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MISSION

DECEMBER 1974



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DECEMBER, 1974, VOLUME 8, NUMBER 6

"... 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."

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THE RENEWAL OF WORSHIP

BY NORMAN MURPHY

To say that we are living in the midst of a social revolution seems trite because the evidence is so obvious. The church has found itself in the midst of the revolution despite great efforts to insulate itself. This revolution has affected the church on many fronts. Most attention has centered on the role of the church in regard to various social issues—race, war and now women.

Another question has persisted over the years without occupying center stage—how a church worships. Considerable turmoil exists in this aspect of the church's life as well. Charismatic gifts are exercised—or exorcised, on occasion—by people among all denominations, Episcopalian to Baptist. Roman Catholics can now eat meat on Friday and hear mass in English. But St. Christopher is no longer a saint—only Christopher. If Baptists go to the right place—or the wrong place, depending on your view—they may hear one of twenty ordained women ministers deliver the sermon.

How people worship together is a particularly sensitive topic simply because it affects everyone. It is possible to defuse other delicate issues by confining discussion to a relatively small group which is not so threatening to the church at large. But the entire congregation comes together on Sunday for public worship. A change here affects everyone. Tinkering with the arrangement of songs and prayers may cause a ripple of unrest. Suggestions of omitting the invitation song or initiating a responsive reading cause great concern.

I perceive two opposite attitudes toward changes

in worship. Most people probably fall somewhere on the continuum between the two. First there is the traditionalist who sees the church as a changeless island in a sea of change. Church is the one place in the world where there is a security that comes from warm familiarity. The old standard hymns still bring a glow. The “ol’ time” religion is what these people like.

On the other hand, nontraditionalists react in almost a knee-jerk fashion to more traditional worship styles. Change is sought for change's sake—it's important to shake people up. These people find the standard worship quite sterile and meaningless. Often this group includes people who have gone off to college or a camp and experienced a variety of worshipping styles. Quite often a mountaintop experience might be involved. Then they return to the same church disenchanted with structured worship. Often a desire for more spontaneity is voiced. The underlying assumption is that forms and structures hinder true worship.

In this conflict I have the firm conviction that each perspective needs the other. As a traditionalist would insist, structure in

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worship is necessary. But it is equally true that existing forms and structures were not handed down by Jesus or the apostles and that worship must in some way relate to the world we live in today.

How are we to resolve this dilemma? Basically, we need to understand what worship is about. We must examine the rationale behind what we do. How does Christian theology inform our worship? A real problem exists for us simply because we typically do not deal with worship from a theological perspective. The two common criteria applied when making changes in the worship reflect how captive we are to our own culture. One criterion is *efficiency*. In partaking of the Lord's Supper, for example, the chief concern appears to be how quietly and rapidly the most people can be served. A second criterion is primarily *esthetic* for both traditionalists and nontraditionalists. The basic issue is a matter of personal taste.

These criteria seem inadequate to me simply because they fail to consider the meaning of Christian worship. This failure is perfectly understandable in light of restoration history. Typically we have been concerned with doing the five acts of worship. The important thing was that people sang, prayed, gave, partook of the Lord's Supper, and heard the preached word. It simply was not important how the action of worship expressed its meaning. Other denominations, not sharing our history, pay attention to this matter. Presbyterians, for example, emphasize the importance of the preached word. Consequently, the one pulpit reserved for preaching is elevated and larger than the other one used for prayer and announcements, thus visualizing a theological conviction. Christians then have known, long before McLuhan, that the "medium is the message."

Nontraditionalists often have a fear of this kind of thinking because it implies the importance of form and structure which are seen as obstructions to worship. I am convinced however, that forms are inescapable. The real issue is what kind of forms or structures our worship will have. Will these forms hinder or facilitate the communication of the gospel in today's world? Even in the most free wheeling church in the New Testament—Corinth—the mandate is for an ordered worship. Worship must be intelligible to outsiders, Paul insists. Structure is evident in today's charismatic worship. No communal life is possible without forms. But there is a deeper reason for their importance: they reflect the process of incarnation—the process of God entering history in Jesus

of Nazareth. To distrust forms, then, is to question the heart of the Christian faith.¹

To this point I have sketched two opposing viewpoints regarding changes in Christian worship. I have underlined the importance of the forms used to express our worship. I have also indicated the fundamental importance of Christian theology for determining the shape of these forms rather than the values of efficiency or esthetic taste.

One basic question remains: How is Christian theology to inform the forms and structure of the Christian worship? There are so many important considerations that it is impossible to discuss them all in this article. One article might detail the importance the biblical witness attaches to congregational participation and discuss ways worshippers might become more active participants than passive spectators. I want to focus this article on what I consider to be the fundamental consideration for Christian worship. Psalm 150 states it quite clearly: "Praise him for his mighty deeds." Our faith is historical, based on God's acts in history.

The Christian affirms that God has acted, is acting and will act. Our faith has a past, a present and a future. God has visited this world and his presence continues. For God's people, specific events have assumed special significance in worship. The Hebrew people looked to the exodus from Egypt as the cornerstone of their faith, even as Christians look to the cross and resurrection. These events are re-presented in worship—passover, Lord's Supper and baptism. Strikingly these events occurred in secular history.²

The exodus, from the eyes of the Egyptians, is no more than a walkout of slave laborers—or in terms of current experience, a strike of migrant workers. It was certainly not a religious event. In fact it was apparently a nonevent—for they left no record of the happening. The eyes of faith, however, see this event as a foundation for a way of life—total obedience to the exodus God. Christians also confess the presence of God in the death and resurrection of Jesus, while Roman historians do not rate the event worth an obituary notice. Secular history thus lies at the heart of Christian worship and in fact gives rise to the key elements of Christian worship—baptism, Lord's Supper, preaching of the Word. These forms of worship recall what God has done.

¹I am indebted to J. J. von Allman, *Worship: Its Theology and Practice* (London: Lutterworth, 1968), for this point.

²This point and its implications are developed in a thorough-going fashion by James F. White, *The Worldliness of Worship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

For the Christian, the past gives meaning to present life. Our God is, in Pascal's words, not the God of the philosophers, but of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I might add Augustine, Martin Luther, Alexander Campbell, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Martin Luther King. The point is that we belong to a cause greater than ourselves. God's kingdom existed before and will continue after us. In short, we belong to the Lord of history. Today, like Miriam after the exodus, we can "sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously."

God's continued presence in our midst is expressed in embarrassingly worldly and earthy substances. God does not leave us to fleeting mountain top experiences to realize his presence. Rather he leaves us water, bread and wine. Worship in fact is a very worldly experience. Any form or practice which tries to evade this fact denies the gospel. Worship is not a place where one tries to escape from the world—that is, from history. Rather, the world meets us in worship. Like it or not, we worship with neighbors, not angels! As Paul reminds the Corinthian church, they are to discern the body of believers in the breaking of bread. We eat, not of some invisible food, but bread produced by the sweat of man's brow. We drink wine, made from grapes picked by migrant workers and pressed and bottled mechanically.

How strange the early Christians would find our observance of the Lord's Supper. For them, bread and wine were common table elements, like coffee and toast, or hamburger and coke for us. They were not set aside for special use on Sunday. The overall atmosphere of Christian worship today appears to represent an attempt to escape the world to find a "spiritual" experience. This striving is more closely akin to the Buddhists' longing for Nirvana than a Christian's worshipping the only true and living God. A sign sometimes seen in church buildings reflects the way we have separated worship from life. It says: "Enter quietly, worship reverently, depart to serve." An early Christian, Jerome, whose Latin translation of the New Testament served as the New Testament of the church for over 1,000 years, described worship in the Roman basilicas as a very noisy affair: "The 'Amen' of the people," he says, "resounded like heavenly thunder." Nothing in the central Christian tradition accounts for the tiptoe!

Using communion as an example of the process of theological thinking, I would like to raise some

questions that may inform how worshippers celebrate the Lord's Supper. These questions, it seems to me, are crucial in determining how we do the Lord's Supper, whether we continue to observe it in the same way, whether we change it, and if it is changed in what way.

1. How can we take history seriously in observing the Lord's Supper? How can we celebrate the Lord's Supper in a way that does not separate our everyday life from eating bread and drinking wine?

2. What forms might be appropriate for evoking a greater sense of participation?

3. Are some forms or practices more appropriate than others for creating a celebrative rather than a funereal atmosphere?

You no doubt can raise other theologically grounded questions that merit discussion.

Again, I want to emphasize that answers to these questions may or may not lead to change. The crucial concern is that we raise these questions to a conscious level. Too often we regard how we partake of the Lord's Supper a mere tactical problem: how can we all do it? My point is that such "practical" problems have real doctrinal implications. *How* we do it communicates a real message about our doctrinal beliefs.

If we are concerned with renewal of our worship together, we must come to grips with the historical character of our faith.

We must not freeze history as those of us who tend to be traditional are tempted to try.

Neither must we attempt to escape the structure of history as nontraditionalists seek to do.

Rather, we must wrestle with the substance of our faith and seek to ascertain what forms most adequately express the Christian message to the world.

Shuffling the pieces of worship around like a religious jig-saw puzzle is no answer. An approach which adds a zippy song here and cuts a dry prayer there is doomed to failure. Changing clothes on a mannikin will never cause it to come to life, regardless of how much pizzazz the new garb may have.

We will experience renewal in worship only when we take history more seriously. As Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote: "I never experience the reality of God without the reality of the world, or the reality of the world without the reality of God."

MISSION

THE EXORCIST AND ALEXANDER CAMPBELL

BY THOMAS A. LANGFORD
AND WILLIAM J. COOK JR.

Whether there is anyone who yet is not familiar with *The Exorcist*, book or movie, is a matter of little doubt. One would have to lead a rather isolated life to have escaped some notice of it. Appearing originally as a novel in May, 1971, William Peter Blatty's fantastic tale of horror was catapulted into almost universal recognition by the movie version which garnered ten Academy Award nominations and caused a good deal of temporary, although earnest, sickness among viewers.

The Exorcist has caused consternation among literary and film critics. They appear to have difficulty in knowing exactly how to take it. Literary critics are divided sharply in their appraisals of the novel. Reviewers for *Life* and the *Los Angeles Times* placed the author in the tradition of Edgar Allen Poe; but another critic (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 11, 1974) insists that Blatty "most assuredly does not belong" in the honored succession of America's men of letters. "What distinguishes Blatty's tale is its wholly manipulative use of the 'black conceit,' a use which is so clearly opportunistic as to be morally vacant," says the *Chronicle* critic, Marc Green. Film critics have praised the technical aspects of the movie while generally condemning the manipulation of viewer emotion.

Of more interest for the purpose of this study,

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however, is the reaction of churchmen and religious leaders. Whether the work is a "religious novel" as many have insisted is debatable; but, even so, its implications for the church and Christian doctrine are clearly evident. *Christianity Today* (February 15, 1974) accurately pinpoints the basic challenge of the story: "the real interest in the . . . film lies not in its horror, though there's plenty of that, but in its underlying presumption that demon possession exists and that therefore exorcism . . . is necessary." This is a presupposition not universally held by religious leaders, of course. Generally speaking, they are divided along the classic "liberal"-"fundamental" lines with regard to belief in demons and therefore in reaction to *The Exorcist*.

Reaction to the work is typified by the comments of Lubbock clergymen regarding the movie. An *Avalanche-Journal* columnist (February 22, 1974) reported that the Unitarian-Universalist minister said he did not believe in demon possession and that "the movie is more of a gimmick than a reality." An Episcopal bishop indicated that he wasn't a believer in demon possession "in the classical sense." Among others interviewed, ministers of the First Christian Church, the First Baptist Church, and one of the Catholic parishes discouraged attendance at the movie for the average individual.

Most interesting to readers of this journal, however, were the remarks attributed to the director of the School of Preaching at one of the city's Churches of Christ. He indicated, according to the column, that he would not give any encouragement for anyone to see the movie because it was based "strictly on fiction." (Blatty based his story on a purportedly well-documented case of "possession" in 1949.) The minister was further quoted as saying that "God does not allow the devil to enter a person. God did allow demon possession as an arena for Jesus to demonstrate his power.

"Now Christians do not have to fear demon possession because the person has been delivered from the power of darkness."

In a somewhat less provincial atmosphere but with the same fundamentalistic vigor, Leroy Garrett, in a recent issue of *Restoration Review* (February, 1974), reacts quite strongly against the movie and the book saying that "Satan has no control over one's life except as that person willingly yields himself to his clutches." He argues that the movie is likely to have the unfortunate effect of frightening viewers into such concern over the dramatic aspects of "possession" that they

overlook the more real and damning sins which are a part of their everyday lives. Of course, it is hard to argue with his contention that the Christians would better spend the time it takes to go to the movie by reading the scriptures with his family or walking across the street to visit a widowed neighbor.

Others have reacted to the book and movie a bit differently. Any Christian must be bothered by the vile language with which the story is filled. And the rather flagrant exploitation of the emotional and traumatic potentialities of the situation can scarcely be defended. Yet the work does require consideration of an eminently biblical subject which most theologians and preachers have given proportionately little attention. This is especially true of scholars in the "Restoration" tradition. While the heirs of the nineteenth century Restoration movement have generally held a "dispensational" view of supernatural phenomenon as relates to gifts of the Spirit and miraculous intervention of God in post-apostolic human affairs, there has been little in the way of a consistent and well-articulated "demonology" (or "angelology" either, for that matter, as Richard Kirby points out in the January, 1974 *Restoration Review*).

Suppose, indeed, that the "day of miracles is past," as so many of our people have been wont to say, or at least that God is not working in human affairs today quite as he did when Lazarus and Christ were raised, does that mean that the devil also follows a dispensational plan of his own (or of our own) and that he no longer "goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour?" Or even if we grant the interpretation of the book of Revelation which insists that the devil is now bound by the power of the gospel, so far as the Christian is concerned, is there any reason to suppose that he will not seek to devour that vast portion of the world which has not accepted the gospel defense against his wiles?

These are questions which persisted with many students of the Bible and human behavior long before Blatty's *The Exorcist* flashed across the sky, questions which received surprisingly scant attention from a people who claimed to receive the Bible more or less literally and who insisted that a denial of the existence of the devil was a sure sign of "modernism." Instances in the Bible of demon possession

can hardly be written off as something which God allowed merely "as an arena for Jesus to demonstrate his power," unless our view of scripture is so simplistic as to make it conform to our own pseudo-Lockean system of non-supernaturalism. Approached on its own terms the Bible seems clearly to indicate that Satan has arrogated certain powers unto himself and is not simply following the design and will of God, to say nothing of ours. (This is not to say, of course, that God will not turn Satan's evil to our good, as in the crucifixion.)

Some students of Restoration writers will, when they read *The Exorcist*, remember an essay in Alexander Campbell's *Popular Lectures and Addresses* (Philadelphia, 1861), entitled "Address on Demonology." A rereading of the essay confirms one's feeling that the "sage of Bethany" with his typically catholic interests and depth of understanding probably has more to say on the subject than any who are talking today. He gave the address in Nashville, Tennessee on March 10, 1841, before the Popular Lecture Club. While his conclusions do not in every way give credibility to the incidents in *The Exorcist*, they are such, if accepted, as not to allow a light dismissal of demonic possession as "mere fiction." Our problem, as identified by Campbell, is that "here, as in everything else, there are the fact and the fable, the true and the false, the real and the imaginary. The extravagant fancies of the poets, the ghosts and spectres of the dark ages, have spread their sable mantles upon this subject, and involved it either in philosophical dubiety or in a blind indiscriminate infidelity." Noting that "truth and fable [are] blended in the same tradition," he "institutes an examination into the merits of the subject" (p. 380).

Campbell traces out the earliest uses of the word "demon" by going back to its Grecian origin and meaning, pointing out that Aristotle was called a "demon" for his great learning, as was Thucydides. This was a special appropriation of the term in the sense of "a knowing one," for according to some etymologists the word "descended from a very ancient verb, pronounced 'daioo,' which meant 'to discriminate, to know'" (380). From this usage the term was taken as "the title of a human spirit when divested of its clay tenement, because of its supposed initiation into the secrets of another world" (381).

Having treated quite deftly the speculations of etymologists and lexicographers, Campbell moves with even greater confidence to the history of the term "demon" from "its earliest acceptation among the elder Pagans, Jews and Christians."

Hesiod is quoted (through Petrarch): "The spirits of mortals become demons when separated from their earthly bodies." Plutarch himself declares that "the demons of the Greeks were the ghosts and genii of departed men; and they go up and down the earth as observers, and even rewarders, of men; and although not actors themselves, they encourage others to act in harmony with their views and characters." Then in addition to these ancient worthies, Campbell adduces Zoroaster, Thales, Pythagoras, Plato, Celsus, Apuleius, Zeno-crates and Aristotle as all regarding and using the word "demon" in the same light.

Campbell then moves dramatically to the time of the Jewish Patriarchs and demonstrates that a thousand years before Homer or Hesiod, demons were recognized and worshipped in the land of Canaan. Statutes against the worship of demons and the consultation of familiar spirits were set forth at Mount Sinai; traces of necromancy and divination continued even among the Jews down to the time of Christ. He points out that "even David admits that his nation 'learned the works of the heathen, served their idols, and sacrificed their sons and daughters to demons'" (383). A significant point is the fact that among the Jews the term "demon" always denoted an unclean or wicked spirit, while among the pagans it apparently at one time represented both good and evil spirits. Campbell's discussion even at this point is clearly a definitive exposition of demons. A close examination of his analysis will discover that he has dealt summarily with the three later popular views of demons—humanistic, animistic, and astral. And this about forty years before the first serious book length study of demons was published.

In the New Testament scriptures, Campbell points out, the term "demon" occurs, in one form or another, seventy-five times, almost without exception in the sense of a wicked and unclean spirit. Further, it is suggested that

this association of the idea of wickedness with the word "daimoon" may have induced our translators to give us so many "devils" in their authorized version. But this misapprehension is now universally admitted and regretted; for, while the Bible teaches many demons, it nowhere intimates a plurality of devils or Satans. There is but one devil or Satan in the universe, whose legions of angels and demons give him a sort of omnipresence, by acting out his will in all their intercourse with mortals. This evil spirit, whose official titles are the serpent, the devil and Satan, is always found in the singular number in both the Hebrew and Greek scriptures; while demon is found in both numbers, indicating sometimes one, and sometimes a legion. (384).

In determining how the word "demon" was used in Judea in the Christian era, Campbell raises the question whether the inspired writers ever give any special definition for the word. In all of the seventy-five occurrences of the word, no "hint of a special, private or peculiar interpretation of it" is given. Following the common law of philology, that a word is to be defined in terms of its common current usage unless there is some indication that a special definition is intended, Campbell concludes that we are "fully authorized to say that the demons of the New Testament were the spirits of dead men." Moreover he concludes that "the demons of Paganism, Judaism and Christianity were the ghosts of dead men" (385).

The thoroughly modern tendency to provide a purely materialistic explanation for "demonic" activity is interestingly and humorously dealt with:

There have been in later times a few intellectual dyspeptics, on whose nervous system the idea of being really possessed by an evil spirit produces a frenzied excitement. Terrified at the thought of an incarnate demon, they have resolutely undertaken to prove that every demon named in Holy Writ is but a bold Eastern metaphor, placing in high relief dumbness, deafness, madness, palsy, epilepsy, etc; and hence that demoniacs then and now were and are a class of unfortunates laboring under certain physical maladies called unclean spirits. *Credat Judaeus Apella, non ego.*

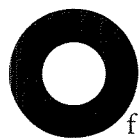
On the principle that every demon is an Eastern metaphor, how incomparably more eloquent than Demosthenes or Cicero, was he that had at one time within him a legion of Eastern metaphors struggling for utterance! No wonder, then, that the swineherds of Gadara were overwhelmed by the moving eloquence of their herds as they rushed with such pathos into the deep waters of dark Galilee! (389).

Campbell thus argues the existence of actual demons and insists that their reality is "palpable and irrefragable proof of a spiritual system." It was not surprising, in his view, that materialists should disbelieve in demons. It would have been inconceivable to him, one gathers, for Christian fundamentalists to question their existence or power.

Having made his case for demons, Campbell concludes that their prevalence is considerably diminished in Christian regions. Wherever the gospel has gone it has "made inroads upon the power and empire of Beelzebub." Christ, "the mighty chieftan of this holy war had a personal encounter with the malignant chief of all unclean spirits, angelic and human, and so defeated his counsels and repelled his assaults, divesting him of much of his sway, and thus gave an earnest of his ultimate triumph over all the powers of darkness"

(396). Further, "these, together with similar indications, allow the conclusion that the power of demons is wholly destroyed as far as Christians are concerned, and, if not wholly, greatly restrained in all lands where the gospel has found its way" (397). But Campbell was by no means assured that the "age of demons" is past. In fact he considers them real enough to demand the full attention and power of our "guardian angels."

That demons may still give oracles, as they were wont to do before the Christian era, and possess living men in heathen lands, or in places where Christianity has made little progress, is not altogether improbable. . . . One thing is abundantly evident, that although the number of such spirits is vast and overwhelming, and their hatred to the living intense and enduring, the man of God, the true Christian, has a guardian angel, or a host of sentinels around him that never sleep; and, therefore, against him the fiery darts of Satan are employed in vain. For this we erect in our hearts a monument of thanks to him who has been, and still is, the Supreme Philanthropist and Redeemer of our race (398).



Of course, all of this is not to say that Campbell would have been pleased with Blatty's *The Exorcist*. There are many excessive and fabulous elements of the book which seem to be exaggerations and misconceptions of orthodox demonologies. For one thing it is never clear whether the young girl Regan is possessed by the devil or by demons. On occasions the possessor identifies himself as *the* devil; at other times as a demon or a host of demons. In answer to the priest Karras' question, "Are you saying that you *aren't* the devil?" The demon replies, "Just a poor struggling demon. A devil. A subtle distinction, but one not entirely lost upon Our Father who is in Hell" (p. 277, Bantam Edition).

In many places, however, the pattern of the possession seems to conform rather closely to Campbell's argument. The demon himself once says, "The word 'demon' means 'wise one'." Elsewhere, the demon says that *the* devil is not present, "Just a poor little family of wandering souls. . . . You don't blame us for being here, do you? After all, we have no place to go. No home" (277). At different times the demon takes on the character and tone of various deceased persons, in line with Campbell's theory.

It is fairly certain that Campbell, in his usual antipathy for Catholicism, would not have countenanced the validity of the rites of exorcism which

are used with such success in delivering Regan from possession. But that the demon is eventually cast out by the purported authority of Christ is significant. One is quite naturally reminded of Christ's disciples coming to him and saying, "Teacher, we saw a man casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he was not following us." But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him; . . . for he that is not against us is for us" (Mark 9:38-40).

It is true that Campbell implied the decline of demonic power in Christian nations, or at least where Christianity has made progress. But it is evident that Regan has had no religious training. Dr. Klein asks her mother, "Now you stated 'No religion' here, Mrs. MacNeil. Is that right? No religious education at all?" To which Chris replies, "Oh, well, maybe just 'God.' You know, general" (197). The doctor is attempting to determine whether religious training can account for many of the expressions Regan has come up with, in her strange state. But the lines also function to tell us that the little girl has no defenses against the devil, at least insofar as the practicing Christian, or even one reasonably familiar with biblical teaching, has such defenses. If it seems repugnant to our sense of rightness that such an innocent (there may be some doubt about Regan's innocence; the novel is not entirely clear here) girl can be possessed, perhaps we should recall the cases of possession in the New Testament scripture. There is really no evidence to support the idea that all who were possessed were so afflicted because they chose to be or because they were guilty of heinous sins.

In conclusion, this paper is not a defense of the novel, nor of the movie. There is no admonition here that all who have not done so should immediately read or see *The Exorcist*. It does appear, however, that the subject involved is one that may have received too little attention, written off too lightly, or vehemently denounced in post-restoration rhetoric. If Blatty's work causes men to think once again of something more than the purely material, even though it be demons, it is possible that the existence of a spiritual world, and perhaps eventually God and his Holy Spirit, will come to a more prominent place in their thought. It has been observed that it is the normally unconcerned, the unbelievers, who are most shaken by the book and the movie. Having been shaken, perhaps they will seek the settling truths of Christianity. And perhaps those who are settled into a kind of materialistic *rigor mortis* might be moved to re-examine the New Testament view of the supernatural.

TOWARD A FREER FREEDOM

BY BILL LOVE

The Canadian theologian, Kenneth Hamilton, has observed that every fellowship has its own peculiar struggle with the concepts of authority and freedom. The Quaker's "inner light" can lead to rank individualism, Catholic theology can easily run to legalism, and the Southern Baptists may tend toward antinomianism in worship and legalism in ethics.¹

The Church of Christ also seems to be wrestling with these concepts. Many of us have discovered grace only within the last few years. As with Martin Luther, Paul's letters to the Romans and the Galatians have become explosive in our spiritual lives. And, speaking candidly, many of our brethren have not shared in our discovery. We now face a basic rethinking of our religious orientation toward God, toward our brethren, and toward ourselves. In this essay I will offer an opinion on the subject of Christian freedom in view of Paul's doctrine of liberty in Galatians.

Galatians is a personal defense of Paul and his gospel. Judaizing Christian teachers were conducting a smear campaign against Paul among the disciples in Galatia. These leaders saw Paul's new gospel as a threat to everything distinctive and holy in their heritage. They were especially incensed at Paul's seeming disrespect for the law and circumcision. They charged that Paul's apostleship was bogus, and that his message was a "sell-out" of the ancient faith. Paul's defense includes as profound an exposition of Christian liberty as we have in our legacy of inspired writing. The apostle sets out three great freedoms in Galatians, or perhaps one should say three dimensions of the great freedom Christians enjoy in Christ.

Free from Human Approval (1:10-2:21) . . .

The sovereignty of Jesus in our lives is easier preached than practiced. Huey Long once com-

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¹Unpublished class notes, University of Winnipeg, 1966.

mented: "The Bible's the greatest book ever written but I sure don't need anybody I can buy for six bits and a chew of tobacco to explain it to me. When I need preachers I'll buy 'um cheap."² A study of church history can make one as cynical as Long was about church leaders. Many a priest in the feudal era was "the man of another man." Before the Civil War Southern planters kept many preachers "in line" on the slavery issue by sheer economic pressure. Nor has the last "sell out" been made among us today.

Paul would not allow the Judaizers to label his gospel "made in Jerusalem." He states clearly that his call came directly from Jesus and that he had hammered out his theology with the Lord in the solitude of Arabia. Although Paul was independent of the Jerusalem church, he still was no rugged individualist. His doctrine of the corporateness of the church is the fullest to be found in the New Testament. But for Paul fellowship was the *result*, and never the *source* of faith. When it came to the matter of his *ultimate* allegiance he could say that he did not care what men thought. (Surely the other apostles felt that their commissions were of the same kind.) Since Paul had this question settled in his mind, he was able to enjoy both freedom and fellowship. On the one hand, he had nothing to prove to the leaders at Jerusalem, but on the other hand he was secure enough in his own calling to confer freely with them.

How much we need this kind of balance in our lives today! Freedom is necessary for fellowship. We must never allow ourselves to be owned by others, nor can we afford to give way to our own manipulative impulses. It is regrettable that church leaders among the Disciples in the last century were dubbed "Standard" men and "Advocate" men. The same kind of simplistic labeling is common today. But the fact remains that many men *were* too dependent on their brethren for their beliefs. When one knows beyond all question who holds the deed to his life, he will be free to enjoy the blessings of fellowship. We must assert clearly that our *ultimate* responsibility runs directly to the one who saves us, and not to one another. Only on this basis can we realize true brotherhood in Christ.

Free from Legalism (3:1-5:12) . . .

Louis D. Brandeis claimed that: "The greatest achievement of the English speaking people is the

²Herman B. Cutsch, *The Huey Long Murder Case* (Doubleday, 1963), p. 25.

attainment of liberty through law."³ There is a kind of liberty which can be buttressed by law, and certainly Brandeis' own contribution as a pioneer of social justice in the United States is remarkable. Still, poverty and public scandal at home and repeated frustrations in enforcing agreements among nations have lately led many Americans to admit that freedom from human selfishness cannot be secured by law.

This kind of realism about man is found in Galatians. Paul wanted the Galatians to know that Christianity defined in terms of rule-keeping would make the saving mission of Christ abortive in their lives. In contrast with the Judaizing teachers Paul denied that anything truly redemptive takes place in the rule-making and rule-keeping enterprise. In fact, he would not let Jewish Christians claim God's special favor on *any* consideration of heritage or achievement.

This principle convicts us of our pride of human achievement. The temptation is always present to reduce God's call to holiness to a manageable checklist of sins we never commit. The self-deception involved here is exposed by a comment T. S. Eliot made about the Anglican church:

We invent personal dogmas, like the puritanical ideas rampant in my youth. We place prohibitions on the use of tobacco or alcohol or forbid dancing or reading certain books, and in obeying these rules we think that we are accomplishing something morally worthwhile. It is all nonsense, of course: the substituting of easy commands for the real ones. Our Lord said that many shall cast out devils in his name, only to be told at the last day that they were rejected by God—naturally, for the devils they cast out were not real, but of their own invention.⁴

When Christians are not truly in covenant with God the Bible can become a club to maim and destroy. The historian Charles Sydnor has discovered that Southerners were brutally legalistic in their use of the Bible to defend slavery in the ante-bellum South.⁵ David Edwin Harrell documents the Disciples' participation in this legal sophistry.⁶ We must be aware that we have this mentality in our heritage, and that we may be prone to overlook the "weightier matters of the

law—justice, mercy, and faith."

But the principle set out here goes far beyond salvation by rule-keeping. Paul disavowed *any* kind of salvation by human goodness. W. D. Davies asserted that the spiritualism existing in many Gentile churches of Paul's day really amounted to a proud antinomianism "always crouching at the door, ready to enter under the cloak of grace."⁷ Andres Nygren, commenting on Romans 1:16-17, said that Paul would not allow Christians to move from "my works that save me" to "my faith that saves me."⁸ If this principle is applicable to our lives, it must mean that we are no more saved by our urbanity and social concern than by our heritage and perfect church attendance. The accent must never come to rest on *anything* human.

Freedom from Freedom (5:13-6:5) . . .

There remains a third dimension of liberty discussed in Galatians which we sometimes overlook. One might call it "freedom from freedom," or "freedom from self." Paul's *central* concern in the letter was to establish the truth of his gospel of grace independent of the Law and the leaders at Jerusalem. After doing this, he evidently saw the need to include an important postscript: "For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love by servants of one another (Galatians 5:13, RSV)." "Opportunity" comes from a military term which means "base of operation," and "flesh" in Pauline thought means something like "selfish human nature." So Paul is saying: "Don't use your liberty as a launching pad for your own selfish desires against your brother. You may destroy him in the name of personal freedom. Instead, be servants one of another." Evidently Paul feared that some of the Galatians would see rugged individualism as the only alternative to the legalism of the Judaizers. As a teacher of grace, Paul was careful to teach the *loving use* of freedom. In 1 Corinthians 8 Paul had pointed the newly liberated Christians toward a kind of freedom which curbed itself in concern for "the brother for whom Christ died."

In Pauline thought freedom is tasted first at baptism which (like the Lord's Supper) is *not* a meritorious work but a pointing to and appropriating of the central, liberated event of the faith. One's baptism, consequently, serves as a continuing

³Perry Miller, ed., *American Thought, Civil War to World War I* (Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967), p. 332.

⁴William T. Levy and Victor Scherle, *Affectionately, T. S. Eliot* (Lippencott, 1968), p. 61.

⁵The Journal of Southern History, VI, No. 1, Feb., 1940, p. 6.

⁶*Quest for a Christian America* (Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1966), pp. 91-138.

⁷*Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (Harper and Row, 1948), p. 111.

⁸*Commentary on Romans* (Fortress, 1949), p. 71.

reminder of the source and responsibility of Christian freedom (Romans 6). Paul's teaching is consistent with the larger New Testament concept of freedom. *Elutheros* originally drew the political distinction between a slave and a free man. It meant to "be on one's own disposal." The Stoics internalized the idea, and made self-control life's supreme achievement. In Christianity a new and paradoxical idea breaks in. One "attains to self-control by *letting himself be controlled*."⁹ The paradox is that Christian freedom amounts to a change of masters.

If we are to accept Jesus as *Lord* as well as Savior in our lives he must have sovereignty over our freedom. We must allow Him to mark out the direction and boundaries of personal liberty. Martin Luther asserted freedom as forcefully as any man ever has, and yet he admitted the paradox: "The Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none; a Christian man is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, and subject to all."¹⁰

It seems to me that there is a kind of naughty Christianity among us that is reminiscent of the "smoking behind the barn," "at college and away from home" kind of liberty which marks adolescence and early adulthood. My concern is not with broken moralism, but with the self-centeredness which throws off the Lordship of Jesus, and destroys the family of God. One hopes such a "liberated" brother will grow out of his sophomoric assertions of independence.

Perhaps we need to look again at law and grace. Is it not possible that some kinds of freedom are an inverted legalism, as some kinds of asceticism are an inverted materialism? T. S. Eliot's observation about the taboos of his youth serves to point up a bondage to moralism. But what about the Christian who takes the systematic breaking of every last taboo (smoking, drinking, dancing, etc.) as his life's central mission? Is he *really free* from moralism and human approval? Why are we amused with the teenager who protests days on end that his life is not shattered because a certain girl (who has no control over his life) has rejected him? He who is antinomian may simply stand in a *negative* relation to that toward which the legalist has a positive relation, both still orbiting around the principle of rule-keeping. He is still enslaved to legalistic think-

ing who says: "Now it's legal to be illegal!" Iconoclasm by itself offers no nutrition for either personal or corporate growth. Must our children and grandchildren be subjected to the sordid tales of our personal struggles with legalism because we have nothing better to teach them? We are intellectually and spiritually bankrupt if the whole content of our faith is reaction to the traditions of our fathers.

The price we pay for naughty Christianity is exorbitant! Our secular friends, tired of the "good life," look to us and find us doing a pale imitation of the reckless pagan. We ignore the Sermon on the Mount and imagine that we are living under the Lordship of Jesus. Most tragic of all, the naughty Christian misses the real grace of God which would heal his wounds and bind up his relationships (Romans 5-8).

Paul Tillich believed that, in successive ages in history, men are other-directed (heteronomous), self-directed (autonomous), and "God"-directed (theonomous).¹¹ Without accepting Tillich's dialectical view of history, I believe many of us have moved from the heteronomous to the autonomous view of life. The vital question is whether we will be frozen in our self-reliance, or find the humility to move toward God-directedness. In short, the issue staring us in the face is whether we will submit to the Lordship of Jesus.

Absolute freedom from self is not a human possibility, but we have missed the point of Christian liberty if we have exchanged slavery to tradition for slavery to self. In Galatians 5 Paul points toward genuine freedom. As we submit ourselves more and more to the Lordship of Jesus (including his command to care for one another) we begin to see the fruit which the *Spirit* produces in us. Otherwise, baptised or not, we will spend the rest of our lives working the works of the flesh.

Christian freedom is in *essence* freedom from *ourselves*. The love of God at Golgotha is the only rock upon which man's pride can be shattered. Jesus would liberate us, not only from the shackles of human opinion and legalism, but also from our own self-centeredness. As we follow him toward the open tomb we begin to see that his path to liberty leads first to Gethsemane and Golgotha. The one who promised, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" is he who cried in abdication: "Not my will but Thine be done."

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⁹G. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, II, 1964, 497. (Emphasis is mine.)

¹⁰*On Christian Liberty*, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1943), p. 5. (It must be admitted, however, that Luther's "freedom" was more for the aristocracy than for the peasants.)

¹¹For a readable summary see William Hordern's, *A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology* (Macmillan, 1955), pp. 165-183.

I'M THE MINISTER

BY CHARLES COULSTON

I'm the minister, you see, and I have lots of things to do and organize and put up with (or not put up with, as I choose). I also chose this job (yeah, it's a job, and a vocation and a profession and perpetual recreation all rolled up in one), and I like it. Lately I've been reading about professions and new professions, including the new clergyman—what's happening to him and what he thinks about it and what he thinks his role is. Now I'm one of those new ones, because now that I'm 30, I'm just getting started good. And I know what they mean when they say that the minister is having his roles multiplied, partly to legitimate his right to exist. And I'm for change.

I listen to people a lot, even to ministers (you know, it's amazing how much ministers know about people, and how little they use that knowledge, but that's another topic). I hear a lot about how difficult and pointless it is, and how being a minister is not quite worth it (or barely). I hear about stubborn elders and conniving deacons and doing bulletins and organizing programs and fighting heresy and fighting legalism and about sterile worship and deliberately ignorant people and lack of money and lack of privacy and lack of time and lack of recreation and lack of family life. Ain't it awful!

Now I'm a pretty ordinary minister, you see, but all this is exciting to me. I'm fascinated with the process of turning out the bulletin and watching the five-year impact. Everything I touch is an instrument of change. I look down the broadening years and see destiny, and I've a date with the lady. I'm fascinated with the possibility of having ministry without money.

There are things I don't have (things that I hear

go with an exciting life). I don't have a wilderness cabin in the mountains, and I've never been to Mexico City, and I've never scaled a mountain on an expedition or dived into the ocean. And I don't wheel and deal in bonds and funds and equipment or command the movements of armed forces. I don't own a modern house in the beautifully landscaped suburbs. Tell me, where is the real world?

But I have staked my claim in the primitive wilderness of the human heart and been stimulated by the raw nature of emotion. I have climbed the mountains of their aspirations and dreams and folded those for whom I care in my psychic arms. I have explored the subterranean caverns of human despair and death and hung stillborn in another's agony. And I have journeyed far to the mysterious and mystical cities of the mind, to the psychic houses where my people dwell.

I wheel and deal in the destinies of families and individual lives. I handle voltage before which the electrician can only stand in awe. I fight on the front lines of the lonely wars that men and women wage against their own lives or against their own evil spirits. My dwelling place is on the plain where the conscious meets the unconscious, in the valley of decision.

But like I said in the beginning, I'm the minister. And I am there as Paraclete, Philos, Didaskalos, and Kerux—counselor, friend, teacher, preacher. That is what I am, and that is what I do. And all being and all movement proceed from the word.

I could not have imagined, nor can now imagine, a more exciting life. Perhaps I shall later. And I do not say that I shall remain a minister forever. Why else would I read about the professions, if not for the possibility of change? If I change, I think it will be a step away from the eye of the storm, a lessening of focus, a little bit less exciting. But the source remains.

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TOWARD A PSYCHOLOGY OF BELIEF

BY C. W. WILLERTON

Even the most casual observer of religion is aware of the baffling variety in what religious people believe, why they believe, and how they manifest their belief. They differ fervently on the nature of God (is he a Person or an Oversoul? a universalist or the exclusive Deity of a congregation? has he spoken through Christ, Mohammed, or Baha-'u'llah?) They differ on the afterlife, some arguing over admissions standards to heaven, some denying that there is a heaven, some computing its square footage and potential for occupancy. They differ on how to serve God, whether with prayer wheels, convents, children's homes, rock musicals, worldwide federations, political blocs, etc. This differing on every conceivable point has for centuries brought about congregational squabbles, ecclesiastical factions, and holy wars. What causes those differences?

The question is even more keenly focused when we carry on evangelism. An honest appraisal of a city, region, or economic group has to be made before deciding tactics—the revival that would bring crowds in one city might meet derision or just boredom in another; door-to-door personal work might find guarded welcome in one neighborhood but hostility in another. And certainly individuals differ. One will respond enthusiastically to a display of proof-texts; another will find it casuistry. Another cannot feel religious apart from hieratic ceremony, such as a Mass; another finds the Mass a circus and feels worshipful only when plain men in business suits are offering prayers in southern protestant phrasing.

Again the question: why? We have surprisingly few answers. More accurately, we fail to do much with the answers we *have*. The psychological study of religion had its first major impetus in 1902 with William James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. The field is well-developed—and largely ignored in the training of evangelists (possibly excepting those dealing in counseling or mass communications); it is ignored by laymen as well, except in study-group adaptations of transactional analysis or in reading of religion's psychosomatic benefits. I have collected here some principles toward a psychology of belief—principles of human nature that can help explain why a person believes as he does. I have chosen them to be of practical

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help for the average Christian worker, ignoring, for instance, studies aimed solely at the depth psychologist or the student of mysticism. Studies of the *divine* elements in conversion and witness—the operations of the word and the Spirit—have long flourished; we need to give attention as well to the human elements—matters of operant conditioning, of non-rational and rational modes of conviction. Any means that can help us bring persons to Christ or promote understanding between differing brethren deserves our best energies.

Conditioning. It is axiomatic that people are affected by their environments. Christian youth groups, schools, summer camps, home devotionals, and Sunday schools exist precisely as conditioning agents to help make children into Christian adults. It is also axiomatic that a person with a religious background (i.e., having had religious conditioning) will respond to evangelism differently than a person without one. He may grant us the existence of a God whereas the latter may not? He might also raise more objections to our doctrines; yet if converted to our group he may be more fervent in his new convictions than the latter could ever be. Common sense tells us these things; but common sense oversimplifies if it does not consider how complicated the effects of conditioning are. Too often we concentrate on the logical aspects of conversion—pressing the new acquaintance with tracts, charts, and arguments against our opponents—and ignore the non-logical—the individual's temperament, personal and regional prejudices, and aesthetic tastes.

By way of illustration William James says in the *Varieties* that some persons need plainness and intellectual purity in their religion while others must have aesthetic richness. Roman Catholic minds such as that of his contemporary Cardinal Newman demand a complex hierarchy and mode of worship, he says. Such a one "feels then as if in presence of some vast incrustated work of jewelry or architecture; one hears the multitudinous liturgical appeal; one gets the honorific vibration from every quarter. . . . To an imagination used to the perspectives of dignity and glory, the naked gospel scheme seems to offer an almshouse for a palace."¹ Though himself a protestant, William James esti-

mated that Catholicism would make many more converts than protestantism, because of the richness of its aesthetic and emotional appeal; that he was wrong only emphasizes the complexity of the issue. His point about the primacy of the aesthetic need in some persons is still valid. Each of us had a sense of the principle, who has puzzled at some practice alien to us—the Bar Mitzvah, organ music (or its absence) in worship, administration of communion by a priest, etc. Aside from doctrinal (i.e., more or less rational) objections to some practice, our repugnance or puzzlement toward it will stem from conditioned responses, moral or aesthetic, that operate at a non-verbal, non-rational level. It should come as no surprise, then, that different stimuli are needed to sway different persons; Paul seems to have this principle in mind when he says, "I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."² We should welcome creativity in evangelistic methods; because every individual's road to Christ is unique, we need the flexibility that yields a variety of approaches to touch a variety of hearts.

Conditioning is hard to control, of course, as many a disappointed parent or teacher knows. Forces offset or reinforce one another, sometimes in ways we cannot anticipate. Yet it is because conditioning is dynamic that evangelism is possible. Every day persons come to Christ who have spent their lives in cultures saturated with Buddhism, voodoo, or totalitarian atheism. And persons who claimed Christ under one persuasion claim him under another, becoming Protestant instead of Catholics, Mormons instead of Baptists, and so on. For better or worse, many persons change. Some psychologists—most of them influenced by B. F. Skinner—dismiss all decisions as products of conditioning; they deny free will. But we must go beyond theories of conditioning to find principles that apply to an adult making what he believes to be a decision—his best, most reasonable decision, by which he commits his soul and his service to God.

Types of Belief. One of the most famous religious decisions in modern times was John Henry Newman's decision in 1845 to leave the Anglican church for the Roman Catholic. A clergyman of such enormous influence

¹ *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902; rpt.

New York: Longmans, Green, 1935), p. 460.

² 1 Corinthians 9:22

among the Anglicans (especially in the Tractarian movement at Oxford) would not change easily. Through his own decisions and a lifetime of thinking on all aspects of Christianity, he came to a profound understanding of how faith is achieved and doctrine affirmed. One of the many insights in his *Grammar of Assent* (1870) is his distinction of five levels of "notional assent," that is, affirmation of abstractions or notions. Most religious (and political and aesthetic) ideas are held in one of these ways. Note that Newman defines each term strictly.

1. Profession: unthinking assertion made out of habit. This class includes not only shallow affiliations ("I'm a Republican because our family's always been Republican.") but also adherence to fads in dress, music, manners, religion, etc.

2. Credence: taking for granted such opinions and facts as occur in everyday living, thus accumulating a broad foundation for social interaction. Such "furniture of the mind" largely constitutes a country's politics, morality, and social code; it forms the bonds of sympathy and national identity between countrymen.

3. Opinion: assent to the *probable* truth of something. Opinion is like Credence in being formed without premises—that is, it may not have a logical reason; but unlike Credence it does involve reflection on the issue.

4. Presumption: assent to first principles, the propositions with which reasoning on any subject matter begins. Such propositions as "There is a right and a wrong," "Nature's laws are uniform," and "Every effect has a cause" are so deeply imbedded in our thoughts that we never question their sources or validity.

5. Speculation: assent to strictly mental operations and conclusions (as opposed to those based on experiment or sense experience). Speculation, in Newman's sense, includes acceptance of maxims, legal judgments, mathematical truths, reflections of men and society, and theological statements.³

The practical application of this system is to clarify and determine the strengths of a person's beliefs—or even our own. Every individual has several types of ideas. Everyone uses Credence and Presumption in his ordinary dealings. Yet one type of idea may be conspicuous in his active thoughts; his temperament and educational background may make Profession, Opinion, or Speculation a habit of mind. If a person's religion is mainly a matter of

Profession, he may participate in the religion he was reared in simply because he has never thought of doing otherwise. Other examples of Profession abound these days, with one religious fad after another: scientism, astrology, Hare Krishna, Maharaj Ji, even witchcraft. For other persons religion may be a matter of Opinion: accepted thoughtfully but without logical reasons. For some, religion has the nature of Credence as well as Opinion; if his social circle or community is dominated by members of his religion, then their common religious concerns give them a social bond and a language, as it were, for much of their interaction. For still others Speculations are the most important part of their religion. All religions contain Speculations; but propositions which are Speculations for some because they are firmly and consciously affirmed, are merely Professions or Opinions for others; the difference is in the conscientiousness and rigor of the believer's thinking on the issues.

The evangelist or counselor can profit by these distinctions. If he is working with a person who only Professes, he may convince him that religion deserves more sincere commitment. If he works with a person given merely to Opinions, he may by pressing for reasons make the other see the weakness of the Opinions. If the evangelist talks with a Speculative person, he may be put to his mettle. A thoughtful person who is seasoned in his doctrines will not yield them easily. The best approach may be to ask for practical proof of them, for evidence of some real benefit to the poor or the lonely or the homeless; every religion that is too intellectual is open to the pragmatic test.

Newman's distinctions might also help us deal with divisive arguments. If the point at issue is a fad in its nature—a mere Profession—the passing of time may do away with it. If it is a Speculation and is trivial, perhaps it may be endured until it wears itself out; hot air is dangerous only if it builds past a certain point. But if the Speculation is not trivial, the Bible's warning (2 Timothy 2:23) becomes urgent. Issues such as premillennialism are potent precisely because they are Speculative—dealing with mental conclusions that are presently beyond the reach of empirical proof. In the Middle Ages such Speculations as the number of angels that could fit on the head of a pin were debated for Scholastic exercise and public entertainment; but during the Inquisition propositions no more provable were used as excuses for torture and killing. When a congregation is caught up in a Speculative debate it is crucial that the members be reminded of the potential danger of division; they must take into account whether the Lord is best served by

³ *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, ed. C. F. Harrold (New York: Longmans, Green, 1947), pp. 33-57 *passim*.

rending Christ's Body to prove an abstract doctrine or by adopting a tolerant spirit that will keep the group together for its vital work.

Certitude. I have been discussing ways of holding abstract propositions and explaining how they may characterize a person's practice of religion. Now I must refine those generalizations, for they only partly account for religious belief. According to Newman the only religious feeling on which a person will stake his life is *certitude*—the absolute conviction that something is true. Certitude encompasses real (concrete) propositions as well as notional (abstract); it includes "simple assent" (affirmation made without intellectual questioning) as well as "reflex assent" (affirmation made after intellectual questioning and development).⁴ So an unschooled shepherd in the Andes can possess as much certitude as a European professor of theology, though they may otherwise be markedly different people.

Considering the nature of certitude, we are brought back to our problem of why people cannot more often agree in religion. When we give certitude to something (e.g., the proposition that "The planets revolve around the sun"), we affirm that it is a *true* thing. When we try to persuade others, we are using a corollary: "This thing has properties that convince me of its truth; so probably its properties will also convince others." Se we naturally feel puzzled or frustrated when someone else is not persuaded.

What we must keep in mind when evangelizing is that accepting a new faith or new dogma is complicated. We must keep in perspective what we are selling and how it is to be bought. As Newman explains, "A religion is not a proposition, but a system, it is a rite, a creed, a philosophy, a rule of duty, all at once; and to accept a religion is neither a simple assent to it nor a complex, neither a conviction nor a prejudice, neither a notional assent nor a real, not a mere act of profession, nor of credence, nor of opinion, nor of speculation but it is a collection of all these various kinds of assents at once and together, some of one description, some of another; but, out of all these different assents, how many are of that kind which I have called certitude? Certitudes indeed do not change,

but who shall pretend that assents are indefectible?"⁵ It is naive to expect a potential or recent convert to give assent, credence, certitude, etc. at exactly the same points as we or in exactly the same degree. We should not be bent on making religious carbon copies of ourselves, but on helping the other person reach an emphasis that will let him serve God in his own way. Assent is enough in questions of whether to use one communion cup or many; but only certitude will do in matters of salvation.

A further use of the distinction between certitude and less assents is to determine the bedrock of others' beliefs. According to Newman a person may change his religion drastically without changing his certitudes. In a famous illustration he describes three protestants who change, one to become a Catholic, the second a Unitarian, the third an unbeliever. The first possessed, as a protestant, a certitude of Christ's divinity. But "this certitude... led him on to welcome the Catholic doctrines of the Real Presence and of the Theotocos, till his protestantism fell off from him" and he became Catholic. The second protestant began with the certitude that the private conscience was the only rule of interpreting scripture. As time passed he found that the principle was not realized, that the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds did not proceed from the scripture as he read it. Concluding that the church had corrupted the pure practice of the word, he left and settled for being a humanitarian. The third protestant began with the certitude that a priesthood was a corruption of gospel simplicity. So he condemned the use of priests in the Mass, in baptism, and in the sacrament. As time passed he decided that dogma was as bad as a priesthood; then he rejected teachers of religion, even the apostles, and decided that God's revelation could only be what was written on the heart. But after some time as a Deist he concluded that God was a hypothesis to give sanction to an innate moral principle. So he became an atheist. As Newman says, each man "has indeed made serious additions to his initial ruling principle, but he has lost no conviction of which he was originally possessed."⁶

Emotion and Belief. As William James explains in *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), the individual unconsciously assigns a

⁴ See *Grammar*, pp. 159-164.

⁵ *Grammar*, p. 184.

⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 186-187.

category to every new object or proposition. Twinges of rheumatism are assigned to "the world of physical sense," the notion of a winged horse to a "world of fable," aerodynamic principles to a "world of science," and so forth. Some things from these various worlds are selected for his "world of practical realities" and their main criterion is their "relation to our emotional and active life. . . . In this sense whatever excites and stimulates our interest is real."⁷ For example, the suffering of earthquake victims on another continent seems far away and hard to imagine when we hear of it in a radio newscast; but the phone call telling us a loved one has been injured in an earthquake in another state carries an instant and horrible sensation of reality.

There is evidence everywhere we turn of the relation of sensation and emotion to belief. On the fourth of July we are never content with a few bland announcements; rather, we "stir the blood" with marching bands, banners, and orations, reinforcing an abstract belief in liberty with physical sensations and passionate speech. In religion we reinforce the abstract idea of Christian fellowship, for example, with physical sensations (being part of a crowd at worship, joining in singing, shaking hands and smiling) and with emotion (in sharing concerns, sympathizing aloud, praying together). We reinforce the abstract idea so effectively when we are with brethren physically, that we can soon extend an emotion of fellowship to brethren we may *never* meet physically—brethren in other regions or on other continents. By the same principle, avoiding worship services undermines our Christian vigor because it deprives us of this emotional reinforcement as well as of formal instruction.

The wrong or foolish uses of emotion and sensation are well known, ranging from fake faith-healers and evangelists (the movie *Marjoe* shows a blatant example) to snake-handling cults. There is a reason that these phenomena are most prevalent in lower socioeconomic groups. William James says that "the highest result of education" is to give the "ability to suspend belief in presence of an emotionally exciting idea. . . . In untutored minds the power does not exist. Every exciting thought in the natural man carried credence with it."⁸ These are the built-in difficulties in converting a jungle native from devil-worship or an

illiterate laborer from a snake-handling cult. Occasionally, despite what James says, these difficulties attend even the more sophisticated; spiritualism and modern witch cults have numbers of college graduates in their ranks. The point here is not that we should avoid all exciting ideas but only that we should not become carried away before we can reason about them. Nor is it implied here that education necessarily keeps one from error. If it only substitutes arrogance for credulousness, education leaves the individual still open to mistaken beliefs, though perhaps of another kind.

These principles are offered as a *beginning* in the use of a psychology of belief. They are few, but suggestive and usable. I have made no attempt at a complete or up-to-date survey of the field; rather, I have drawn from two pioneers a handful of principles as a starting place for those new to the field. There is more to finding a psychology of belief than sifting Skinner or recycling Newman and James. What I hope for is that Christians trained in psychology will give more of their time to writing brief, popularized treatments of principles adapted for counseling and evangelism. Too many preachers and personal workers are ignorant of psychological principles they could turn to their own advantage; too many church committees ponder declining attendance figures and grope for reasons for the failure; too many persons in need of Christ remain lost and discontented, kept from his church by psychological barriers they may not even recognize.

Of course it is not psychology but rather faith that overcomes the world and justifies the Christian.⁹ So to every principle sketched here must be added the principle of faith. To try to manipulate a brother or a potential convert would be dishonest, unloving, and arrogant. But to facilitate a conversion or reconciliation with all one's resources of education, insight, and compassion—all the while praying for God's help—is blessed; it fulfills the great commission and the command implicit in the parable of the talents. We must look constantly to God because he who created the human mind can influence or override its working principles to convert or correct when human efforts have not been enough. **MISSION**

⁷ *The Principles of Psychology* (1890; rpt. New York: Dover, 1950), II, 292-295. Italics removed.

⁸ *Ibid.*, II, 308. Italics removed.

⁹ 1 John 5:4; Romans 3:28, 5:1; Galatians 3:24.

A letter from Suzan

A Christmas
Story

Hello,

I am about to tell you a Christmas story. This isn't a fairy tale because it involves real people and real situations. For a long time I have thought about it, and, through all the fuzziness and uncertainty, I have come to a clear picture of what I feel and want to believe about celebrating life everyday and on special occasions. Once I told you that I had all that I needed and more. And it is very true. I don't need any clothes; my winter ones are somewhere on the way. I don't need food because my paycheck covers that. I don't need furniture. I have a bed and table and chair. There is

People used to buy things
because they needed the things to survive,
not because the things needed
people to survive.

M. Williams

really nothing that I need. There are many wants, but I can't justify fulfilling them. Giving and receiving can be beautiful, but if it is not something needed, then something has been lost. Maybe I should explain what I feel need is. If a person is unhappy or even joyous, to give them a token (a flower, a rock, a leaf) can be a beautiful thing. It doesn't need to be extravagant. It doesn't need to be a material thing. Jesus' most precious gift was not a material thing, but was his life. I want to give my life to other people. I know that material things that are not necessary can be used to make people happy. I think of when Jesus was annointed

Earth provides enough for everyman's need,
but not for everyman's greed.

Gandhi

with oil. But that was a rare thing. Were that to happen too often it would lose it's specialness. I don't want the giving of special gifts to lose something precious. For Christmas, I would like for you to choose only one thing from my list to give to me. And I would like to return the same to you. That way we give one another one thing

special for this very beautiful time of year. Does that sound reasonable? And more than just this time of year? For birthdays or any other time, it should be this way. I don't want to be weighted down with many things. The gift of ourselves is quite sufficient.

I have a book called The Alternative Christmas Catalogue. In it is page after page of alternatives to buying extravagant gifts, or even unwise, unecological and sometimes immoral gifts. There are numerous reports and addresses of places and people who need help. The sad part about it is that they need something to eat and wear. For them, Christmas is just another day to hurt and be uncomfortable and unprotected because their nakedness exposes them to the heat and cold. I don't want any of these people to miss the meaning of receiving. I can't help them all by myself. I can't even see their faces when they are given the food I've helped provide. I

Invest in human lives.

want to encourage anyone I can to help give to these very alive people. There is an organization that I have received literature from in the past that I know to be reputable. If you would send a donation you can be assured it would go for the cause they claim to support. The address is: Reformed Church in America, Room 1807, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, N. Y. 10027. They state plainly that their mission "is to minister to people in need . . . whatever the need, wherever the place." They have an excellent reputation as being a community of people who really care.

For this Christmas I want to purchase gifts from organizations that want to help me economically and that I can help—such as purchasing things from UNICEF or other helping groups. I want to encourage that for no other reason than that it is a warm thing to do. In America the whole economy is run by encouraging people to buy and make things that they don't really need. I see needs as

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The RENEWAL IN THE PULPIT Recovery Of Perspective BY DERYL FLEMING

For thus said the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength" (Isaiah 30:15).

The loss of perspective is not being able to see the forest for the trees. The recovery of perspective is getting the larger look. The Psalmist said, "I will lift up my eyes to the hills." That kind of looking sets things in proper perspective.

Standing too close can distort things so that one has no perspective. The toothache that is severe becomes so all consuming that life is just one big toothache. Such loss of perspective is what turns molehills into mountains.

In the last years of the eighth century B.C., Judah was a weak and struggling nation. At the top of the heap of the nations was Assyria. The number one challenger for world dominance was Egypt. Hezekiah, king of Judah, was invited to unite with Egypt in a revolt against Assyria. Isaiah, the prophet, emphatically opposed such a scheme, not because he feared Judah's defeat at the hands of Assyria, but because he believed that the nation's only hope was God. He saw the overture from Egypt as another in a long line of temptations to place ultimate trust in a political alliance and military power. Years earlier Isaiah had opposed a similar alliance with Egypt. To put one's hopes in political and military power was to lose perspective on life and to forget God.

When one loses perspective he begins to build on false values. Jesus told a story about two men who built houses. One built on a solid foundation and when the storms came the house held firm. The other man built on the sand without a foundation, and the storms wiped him out. Losing perspective and putting one's ultimate trust in something less than God is to build without a foundation.

Thus the call of the prophet Isaiah to recover perspective. He says Judah's salvation and ours is in returning and rest, in quietness and trust.

In returning . . .

No matter how difficult things become and how bad it gets, there is hope. Why? Because God is the God of infinite resources. His energy never runs short. His power never grows weak. His possibilities are of boundless proportions.

No matter how messed up we become, returning to the selfhood for which we were made is within the realm of possibility. The God of biblical faith has a limitless mercy. His mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, the writers tell us. "There is a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the sea."

The Old Testament prophets and those of the New Testament era come down hard on the waywardness of man. At times they almost read man out of the universe. But running through the judgment is a continuous, though sometimes thin, line of mercy. Man never gets so messed up that he cannot repent and return. He may not find it within himself to do so, but "with God all things are possible."

No matter how fixed in our frustration, how set in our stalemate-like existence, the word of God is, "Behold, I am doing a new thing." Yea, even, "Behold, I make all things new."

Return to a centeredness that sets life in true perspective is the prophet's first clue to salvation.

And rest . . .

The prophet's word translated *rest* does not mean putting your body to bed. It has a spiritual or religious meaning, not merely a physical connotation. It conveys the meaning of submission to God's will. Yet there is a connection with that meaning of rest and the way in which we ordinarily

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use the term. Often we need to stop—rest—in order to know the will of God for our lives.

It's no wonder we lose perspective on things. We move too fast to see clearly. Human beings are built to move at five miles per hour. At that speed even the nearsighted can see trees, rocks, birds, persons, situations and realities. From the speeding pace with which most of us take life our vision is at least blurred, if not severely impaired.

Speed insulates us from perspective, awareness, sensitivity. You can move through life so fast you don't feel any of it; so fast you pay no attention to God's will and purpose.

The usual response to a plea to slow down is, "I don't have time." The irony is that that is precisely what rest is for—to enable you to see what you do have time for and that you do have time for it. A lot of things we do we don't have time for, if we're going to do what God would have us do. But surely there is time to do that which he would have us do. Stopping and resting is for the purpose of discovering what he would have us do.

Speaking of the pace of life W. B. J. Martin writes:

How valid is this concept "dramatic," with its many variants: "interesting," "attention-getting," "fascinating," "glamorous," "titillating," "intriguing?"

I sometimes think these are the dirty words of modern life, and will be the death of us yet! If everything has to be "interesting," what happens to truth, which is sometimes very boring. If everything has to be immediately accessible to a child's span of attention, what happens to concentration?

It was said of Jesus, growing up in Nazareth, that "he learned obedience by the things he suffered," and I'm willing to bet that one of the things he suffered was boredom—the boredom of a petty, provincial home and of small village life—and was none the worse for it. Among the meditations I am thinking of writing in the near future is a "Thanksgiving for Boredom." I bless every moment of my boyhood's boredom. If I have any liveliness of mind today it is a response to that boredom. And I don't envy kids who are continuously entertained!

In quietness . . .

Hearing is largely a matter of listening. We miss a multitude of sounds and voices because we're not listening for them. We're tuned to a different frequency.

The biblical writers call us to be quiet and listen. "Be still and know that I am God." Or, "The Lord is in his holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before him." They don't mean for us to tune out and go to sleep. On the contrary. It's a call to turn

on, tune in, pay attention to God who is speaking to us.

Quietness is a prerequisite to learning to listen. Noisy people—people who can't be quiet or stand quietness—are oblivious to much that is going on. Preoccupied with the noise they make, they are unaware of the network of communications all around them. The person who's always pressing for his turn to speak cannot hear what others are saying. He's too busy thinking about what he's going to say.

Busy people who take no time to be quiet and listen miss a lot too. In Thornton Wilder's play, *Our Town*, Emily is allowed to come back to earth for one day. She chooses her 12th birthday. It's a dream sequence, so the other people respond as they did the first time around. Emily walks into the kitchen. Her mother, busy with cooking and chores, casually wishes her a happy birthday and tells her that presents are on the table. She doesn't really pay attention to Emily. Things continue in that vein and Emily pleads with her mother to look at her for once as though she really saw her. She never does. At the end of the day Emily returns to her grave grieved over the way people fail to see each other and the speed with which life passes them by. She asks the stage manager, "Do people ever realize life while they live it?" He says that perhaps a few poets and saints do, but not many people do.

And trust . . .

Erik Erikson talks about basic trust as the foundation of a healthy, growing personality. It means being able to live with confidence.

Some of the translations use the word confidence to translate the prophet's message. Such confidence or trust is not born of a sure sense of one's ability, as important as that may be. True confidence in life and oneself and others is born of confidence in God. It means that one trusts that God is, that he is for us, that, come what may, he will provide.

Before he died, Wallace Hamilton told a story about a Bishop Fisk who went on a hunting trip in the Maine woods in the summer of 1896. His companions were an astronomer and a geology professor. Their guide, a native of Maine, was a rock-ribbed Republican and was greatly troubled about the prospects of William Jennings Bryan getting elected president that November. He worried about what would happen if a Democrat like Bryan should get into the White House. One evening as the group sat around the campfire the

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BOOKS

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GIFT SUGGESTIONS

I wish to accomplish two things in this gift column for which so many of you have expressed appreciation. One is to tell you about some books—recent and otherwise—which might be more than adequate expressions of love for any occasion of giving, including the upcoming holiday season. The second purpose is to combine a kind of update of some recent books released over the past two years. The relationship of this second purpose to the first is that out of these newer works you might wish to select a current book as a gift for others—or if you prefer, for yourself. You will at least be advised that they are available.

BIBLES

The most frequent book-gift is a Bible. The types and prices are almost infinite, but let me give you some options that I consider useful. *The New International Version of the New Testament* (Zondervan, \$5.95) has made its entrance during the past months. It's a useful addition, even though many of us are beginning to wonder if it is not profitable to call a moratorium on the proliferation of versions. This version is sponsored by the independent New York Bible Society and includes the work of over 100 evangelical scholars.

A favorite of mine is the *Harper Study Bible* which is no longer issued by Harper but is now published by Zondervan. Zondervan's edition now sells for \$12.95. The text is the RSV.

The American Bible Society

has begun to issue its translation of the Old Testament *Today's English Version* in smaller volumes. Several are now available: "Psalms For Modern Man" (order no. 004456, 14 cents); "Wisdom for Modern Man: Proverbs and Ecclesiastes" (order no. 04449, 10 cents); "Tried and True: Job for Modern Man" (order no. 04450, 10 cents); "Jonah—The Man Who Said No!" (order no. 06835, five cents); "Justice Now: Hosea, Amos and Micah" (order no. 04440, 10 cents).

BOOKS ABOUT BOOKS

One of the most useful books you might give is a book about books—or better, a book about religious books. Any of the following might serve as a kind of an evaluation/description of certain books for the sake of purchase or for their bibliographic value. *Encounter With Books* (InterVarsity), by Harish D. Merchant, is an annotated bibliography of 1600 books on Christianity, the arts and humanities. The faculty of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary has prepared a useful bibliography of about 1000 books to aid non-technical readers in selecting the most helpful books for their libraries: *Essential Books For Christian Ministry* (Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1972). An excellent specialized bibliographical tool is David M. Scholer's *A Basic Bibliographic Guide for New Testament Exegesis* (second edition, Eerdmans). Cerdic Publications (9, Place de l'Université, 67084 Strasbourg Cedex, France) has issued a series

of international thematic bibliographies. The works are inexpensive (about \$4.00 each) and very useful. I especially recommend "Marriage and Divorce," "The Jesus Movement," "Evangelization and Mission," "Church and State," and "Politics and Salvation." Of course we would be remiss if we did not mention F. W. Danker's *Multipurpose Tools For Bible Study* (revised edition, Concordia, \$6.25).

FOR/ABOUT KIDS

Francis and Edith Schaeffer have introduced a much needed type of book: *Everybody Can Know* (Tyndale House) is written for all ages, and is designed to be shared aloud in families. Based on the Gospel of Luke, the book involves reading projects and activities to stimulate family discussion of the scripture and vital issues of contemporary life. For children a fine picture book with simple words has a great theological meaning: *3 in 1 (A Picture of God)* by Joanne and Benjamin Marxhausen (Concordia, 1973). Concordia also has issued a clever book for children entitled *I Used To Be An Artichoke* by Maureen O'Connor McGinn and Anita Norman. For ages 3-8 Betty Elleyboe retells the classic biblical story of Zacchaeus in *The Little Man From Jericho* (Augsburg). Of course, my all-time favorites remain the several sets of Arch Books by Concordia.

A really helpful book intended as a guide for parents in evaluating, using and creating toys is Irene Pepper's *Growing Up With Toys* (Augsburg, 1974). And if you want some practical and

clever way to keep a youngster occupied in creative ways, you'll buy a little compendium of ideas called *Rainy Day Magic* (Evans) by Margaret Perry. A most serviceable book is *Play Activities for the Retarded Child* designed by authors Bernice Carlson and David Ginglend to help a retarded child learn through music, games, handicrafts and other play activities. An imaginative book called *Bible Learning Activities* issued by Gospel Light has some substantive ideas for teachers and parents of children grades one to six.

The title sounds corny but *Ranger Rick's Nature Magazine* (published by the National Wildlife Federation) is a monthly delight for kids of all ages. And so are some of National Geographic's exquisitely done books: I strongly commend *The Marvels of Animal Behavior* (\$11.95, No. 105), *Everyday Life in Bible Times* (\$9.95, No. 065) and the new *The World of the American Indian* (\$9.95, No. 151). Come to think of it, why not write the National Geographic and ask them for their booklet called "Gift Ideas . . . for 1975." Write to National Geographic, P.O. Box 2118, Washington, D.C. 20013. The National Geographic books work the same way as the magazine: put it on a table and sooner or later everyone in the family will pick it up and use it on their level, even it is just to look at the great pictures.

POSTERS

Speaking of pictures reminds me of Gospel Light's new poster set called "The Way." The pho-

tographs are excellent and have as a central theme events from the life of Jesus. On the back of each poster is additional information about the location depicted. Included in the 10-poster set is Bethlehem, Nazareth, Jerusalem, Gethsemane, Mount of Temptation, Calvary and Galilee.

Though technically not a poster, I commend to you a most helpful and extensive chart summarizing the major developments and persons in church history from 60 A.D. to 460 A.D. It is entitled "Synopsis Scriptorum Ecclesiae Antiquae" and is produced by Willy Rousseau, R. Ed. Michiels, 45; 1180 Bruxelles (Belgique). Write them for a current price which should be no more than five dollars.

STIMULATORS

For starters, get John Stott's provocative little book *Your Mind Matters* (InterVarsity, 95 cents). For spiritual excitement get *Peace Child* by Don Richardson (Gospel Light, \$1.95) and *The Hiding Place* by Corrie ten Boom (Revell, \$2.95).

The Evangelism Department of the Board of Home Missions, Reformed Church of America, deserves some sort of medal for its excellent set of booklets entitled "Creative Strategies For Churches: Idea Series." The title is appropriate! The RCA has brainstormed and evaluated and they have produced some how-to resource books on almost every major idea for church ministries. At last pricing the books are only \$1.00—a real steal. I suggest that you examine *Grow Groups* (No.

12) *Coffee House Ministries* (No. 32) *Films and Evangelism* (No. 25) *Retreats and Evangelism* (No. 3) *Evangelistic Bible Studies* (No. 11), *Weekday Bible Clubs* (No. 20), *Senior Citizens in Evangelism* (No. 19) *Shopping Center Ministries* (No. 24) and *Book Clubs* (No. 2).

J. D. Thomas has edited a book entitled *What Lack We Yet? An Evaluation* (Biblical Research Press, Abilene, Texas) with 47 contributors as varied as Roy Bowen Ward, K. C. Moser, Buster Dobbs, W. Carl Ketcherside and Willard Collins. The book is valuable—even if you should not get beyond the first page where Reuel Lemmons correctly diagnoses a leadership crisis of major proportions. In this connection Lyle E. Schaller's new book could challenge leaders: *The Decision Makers: How To Improve the Quality of Decision-Making in the Churches* (Abingdon, \$5.93, 1974).

A real sleeper is a little paperback by Robert Coleman. It has the capacity to revolutionize Churches of Christ because in one fell swoop it would correct (if accepted) our power-institutional-authoritarian approach to everything. Get Coleman's *The Master Plan of Evangelism* (Revell, \$1.50) and get set for a simple but thrilling documentation of how Jesus did it!

I still consider Michael Green's *Evangelism in the Early Church* (Eerdmans, \$6.95) a book of outstanding worth.

Two excellent books about Evangelicals are well worth your

reading: *The Evangelical Renaissance* by Donald Bloesch (Eerdmans, \$2.95) and *The Young Evangelicals* by Richard Quebe-deaux (Harper, \$2.50). In addition to his summary of current evangelical thought, Bloesch includes two essays (one on Barth and one on the Pietist Movement). I am particularly impressed with the essay dealing with the contributions of the Pietists.

There are several good books on the ethical challenges posed by scientific advancements. Somewhat frightening, but still a good introduction, is *The New Genetics and the Future of Man* edited by Michael Hamilton (Eerdmans, \$6.95). Francis Schaeffer is dealing with the same challenge in his brief but bracing *Back To Freedom and Dignity* (InterVarsity). Two very excellent works on science from a positive standpoint are Denis Alexander's *Beyond Science* (Holman, \$4.95) and Richard H. Bube's *The Human Quest* (Word).

I like J. I. Packer's *Knowing God* (InterVarsity, \$5.98). A short little winner is F. F. Bruce's *The Message of the New Testament* (Eerdmans). Incidentally, by the holiday season you may be able to pick up a copy of Bruce's newest work: *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament* (Eerdmans, \$3.45). Whether you agree or not you should be familiar with the contents of *Peter in the New Testament* jointly edited by three Catholic and Protestant scholars (including the famous

New Testament scholar Raymond E. Brown) and jointly published by a Protestant publisher (Augsburg) and a Catholic publisher (Paulist). You also owe it to yourself to read (and possibly acquire) *God's Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Truthworthiness of Scripture*, edited by John Warwick Montgomery (Bethany Fellowship, \$6.95). Likewise, the same may be said for *Spiritual Gifts and the Church* by Donald Bridge and David Phipers (InterVarsity).

Three chapters from Os Guinness' *The Dust of Death* have been issued as short booklets, *Violence; The East, No Exit* (on the proclivity of moderns to Eastern mysticism); and *Encircling Eyes* (occultism). Each booklet is well worth its price of 95 cents. Get them all, and more too, in *The Dust of Death* (InterVarsity, \$4.95). Francis Schaeffer has a new collection of sermons called *No Little People* (InterVarsity, \$3.50). And from L'Abri's dynamism Udo Middlemann sends his first book entitled *Proexistence* (InterVarsity, \$1.95).

Robert Fife's *Teeth On Edge* still bites (Baker, \$1.95)! For every student entering college or seminary or graduate school you should give him *The Challenge of Religious Studies* (InterVarsity, \$2.50). And to everyone who has ever wondered whether God is really good in view of question-raisers like hell, cruelty, suffering and war, then get *The Goodness of God* by John W. Wenham (InterVarsity, \$2.95). I am in-

debted to Perry Cotham for his excellent discussion of *Obscenity, Pornography and Censorship* (Baker, \$2.95). And for those who wish a good faith-builder, then get any or all of three books presenting the evidence for the Christian way: *Christianity On Trail, Books I, II, III*, by Colin Chapman (Lion Publishing, 29-33 Lower Kings Road, Berkhamsted, Herts., England).

For every person who needs good daily, capsulated Bible study devotionals, then you will appreciate the inexpensive but powerful *This Morning With God* in four volumes (InterVarsity, \$2.50 per volume) or any one of the *Scripture Union Bible Study Books* published by Eerdmans.

REFERENCE BOOKS

The past two years have seen the introduction of several excellent reference works. By its sheer practicality and technical excellence I must first point you to the *Handbook to the Bible*, edited by David and Pat Alexander. It is issued in the United Kingdom and Europe under the title *Lion's Handbook to the Bible* and in the United States under the title *Eerdman's Handbook to the Bible* (Eerdmans, \$12.95). The graphics are particularly striking, along with some outstanding charts and diagrams depicting some hard-to-organize subjects like weights, measures, money, and the calendars of biblical times.

The handbook is conveniently divided into four major sections. The first section has outstanding introductory essays and articles.

The next two sections deal with each book in the Old and New Testaments but with helpful articles, charts and maps interspersed. For example during the discussion of Leviticus there are three helpful supplementary articles: "The Sacrificial System," "Clean and Unclean Animals," and "The Meaning of Blood Sacrifice." The fourth section of the book is a directory to key themes, subjects, persons, places and events of the Bible.

A favorite of mine has been updated as a second edition. It is the valuable *Oxford Bible Atlas* (Oxford, 1974, \$9.95) edited by Herbert G. May. In my opinion the paperback edition of this fine work is the best buy available for a Bible atlas.

A reprint of George Adam Smith's classic *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land* has been issued by Peter Smith (Gloucester, Mass.). Baker and Canon have jointly published George Turner's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (\$11.95).

A new second edition of John Bright's *A History of Israel* has been issued by Westminster Press. Even if one disagrees with some of Bright's conclusions, nevertheless one must admit Bright has a great many valuable insights. The first section of the book regarding the ancient Orient is an invaluable survey of historical backgrounds. Westminster has also issued revised editions of two of its volumes in The Old Testament Library. One is well-known *Genesis, A Commentary* by Gerhard von Rad.

Another is *I & II Kings* by John Gray. You may question these author's documentary and hermeneutical presuppositions, but many of their exegetical observations are meaty and brilliant.

And, speaking of commentaries reminds me that The Living Word Commentary (Sweet) has a new entry by Anthony Ash on the *Gospel According to Luke* (in two volumes). InterVarsity has three excellent additions to its Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries. In the past two years it has released *Exodus* by R. Alan Cole, *Psalms 1-72* by Derek Kidner, and *Jeremiah-Lamentations* by R. K. Harrison. There are two new volumes to Harper's New Testament Commentaries: *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* by C. K. Barrett and Ernest Best's *The First and Second Epistles to the Thessalonians* (Harper & Row).

Two very worthwhile commentaries written by members of Churches of Christ have made their entrance the past two years: *Our Man In Heaven: An Exposition of the Epistle To The Hebrews* by Edward Fudge (Baker and CEI Publishing, Athens, Alabama 35611; \$4.95) and *A Commentary on The Minor Prophets* by Homer Hailey (Baker, \$6.95). Incidentally these two names—Fudge and Hailey—reappear in another volume edited by Fudge: *Resurrection Essays in Honor of Homer Hailey* (CEI, \$4.95).

For the money there is still no better collection than Henry Bettenson's *Documents of the Christian Church* (Galaxy Book,

Oxford University Press). For a study of the first three centuries from a Restoration scholar's vantage point, you will find Everett Ferguson's *Early Christians Speak* an excellent addition to your historical library. And, if you are especially interested in the Reformation get Roland H. Bainton's *Women of the Reformation in France and England* (Augsburg). The chairman of the department of history at Harding College, Raymond Lee Muncy, has authored a fascinating historical study entitled *Sex and Marriage in Utopian Communities: Nineteenth Century America* (Indiana University Press). For the first time there is an English translation of J.W. Fuchs' *Classics Illustrated Dictionary*: this valuable compendium has been translated by L. Visser-Fuchs (Oxford University Press, 1974, \$8.50).

Finally, we remind you that any or all of the nine volumes of the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich (Eerdmans), would make outstanding gifts.

LINGUISTIC TOOLS

There are several linguistic tools that would be a contribution to any individual's library. First let me mention several inexpensive but invaluable books. Bruce Metzger's *Lexical Aids for Students of New Testament Greek* (Theological Book Agency, Princeton, N.J.) provides, among several features, the listing of New Testament Greek by frequency from words used more

than 500 times down to words used 10 times. This accounts for 1055 of the New Testament's vocabulary of over 6400, but by knowing these high frequency words a reader has taken a giant step toward reading with efficiency the contents of the Greek New Testament.

But what does one do about low frequency words? Well, he may accompany his reading with one of two volumes. The first is *A Reader's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* by Sakae Kubo (Andrews University Press, Berrien Springs, Michigan). Arranged by New Testament book/chapter/verse, it lists and defines each Greek word occurring less than fifty times. A second volume is *New Testament Word Lists* by Morrison and Barnes (Eerdmans) and lists/defines words that appear fewer than ten times in the New Testament. In *New Testament Word Lists* the Synoptic Gospels are arranged by section—not by book/chapter/verse—in conjunction with the Huck-Lietzmann synopsis. As you see, either of these two volumes may be used with Metzger's *Lexical Aids* and thereby the student will have a basic "command" of the New Testament's vocabulary.

Three small volumes have provided me invaluable brief reference works on the grammar and syntax of the New Testament. I commend to you these helpful paperbacks: *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek* (second edition, Cambridge University Press) by C. F. D. Moule; *Grammatical Aids For Students of New Testament Greek* by Walter

Mueller (Eerdmans); and *A Concise Exegetical Grammar of New Testament Greek* by J. Harold Greenlee (Eerdmans).

For more advanced New Testament studies students need a lexicon like Bauer/Arndt-Gingrich: *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (now distributed through Zondervan). For an advanced New Testament grammar I suggest either the one-volume *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament* by Blass-deBrunner (Zondervan and University of Chicago) or the three-volume set by Milligan-Howard-Turner (T. & T. Clark). The first volume is *Prolegomena* by James Hope Milligan; the second is *Accidence and Word-Formation* by W. F. Howard; the third is *Syntax* by Nigel Turner.

The William Carey Library (533 Hermosa Street, South Pasadena, California) has issued a handy new edition of the well-known Englishman's Greek Concordance: *The New Englishman's Greek Concordance*. To the older text has been added a numerical apparatus for students who don't know Greek. Nifty book! In this same category are two helpful books for non-Greek speakers/readers: *A Parsing Guide to the Greek New Testament* by Nathan E. Han (Herald Press) and *The Analytical Greek Lexicon to the New Testament* (Zondervan). The latter volume alphabetizes each word appearing in the New Testament and analyzes its form. The volume by Han parses only verbal forms and is arranged by the appearance of the word according to book/

chapter/verse in the New Testament.

Another helpful tool for those who don't do too well with Greek, but still need to use it, is *Index to the Arndt and Gingrich Greek Lexicon* by John R. Alsop. Alsop has done the work for you: he transliterates the Greek words (which appear in the book in their order of appearance in the New Testament by book/chapter/verse), gives a brief translation of the word in English, and then gives the page number—and even the quadrant of the page—in Arndt and Gingrich where a fuller definition may be found. There are two printings of this work: one is by The Wycliffe Bible Translators, Inc. (Santa Ana, California) and the other is by Zondervan (order no. 6770p).

For Old Testament students I suggest the standard Gesenius-Kautzsch-Cowley *Hebrew Grammar* (second edition, Oxford University Press) and A. B. Davidson's *Hebrew Syntax* (third edition, T. T. Clark). For advanced studies there is still nothing like "BDB" for a Hebrew Lexicon: *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* by Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. A. Briggs (Oxford University Press). However, there is a newer lexicon better suited for beginning and intermediate students: *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* by William L. Holladay (Eerdmans).

May the Lord richly bless you during the coming New Year!

Robert R. Marshall

BALAM'S FRIEND

BY GARY FREEMAN

When my son Scott started thinking about college last year, I determined to persuade him to attend my alma mater, Sinai Christian College.

"Scott," I said, digging out my old 1953 yearbook, "take a look at this."

"What is it?" asked Scott, who, in case I haven't mentioned it, is a little dim.

"It's a yearbook."

"It's dorky looking, if you ask me. Why is it called 'The Singing College?'"

"Because everybody there sings all the time."

We flipped through the annual. There were pictures of students singing in chapel, at student productions, at church, in front of the ad building, in the stacks, in the parking lots, cafeteria, chemistry lab, etc. The football team was shown singing in the huddle, faculty members were singing on the way to classes, administrators were shown singing at their desks.

Scott looked sceptical. "Didn't anybody there ever get depressed? Didn't anyone ever frown or mope or curse or try to commit suicide? Didn't anybody ever have financial problems, or emotional problems or sexual problems. Didn't you have any deviants, or psychopaths or hardcore neurotics?"

"Son, there wasn't a week that went by, after the first third of the semester, that I wasn't called out of class to go see the bursar."

"What's a bursar?"

"I never did know actually. But he was a kindly gentleman

by name of Brother Larry Schmidt. I think he may have had something to do with the finances of the college. But there was never a time I walked into his office that he did not break out into song (always the same one), and sometimes his secretary joined in on the alto."

"What was the song?"

"I forget the name of it, but the first two lines went like this:

Kid, if you don't soon pay your tuition

Your college career will not come to fruition."

"Catchy, though I doubt it would ever hit the charts in LA. And did you pay, Dad?"

"I always managed to come up with the money, one way or another."

"OK, that accounts for why the administrators were singing. But what about all the rest. Why did the faculty and students go around singing all the time? I mean, doesn't the whole thing strike you as a little dorky?"

I have neglected to mention, my son has an extremely limited vocabulary.

"No, Scott. We sang because we were joyful, full of love and good will. Our hearts were overflowing with love for God and life and our fellowman. We sang because we knew for a fact that only one of our marriages in a hundred would end in divorce, we sang because we would never have to see marriage counselors or use tranquilizers or alcohol, or have to take our kids to shrinks. We sang because there was no dancing allowed and because we

were going to be the only ones in heaven."

Scott got up to leave. "Thanks, Dad, but I think I'll just go on up to Berkeley. It's closer."

"Sit down, Scott."

He sat down, but a little farther away.

"I want you to remember one thing, Son," I said, taking his hand in my own. "If you don't go where I did, you may not turn out the way I turned out."

He took his hand and placed it on my shoulder. "That's a very powerful argument, Dad."



What & SoWhat

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gospel is God's good news for you. His gift to the world is the gift of himself in the midst of that brokenness. The giving of ourselves to him and to others seems to me to be a good place to begin the healing process of all that is broken.

VLH

FORUM

The points raised by Warren Lewis in his article "Let's Look at the Text—Again!" seem to me to be irrelevant. The question in its most honest form would not be "Do the accounts of the resurrection of Jesus in the four gospels harmonize?" But rather, "Can one who sees contradictions inherent in the accounts remain accepted in the Christian tradition, or more particularly, in the Church of Christ?"

There are reasons for believing that these accounts must harmonize—those reasons are based on *faith*.

The debate, in my opinion, more nearly centers on the statement by Paul that anyone who preaches a strange gospel should be accursed. The *faith* of people who cannot admit any contradiction in the accounts seems to be based on the fact that to preach a contradiction, to them, is to preach "a strange gospel." Though there are good arguments for the contradictions being irreconcilable, and though there are good arguments for saying that to point them out is not the preaching of a strange gospel, those good arguments are basically irrelevant to a man who has already made his decision of *faith*.

Doubtless, Mr. Lewis and others of us who have accepted these good arguments have heard equally good ones that would seem to deny the inspiration of the scriptures entirely; for instance, the comparative study of the development of scriptures of other religions. Doubtless, too, we have heard good arguments

against any kind of resurrection, body or spirit, from all kinds of sources of philosophy, psychology and our own common sense; yet we too have made a decision of *faith* on these points as Mr. Lewis states in his article.

The question, then, seems to be, "How do we harmonize (not the gospels) but our particular decisions of *faith*?" Can we exist together, believing different things—exist intimately as brothers? This has always been the primary question of Christian brotherhood, and indeed all brotherhood. It is the question out of which all controversies seem to have arisen. This is the question, in my opinion, that we need to state openly and deal with honestly.

CAROL CAMPBELL
Charleston, West Virginia

First, I would like to commend you on the new format of "Mission." I find your articles most interesting and stimulating. Second, I would like to congratulate Mr. Kemp in the May 1974 issue for putting woman in her place—and as a woman, I'd like to say to him, "Amen, Brother!"

As I review literature written in recent years by sociologists I am appalled at the problems our world is facing. The most serious of these problems appears to me to be that of population—at the rate we are presently increasing, the world will be doubled in population in 35 years. With the increase of population will come many more problems. Where will we find enough food to go around? Where will we live? How

will we control the waste that comes from having such masses of people? The increase of population in the last 35 years has brought increasing air pollution, and the increase in the next 35 years will probably do the same thing. Japan has already installed vending machines for 25 cents worth of oxygen. Will we have to do the same thing in order to survive in our own smog-ridden nation?

In a recent family life education class that I teach, I pointed out some of the future problems in space, food, institutions, and other areas related to the family. After the class, one of the students (who is also in a church school class that I teach) came to me and said, "What are we as Christians going to do? Are we going to be as greedy as the world around us, or are we going to set examples?" If we are faced with crisis after crisis as a result of overpopulation we as Christians are going to need more than ever to have patience, tolerance, love, understanding, and all the other Christian characteristics Paul describes.

It seems to me, however, that the more important problem is one of the present—for Christians and nonChristians. What are our responsibilities in the prevention of these problems? Should we limit the number of children that we have, or choose to simply not have children, or adopt them if we really genuinely want them? God told us to "be fruitful and multiply" but I believe he also taught us to be responsible and

mature in making decisions. I would very much like to see *Mission* address this problem in the near future, to learn specific counsel we can take from the scriptures, and how best we may apply it to our world.

LINDA G. SMOCK
Pinellas Park, Florida

Having read the September issue of *Mission*, I am overwhelmed by the pathos of repressed abilities and services fostered by the well-meaning but misguided leaders in the Church of Christ over the last century.

Reading Mr. Haymes' hope for positive action by our scholars in sharing with us the fruits of their study, and Ms. Ritter's and Ms. Salners' letters expressing the urgency of correcting our repression of women, I am filled, not with despair, but with a sense of relief. Relief that there is a publication where these problems can be aired.

Our problems of today are the products of the past. There was no *Mission*. There was no free exchange of scholarship. There was only a feeling of fear and intimidation. If our scholars were repressed and bowed down to the god of fear, is there any wonder that our preachers and elders, who lacked the confidence of scholarly information, would have followed tradition and prejudices?

There is a place for each of us. If one individual (or one segment of the brotherhood) does not do his part, it becomes impossible for the rest of us.

There is no question but we have quenched the spirit of our women. Who is responsible? We all are, but especially our scholars who, because of fear, have failed to share.

The problems are great and they are urgent. The cry is for action. My hope is that discussion will be recognized for what it is: the most basic form of action. We can all be thankful that we have a stadium in which to fight the necessary battles. Our scholars are aroused, intelligent, and now they can be responsive since they have a means of communicating with those of us who care.

My plea is that the exodus of intelligence will end, that our sensitive people will have the courage and patience to stay, share, and build. There is nothing accomplished by leaving the brotherhood. Those who leave must accept the responsibility for passing along to another generation the same problems that we recognize as being intolerable to ours. Why quit when there is so much to sustain our hope? We at long last have a responsive means of communicating our aspirations to excellence.

Let each of us recognize that discussion precedes action and is a necessary part of any intelligent act. Discussion is taking place. If the Baptist is crying in the wilderness, can the Messiah be far behind?

MORLEY ROBINSON, JR.
Bokchito, Oklahoma

The comment by the editor concerning the article by Dr. Hunter

[June, 1974] against the restoration principle indicated that people were idolators if they viewed the restoration principle as "the" approach to the Bible.

Is it any wonder that those of us who view the restoration principle as the scriptural approach oppose this attack on the basic principle which makes possible the existence of the church and of individual Christians today? The restoration principle is, to put it briefly, the principle that if we want today what God planted in the first century, we must plant the same seed (the word of God). If this is not the approach to the word of God, one cannot say anything is Christianity or anything is against Christianity. Therefore, the view of Hunter concerning Christianity cannot be any better or worse than ours because there is no standard by which to measure.

JAMES D. BALES
Searcy, Arkansas

Editor's note: The editor said that to *equate one theological method with the gospel* is an idolatry which must be challenged (June, 1974, p. 355). This letter gives me the opportunity to say it again—with emphasis and illustration.

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being important things needed at the time. People are buying and giving plants because they supply much needed oxygen for our polluted world and they are beautiful. Books are and will always be gifts because they are informative and provoke thought. God knows we can use people who think. Those are two of the things that I find helpful to me now. I won't begin to say that they are all I want

The rich get richer, the poor get poorer.

and that it isn't a temptation to be extravagant even with books and plants. I fight being extravagant and greedy. I don't want my wants to win over me. My one personal solution when I want to really get something for myself is to go and buy something and give it to someone else. It's a really neat feeling. People know that they are special when you choose them over yourself. I want to devote a lot—all—of my time making people feel special.

I suppose a lot of my feelings about having and getting are a result of seeing people here who are constantly receiving beautiful and expensive things. They are unhappy and bored. They only live for those things they can get. Getting them still does not make them happy. Not getting makes them angry and unreasonable. I don't want to live a miserable life like that. I have seen one person

When you have given all you can, then you will have given yourself.

collect trinkets, bangles, and useless things that someone paid a price for. She is not happy. That tells me something. Apparently no one ever gave her the gift of their time because she doesn't trust anyone who wants to talk to her. Their warmth makes her suspicious. Anyone who talks to her about things that matter are a threat to her. Do I make sense to you? I don't want to know how anyone else feels about this now or what their opinions are on the matter. I want to know if it makes sense to you that Americans own 80 to 85 percent of the world's resources? It seems unbalanced and unfair to me. I don't feel my citizenship is in America. Boundaries don't keep me from loving, helping or being family to other people.

Consider all this and tell me what you feel about it. I don't mean to be overbearing in the way I feel, but I do feel very strongly about this and want to express that.

Love,
Suzan

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geologist and the astronomer got into a conversation about the nature of things. They discussed the age of the earth. They talked about how many millions of years it took to make the rocks on which they sat and about the size of the earth in comparison to the stars in the milky way above them. The guide got caught up in the cosmic proportions of the universe. Finally the conversation ended. As they prepared to bed down, he kicked the fire with a sigh of relief, "Well, I guess it won't matter too much if Bryan is elected."

The story is not intended to encourage withdrawal from responsibility, but to set things in perspective. It is not that we shouldn't take seriously everyday matters and political events. Rather, we need the saving perspective that prevents panic born of shortsightedness and despair born of standing too close to see things as they really are. We need the perspective that calls us to place our ultimate trust in God only.

Indeed, it is in returning and rest that we shall be saved, in quietness and confidence that we shall be strengthened. Herein lies the clue to the recovery of perspective. Now is a good time to begin.

MISSION

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION
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I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

(s) Ray F. Chester

What & SowWhat

FROM THE EDITOR

For most people Christmas is a time of nostalgia. It's a time to recall childhood memories of family get togethers, cozy times around the tree sharing gifts of love, turkey dinners with grandma's dressing, and caroling on crystal cold nights. Even many of the Christmas cards we receive have cozy scenes depicting life when it was slower, simpler and, apparently, safer.

The stark reality of urban life in America today, however, is that Christmas time is a prime time for suicides in our cities. Perhaps the nostalgia for times gone by when things were better helps to highlight the loneliness and despair of our age.

To thrash about and try to find a word to describe our world is not easy. But it seems to me that the term "broken" might come close. In many ways our world is a world of broken lives, broken relationships and shattered dreams. Confidence in our institutions and in each other has been broken. Even many of our churches might be pictured as broken.

And for many there is the suffering of living with a broken faith. I do not think it is usually a loss of faith that troubles us so much as it is a faith that has worn thin or cracked a little under the stress and strain of life's many pressures. In fact, what honest and sensitive Christian standing in the biblical faith has not suffered at one time or another a spiritual power failure—a black out, a loss of picture and sound, a sense of the unbridgeable distance between the

soul and God, between us and our neighbor? We know only too well what the woman meant who came to Dr. Paul Tournier, the Christian psychiatrist, and said, "I can't pray anymore; I've lost God's address."

It was to a broken world, a world that had lost God's address, that Jesus originally came. He came to restore the broken relationship between man and God, the separation of man from other men, and the alienation of man from himself. His call was a call to authentic existence, where man could live in freedom and love. His message was one of acceptance and belonging. His offer was one of healing and fellowship.

His revelation of God was of a God who cares for man and because of his care he acts in history on behalf of man. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the God of Jesus Christ gives his presence to men. His promise of salvation is contained in the biblical statement, "I will be with you." Salvation, broadly speaking then, is the experience of the divine presence.

The truth that Jesus brought was, therefore, what I have chosen to call relational truth more than it was propositional truth. He came not with a list of propositions, but as a person reaching out to other people to join them in a fellowship of love and caring.

Perhaps this Christmas, then, when we think of the coming of Christ's presence into the world, we will not live nostalgically for

what used to be, but we will redimension our view of life to make room for the presence of God now. This would mean several important things as we live as Christians, partaking in the brokenness of the world.

Rather than just studying what God *did do* we will begin to look for what he *is doing*. Surely we do not live just *between* the acts of God, but *with* them and *in* them. Would this not lead to a recovery of the sense of expectancy and hope in the church and in the world.

When we gather as a church to worship we will begin to gather not just around a report about Jesus, but around the presence of Christ. When anything becomes the center of the Christian faith other than Christ himself, that faith is perverted and worship becomes idolatrous. The center of the Christian community's life will not be propositions but relationships.

If what Christ offers to us is presence, it only stands to reason that what we offer to him and others is our presence. Perhaps the reason we can no longer relate to each other at any depth is because we have lost the "centeredness" of our own lives to such an extent that we do not know what or how to offer our presence to others. The brokenness in ourselves contributes to the brokenness of relationships.

If you feel the brokenness of life and the brokenness of the world in which we live, the healing and restoring power of the

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NEXT MONTH IN

MISSION

Jim Reynolds discusses "The Sexual Revolution in America." Norman L. Parks begins the first in a series of articles calling into question the current concept of "the eldership," showing deviations from the concepts held by 19th century restorationists.