clouds our vision of the path to understanding. While one may never achieve that perfect understanding (Matt. 5:48), nevertheless, "I press on to that goal" (Phil. 3:14). It is in this sense that one must be totally honest in his faith, and dig deep into the reality of his own being. It is there, where our faith

battles our unfaith, that understanding through God's meaning, can take hold.

What I tried to convey in my letter of May, 1978, was that Job, as allegory, was God's message to the world (B.C.) that "meaning" exists. And now (A.D.) through the revelation given to us by the Son, we can at least achieve, even in our personal tragedies on this side of the grave, understanding akin to that of Job. This is "good news" and certainly offers more comfort and power to those in need than the traditional "pie in the sky bye and bye" theology. To consign Job to the standard-bearer of acquiescent faith is to totally turn the message of the book on its head. But after all, our heritage has never gone in very big for sackcloth and ashes.

Bradford L. Stevens
St. Louis, Missouri

A Suggestion

I felt compelled to write and express my gratitude for the special November issue of *Integrity*. I very much appreciated the comments and personal thoughts of your staff; also, being a fairly recent subscriber, I enjoyed the brief history of the publication as given in the articles contained therein.

Now that I know more about the magazine itself, as well as the people behind it, I am more convinced than ever yours is a message that *must* be heard. Although I often do not agree completely with the conclusions of every writer, I have always found the articles contained in *Integrity* to be full of stimulating and crucial ideas. For this fact I am most thankful, and I promise to continue to support you in my prayers and also through financial contributions.

As for your request concerning suggestions, I have only one. After reading the past few issues, I have had an uneasy feeling that perhaps some hostilities have begun to creep into your pages as different viewpoints on several subjects have been aired. While I definitely and positively believe in the necessity of "making a variety of views and insights available to the readership," I must insist that it be done in a true spirit of love and humility, as both sides strive to find the truth. "Reactions," debates, and the further free exchange of ideas are absolutely vital; verbal exchange of insights and a spirit of divisiveness, however, cannot be tolerated. Reasoning *together* must remain our goal as we prayerfully seek to find new ways of applying God's truth to man's situation.

Again, permit me to thank you for the past year of *Integrity*. I hope to enjoy and use it for a long time to come!

David Musick
Elizabethton, Tennessee

INTEGRITY

COMMENT

Beyond Guyana

HUGH V. STEWART

Grand Blanc, Michigan

The horrible reality of the Jonestown tragedy cannot be denied. Undoubtedly the bizarre news out of Guyana in recent weeks has raised some questions for which there are no easy answers. One does not glibly explain the mass suicide of over 900 people. Nevertheless they are questions which we must face.

Years ago, in *The True Believer*, Eric Hoffer presented the criticism that some people want so desperately to believe and to be a part of a definitive answer system that they will believe whatever is necessary to foster and maintain a particular delusion; that they will do whatever is required so long as they are protected by the group; and that they believe because of the charisma — a particular dynamic quality — of a leader. Central to true believer movements is the expectation that all persons subscribe to uniform beliefs and expectations. They want everyone to be their friend — as long as the other person will believe the "true belief." It reminds me of the graphic poster I recently saw: "Everybody has the right to my opinion."

Regardless of the label or particular life style affected by a "true belief" group, and regardless of the collection of beliefs which we could identify only reasonably as "peculiar," the concept of uniformity is primary. This is so for the Unification Church of Mr. Moon, the Peoples Temple of Jim Jones, and any fundamentalist Christian sect.

To demand uniformity is to deny the clear-cut evidence of the Christian Church from New Testament times to the present. If we look at the differing emphases of the gospel writers and the often contrary opinions between Paul and others, we should be able to affirm that creative, enriching, alive belief does not come from adherence to a particular belief system, but arises because a life is truly open to grow in the knowledge and expression of what it means to serve Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

This is precisely why I am personally committed to a faith community (call it a church) which accepts and encourages a variety of belief — as long as that belief begins in the confession of Jesus Christ as Savior of persons and Lord of Life. And that is why I am always saddened and often perturbed when someone asks, "What should I believe about . . .?"

Each of us must work out for herself/himself, within the framework of the believing community, what it means to be saved and directed by

Jesus Christ. Such variety of belief does not mean that it's OK to believe whatever you want, that anyone can be a wishy-washy, Charlie Brown type of Christian. Variety should be on the cutting, challenging edge of the understanding of personal belief. For it is only when one is able to incorporate a personal belief system into his daily responsibilities and personal interrelationships that there is strength and meaning in what he believes. It is the responsibility of the particular faith community, not to give answers, but to help each of us ask the right questions.

While it is true that one who is comfortable within an open faith community is not comfortable within a closed community, the reverse is also true; and the person who needs provided, handed-out answers is game — albeit unfair game — for the hunter of lost souls. Notice that I did not say the *shepherd* of lost souls, but the *hunter* — the one who seeks to capture and/or destroy.

Jim Jones was a hunter. He was a magnetic, colorful, articulate, and probably psychotic hunter. He destroyed hundreds of people whom he lured into his particular delusion.

The other night as my wife and I talked of the whole tragic Peoples Temple commune, she reminded me of this passage from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*:

The point was in his being a gifted creature, and that of all his gifts the one that stood out pre-eminently, that carried with it a sense of real presence, was his ability to talk, his words — the gift of expression, the bewildering, the illuminating, the most exalted and the most contemptible, the pulsating stream of light, or the most deceitful flow from the heart of an impenetrable darkness.

One of the Jonestown survivors said this of Jim Jones: "The man could speak. He could suck them in. A lot of people believed until they saw what was happening."

Dr. Stephen Hersh, Director of Youth Programs at the National Institute of Mental Health, says that "young people who join cults usually are vulnerable. People are hungering for something that is going to structure them, give them answers and make them feel they're involved."

So why did over 900 people follow their leader/hunter into mass suicide? "I believe it was the jungle," said Dr. Thomas Ungerleider of UCLA's psychiatry faculty. "They were under immense group pressure and easily led." How apt Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*:

Soul! If anybody had ever struggled with a soul, I am the man. And I wasn't arguing with a lunatic either. Believe me or not, his intelligence was perfectly clear — concentrated, it is true, upon himself with horrible intensity, yet clear . . . But his soul was mad! Being alone in