Dialogue

A regular feature in which we share correspondence from our readers in order to extend the discussion created by articles in previous issues of CH A R I S. Letters are generally reprinted in their entirety. However, personal or extraneous material is usually excised. The editor reserves the right to provide a response to any letter when providing a balanced perspective calls for it. Readers are invited to write or email comments and reactions to the editor. Any correspondence addressed to the editor may be included in Dialogue at the discretion of the editor without seeking permission of the writer.

Veith’s God at Work

With all the excitement over Eberle's article, I originally missed your brief review of Veith on vocation. Thanks for including that in CH A R I S. I read it just recently.

I’ve become more and more intrigued by the concept of vocation over the years, partly for a reason you cited (“provides a liberating and joyful basis for daily life”) and partly as an antidote to a restless activism in the church that seems at times to rely more on the activism (even a pessimistic activism) than on the gospel, with a calm and confident reliance on the means of grace. Even our articulation of the priesthood of all believers can reflect more the restless activism than the liberating joy of vocation.

And, ironically, imagine what this does to witnessing and evangelism! Instead of seeing vocation work in natural ways - even subconscious or spontaneous - as powerful salt and light, we struggle to marshall the priesthood army to do the work of the church (usually AT or THROUGH the church) with less than stunning results.

Of course, the problem isn’t as simple as “getting vocation.” Even if we taught and lived vocation better than we do, we’d still have to deal with “functional universalism” (Jn Stott’s term) and other matters that hinder our witness.

Bryan Gerlach

Of Magpies...

I found it interesting that you condemn Magpie for a lack of love, yet you lovelessly invoke a secondary [“more telling”?] definition of "magpie" in your "welcome" of the "rag." What of the “tone” of YOUR snippet? “Demeaning?” As a “real people” under the (rather “passionate” care) of one of the Magpie editors, I can testify that you crossed a line in accusing him/ them of greater concern for quoting Latin than caring for souls. With all due respect to you, sir, does YOUR passion justify YOUR “invective” [more telling: diatribe, criticism, tirade, attack, abuse]?

Steve Scheiderer
The day I returned from Church and Change, CHA RIS was in my mailbox. The letters were fascinating as you promised. You're a brave man. I especially enjoyed your comments about the Magpies. I have not read a full issue, just the portions on their website and that was enough for me. Wasn't it just amazing how they treated Rolfe Westendorf? I believe you could use his letter and their reply as a perfect illustration of “casting pearls before swine.” Now I have to read the rest of the magazine. It was good visiting with you.

Bob Johannes

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**Speaking the Truth in Love**

Thank you for sending the latest issue. Although I have only perused it, I have a few comments. I hope you will find them valuable.

1. I do not share the opinion of some that dissent is not allowed in the WELS. Church and Change is one example of the authorized freedom of expression that we enjoy. I have voiced my contrary opinions all the way to the Seminary, and here I am, still enjoying the respect and fellowship of my “adversaries.” CHA RIS serves a useful purpose, but not as the voice of the oppressed masses. I know that others are afraid to express their opinions, but that may be more a matter of self-esteem than a matter of censorship.

Having said that, there are contrary opinions that would eventually be divisive of fellowship. Those contrary opinions may be heard, but then let's recognize that we must not give the same credence to both truth and error. Those who hold those contrary opinions should boldly express them and bravely accept the consequences should their opinions be found contrary to God's Word by those who are responsible for making such judgments. I do not share the opinion of Mark Braun that the application of the doctrine of fellowship was more evangelical in the sixties than in the nineties. I was ordained by Missouri men just weeks before the split. Issues that had to be dealt with then were much more of the hair-splitting variety than today's applications, simply because we were so much closer to Missouri then. Mark may be right, but my experience does not confirm this.

2. Thank you for printing Koehler's essay. But I don't know if I will ever understand it. I once waded through his history of the Wisconsin Synod and made it my long-term goal to translate it from Koehler English to language that most can understand. Those whose minds have been trained to decipher obtuse language may learn from it. Others like me won't get the point, even if we struggle to read it.

3. My most urgent concern lies with the Dialogue. You write with professional respect, and I appreciate it. Some of your correspondents have indulged in the WELS variety of trash talking. They rally the support of their ilk (never used that word before; did I say it right?) and engender the wrath of their opponents, none of which is to the glory of God.

If we cannot speak the truth in love, we should remain silent, lest CHA RIS become a sophisticated version the Christian News, which may God graciously forbid. I urge you to ignore
such correspondence or to respond privately. There is something to be said for journalistic neutrality, but journalism that creates enemies in the church is not worthy of those who represent Jesus Christ.

I have learned during my many years in the ministry that the church needs both John 8 and John 13. As his disciples we must continue in his word, and show that we are his disciples by the love we have for each other. That is a humongous task, as is evidenced by our many failures, including the suspension of J.P. Koehler. But failure does not give us an excuse to fan the flames.

Finally I’m not at all sure that we understand what it means to speak the truth in love. Some would insist that any trash talking that intends to correct error is “loving”, since one is trying to correct someone’s error. That opinion misses the mark by so many miles, yet is used to defend harsh calumny. Maybe CHARIS could find someone who can explain what it really means to speak the truth in love.

Rolfe Westendorf

Hog Heaven

Regarding your recent commentary on Jesus riding a Harley -- wouldn’t Old Testament regulations on avoiding unclean animals keep him off a Hog?
Then again, you were probably referencing a New Testament time frame, so all OT is fulfilled and ceremonial law abolished.

Stand fast in the Grace of God,

Jon Balge

Gesetzlich...

Today’s mail brought TWO copies of the latest journal. Thanks!

I nearly jumped out of my seat with excitement when I saw the reprint of J.P. Koehler’s “Gesetzlich ...” Hopefully, this will generate more widespread reading of the piece than previous reprintings. I hope as many people are led to read this as were led to read Bruce’s article.

When did you first become acquainted with this gem? I remember receiving it in the 70’s when it was distributed at the instruction of the WELS COP. Imagine that! Would that Koehler’s writing had done more in the past half century to instruct us in the dangers of legalism!

Now I have to get busy with my own (re)reading.
May God bless you in your work, John!

Rev. Ronald Muetzel,
It’s A Different World

I enjoyed your article in the most recent Charis. You made the comment on page 27 that “we say little about the many areas we agree with other Christians and focus instead like a laser beam on our presumed areas of disagreement.” We’re not the only Christians who do that.

Recently, we were checking out a contractor that is doing some work at our church. We looked at a Baptist church he had built. In order to see the work, I had to contact the pastor. When I spoke with that Baptist pastor, he wanted to know right away what brand of Lutheran we were. He assumed either ELCA or Free Lutheran. When I said, “WELS,” he had a blank look on his face. Obviously, he didn’t know who we are. His associate, an older gentleman, did know. But the head pastor wanted to know more. He asked if we allowed homosexuals in the pulpit, or women in the pulpit. When I said ‘No’ to both, he realized that we were on some similar ground, at least when it came to believing the gospel and applying it. So what was the next thing out of his mouth? Did he say, “Glad to hear that you stick to God’s Word?” Not at all. He laser beamed in on baptism and made his best effort to prove that his view was right and the Lutheran teaching was wrong. He did it without making accusations, but it was clear he was looking for an area of disagreement rather than celebrating agreement.

So it is not just a Wisconsin Synod thing to beam in on the areas of disagreement. It is a sinful nature thing tied to pride and one-upsmanship. We want to feel like we are somehow superior. It is a sin that needs repentance in more than just WELS people.

Tom Schulz

Dr. Mark Braun responds:

Thanks for the kind words, and for your comments on how other churches also go, like a laser beam, for the differences. I think it is more of a personality issue, typical of the more conservative churches on the spectrum in many denominations. A good analogy, I think, is to the human blood stream, which contains both white and red corpuscles. The reds are the feeders and the whites are the fighters. We along with churches at the conservative ends of their denominations are heavy white corpuscle churches.

Again, to It’s A Different World

I just wanted to drop you a quick note thanking you for “It’s a Different World – Or Is It?” I’m assuming not everybody will be writing you to thank you. Just wanted to let you know I appreciated your presentation.

On the fellowship issue, I have arrived at the same places you so eloquently express. For a number of years I have talked more about those who are willing to listen versus those who are not; instead of persistent errorist - weak brother. I think “separation” takes place almost naturally if we are regularly talking about our faith. When we do that, those who don’t want to
listen or discuss but rather reject a doctrinal truth soon become apparent. When that happens, and we lovingly say we are not willing to compromise, both parties often feel uncomfortable with each other and thus they “naturally” separate.

But I have also found many Christians willing to listen. Even pastors of other denominations. Because of our outreach to Mormons, I have had the opportunity to present workshops in other church bodies, even two day workshops to entire ministerial associations. More often than not, they are intrigued and even impressed with solid Lutheran doctrine. I still remember an Evangelical Free pastor in Wyoming repeatedly telling me how he loved the way I presented conversion. (At the same workshop it was obvious an old Southern Baptist preacher was pretty irritated with me.)

I also thank you for highlighting the different tone our men had 50 years ago. I found the green book, “Essays on Church Fellowship,” truly enlightening. I’m sure you are familiar with those writings but I think J. P. Meyer would be called on the carpet today for writing in regard to St. Paul: “The apostle felt duty bout to worship together with his brethren according to the flesh, although they were not yet ready to accept the most important of all articles. Only when the Jews openly and unmistakably rejected the gospel, only then did he separate himself from them.” (p.136)

On a different point, in your article you also mentioned Luther’s concept of saint-sinner. I have done a lot of study on that and have made presentations about it at two district conferences. The reactions were interesting to say the least. My main concern is how we talk to our members and how we often are not careful about keeping the distinction between believers and unbelievers. I shudder at some of the things I read in Meditations and other places.

The bottom line is that, at the very least, continually holding up to our people the idea of sinner-saint in my eyes is not that helpful. Our people easily seen themselves as sinners – they struggle to see themselves as saints. Small wonder since that is what we emphasize to them We sometimes, in our services, employ a confession of sainthood. Boy, do the eyes raise when I talk about that! But what glories God more? What focuses on Christ more? I believe that regularly addressing believers as sinners beats them down and turns their focus on themselves. I further believe that reminding believers that in Christ they are saints motivates them and focuses them on Jesus.

Rev. Mark Cares

More for Bruce Eberle

Concerning the Eberle article and the dialogue of the fall 2003 issue, I must admit that at least Mr. Eberle is consistent. He is consistently right in asserting that too many pastors lack the enthusiasm and optimism the Gospel provides. I have often asserted that it isn’t the Church’s liturgy, worship, preaching or teaching that people don’t like, it is bad liturgy, worship, preaching, etc. they don’t like. Keep calling for excellence and eschew the least common denominator syndrome in the synod.

But he is also consistently wrong in asserting that the business world or model is essentially part of the Kingdom of God, and that Jesus was some sort of super CEO of Christendom.
Dialogue

Jesus respected economy, money and business practices as part of the Father’s providence, nothing more and nothing less. But he certainly knew the false securities they provided and warned against the love of money. He teaches us to use money and business practices as our servants, not the other way around. He leads us to see past the glitter of worldly modus and power and trust in God alone for all things. He quickly abandoned, nay, ran away from numerical success in trade for the cross. And he was happy to stand there, in front of Pontius Pilate, [half] naked and fully mocked, and call himself “King.” What part of “My kingdom is not of this world” leads us to embrace corporate structure?

Another surprising error is Mr. Eberle’s assertion that the West is ready for some kind of Christian Redoubt. This is the second time in WELS I have heard this untrue belief, rooted in the error of post-millenialism. What books are being read to lead us to that conclusion? Certainly not the Scripture, where Our Lord wonders if he will even find faith on the earth when he returns, and not the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which accurately portrays the Church as a woman exiled to the desert, cared for by God alone as she sits there under assault from Satan and every evil.

The people of America and the West are too impressed with their own wealth, so much so they refuse to build on the solid foundation. Let them build on sand, let them close the font of life to millions of children and rob the Church of Christ’s body and blood. Don’t be so easily impressed with the Mega-Church’s proclamation that they believe the bible to be God’s Word. They have rejected the Christ-hermeneutic, which alone can open up the Scripture unto salvation for the people. Then let all of us call people with the faithfulness and excitement of the apostles and prophets to build on Christ, holy baptism, holy Eucharist, the holy Word.

Rev. Thomas J. Schultz

Editorial Policy Criticized

The following paper was developed at the Shoreland Pastors Conference of the Southeaster Wisconsin District challenging the editorial policy of CHARIS.

The Issue at Hand

Whether the editorial policy of WLC’s Charis - A Journal of Faculty Scholarship (abbreviated to Charis for the remainder of this reaction) adequately allows for the propagation of God’s truth and the refutation of false teaching in our fellowship and beyond.

The Issue Elaborated

Many of our brothers in the ministry have expressed concern over the article that appeared in the last issue of Charis titled “Pastoral Leadership: A Layman’s Perspective.” No on doubts the author’s (Mr. Bruce Eberle) zeal for Christ’s mission nor his love for the Gospel. Mr. Eberle would be a great asset to any of our congregations. Concerns have been expressed, however, regarding his view of what the pastoral ministry is and does. Concern has also been expressed as to the biblical basis - or lack thereof - that he uses to support his view of pastoral leadership.
Brothers have registered concerns over this article with WLC and Mr. Eberle. The WELS grapevine seems to indicate a preference to pointing a finger at Mr. Eberle. The focus should not be placed upon Mr. Eberle. Each one of us attempts to tenderly and tactfully guide and correct our members every Sunday in Bible Class. The responsibility for this article - and all other theological articles - should be placed upon the Charis Institute of WLC in general and the editorial policy of the Charis magazine in particular. The focus of this reaction, therefore, is not the content of the Eberle article. Instead, this reaction seeks to argue for a change in the editorial policy of Charis.

What is the Editorial Policy of Charis

Consider the mission statement of the CHARIS Institute (Though not clearly marked as a mission statement per se): CHARIS, the Institute of Wisconsin Lutheran College, exists to provide a platform for the study and discussion of issues facing the Christian Church. It seeks to provide forums where scholars from the College, the Church, and the academic community can investigate issues of current concern to the Church and the world. It also exists to disseminate the products of such research and investigation to the College’s larger communities. Through all these activities, CHARIS will generally seek to provide a means by which the College can contribute in distinctively Lutheran Christian academic ways to the evangelical mission of the Church. Now compare this excellent purpose with the editorial policy of the journal that is printed in small type at the bottom of the first page. As you read this editorial policy, please keep in mind that CHARIS states “dissemination” of their research as one of the goals of their organization.

“Articles in CHARIS do not necessarily reflect the views of the Institute, Wisconsin Lutheran College, or the editorial advisory board... The editor is responsible for selection and acceptance of the articles, but the responsibility for opinions and accuracy of facts in articles rest solely with the individual author.”

A question presents itself: How have we come to the point within our fellowships that we are able to turn on the printing presses and pray for a wide readership of theological articles that do not necessarily reflect any specific doctrinal viewpoint? The opinion lies with the author? The opinion is multiplied by 1,000 and solidified in the minds of many by the publisher. Even if a concern was never levied against Mr. Eberle’s article, concern can and should be levied against this editorial policy.

The argument in the light of Scripture

Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true. The words of the wise and like goads, their collected saying like firmly embedded nails – given by one Shepherd. Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them. Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body. (Ecc. 12:9-12)

The teacher of Ecclesiastes was careful with his words. The WLC faculty’s time would be well-spent considering to what degree the editorial policy of Charis promotes such care with theology on the pages of their faculty journal.
Even more to the point, however, are the Pauline imperatives to watch life and doctrine closely. You know the standard list of fellowship passages. (The Pastoral Epistles, Romans 16:17; Vast portions of 1 Corinthians, Galatians 2 and 5, 2 John, The Great Commission, etc.) The principles are easy to enunciate, but difficult for the flesh to practice: 1) Saving truth is something to be propagated at the expense of life and limb. 2) False teaching is something to be marked and avoided as poison to the soul. The Scriptures give the Church and her institutions no “academia qualifier” in the realm of false teaching. The context of the writing – academic or homiletic – matters not. What matters to the Lord of the Church is that his truth is being preached, taught, and shared. What matters to the Lord of the Church is that falsehood is clearly labeled as such and then avoided for the good of people’s eternal souls.

The ambivalent editorial policy of Charis does not adequately insure a powerful proclamation of theological truth – nor does it provide an effective way of dealing with that which is false.

The argument in light of the Lutheran Confessions

Compare the spirit of Charis’ editorial policy with the spirit of the Book of Concord. This is a worth-while exercise, since we and our brothers and sisters at WLC have all taken a free oath to uphold the biblical doctrine contained in these confessions. Because of the doctrinal conviction of the original writers, there are several properties that are worth nothing in these confessional documents: 1) Their doctrinal treatment is thetical and anti-ethical. 2) The Confessions strive for clarity of expression. 3) The aim of the Confessions is a practical and proclamatory. 4) They serve as a lasting testimony to posterity. Consider for example the follow quotes from the Book of Concord:

“Likewise, we desire furthermore to agree in a friendly way among ourselves earnestly, using whatever means possible, to maintain this work of concord in our lands, according to our own and each community’s circumstances, through diligent visitation in the churches and schools, through supervision of the presses, and through other salutary means. And should the present controversies about our Christian religion again surface or new ones arise, we agree that to protect against all kinds of scandal they be settled and reconciled in a timely way before given a chance to spread.” (Preface to the Book of Concord #24)

“Therefore I still wanted to publicize these articles through the public press, in case... I should die before a council could take place... I wanted to do this so that those who live and remain after me will have my testimony and confession to present, in addition to the confession that I have already published. I have held fast to this confession until now and by God’s grace, I will continue to hold it.” (The Smalcald Articles: The Preface of Doctor Martin Luther #3)[1] The editors of Charis have all sworn themselves to uphold the Book of Concord in their preaching, teaching, and practice. The current editorial policy of Charis is not confessional in spirit and practice, even though the editor, Dr. Bauer, has personally sworn a confessional oath.

The argument in light of Luther’s own history

Dr. Bauer in his lead editorial bemoans the lack of a “Castle Church Door” in the WELS, claiming that there “existed considerable academic freedom to debate theology” in the great universities of Luther’s day. True to a point. The public debate of philosophical and theological theses was a cornerstone of the learning process. What is also true is that the extent of the
freedom depended upon the theological stripe of the dean of theology. Freedom in theology ended with the Magisterium of the Church. One assumes that the Charis editorial policy is designed to support a “Castle Church Door” within our fellowship.

As to the reference of the Castle Church Door, it is very significant that Luther protested the rampant sale of indulgences as a Doctor of Theology – a defender of truth in the church. His doctoral oath was sworn to God and the church. It was a universal oath obliging him to the preservation of orthodoxy – not an institutional or academic oath.

Consider also the limits of academic freedom that Luther exercised late in his career as Dean of Theology at Wittenberg:

“Although the two theologians shortly thereafter seemed to have come to terms, the controversy was fueled again by Agricola’s submission to the press, without Luther’s approval, of a work which attempted to summarize, in thesis form, the Gospel texts for the church year. In a lengthy introduction and preface Agricola developed his argument that repentance and forgiveness should only be preached on the basis of gospel. Acting in his capacity as dean of the theological faculty, Luther ordered the printed sheets confiscated. Then Luther insisted on publishing the anonymous theses and holding a public disputation with Agricola on their contents. This “First Antinomian Disputation” took place on December 18, 1537, although Agricola failed to appear. After still further negotiations, Agricola agreed to another meeting at which he should publicly admit his errors and declare his agreement with Luther’s views.”[2]

The argument in light of synodical practice

Compare Charis’ editorial policy with that of the Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly:

“This journal is issued by Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary as a testimony of its theological convictions, as a public witness to the saving truths of Holy Scripture, and in the interest of the theological and professional growth of those whom the seminary is training for the public ministry and of those already active in this ministry.”

Or compare with Forward in Christ:

“Forward in Christ formerly Northwestern Lutheran.” “Official magazine of the Wisconsin Lutheran Synod.”

Or compare with The Lutheran Educator:

“The Lutheran Educator: The educational journal of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod edited by the faculty of Martin Luther College.”

First impression? Charis’ editorial policy is unique.

Second impression? Charis’ editorial policy is wanting.

The argument in light of pastoral practice
Because CHARIS desires “to provide a means by which the College can contribute in distinctively Lutheran Christian academic ways to the evangelical mission of the Church,” it is fair to ask how the editorial policy of Charis would impact the evangelical mission of local congregations. Practically speaking, none of us could provide effective leadership in our churches with the Charis editorial policy as our policy. How could we maintain doctrinal discipline? How could be correct, rebuke, and encourage with great patience and careful instruction? How could be allow a layman to teach if the Charis policy was in effect in the parish? (“It’s the layman’s statement, not mine. Direct any concerns to him.”)

Ultimately, there is an inescapable irony here. According to Mr. Eberle pastoral leadership involves pastoral accountability. [3] In other words, the buck stops on the pastor’s desk. When it comes to Charis, the buck stops with a gentlemen I haven’t met, whose background I don’t know, who attends a parish that I’m not aware of. The editorial policy of Charis refuses to provide the very accountability that Mr. Eberle’s article encourages – an article which Dr. Bauer, Executive Director of CHARIS, warmly commends in his editorial.

**Counterpoint**

Doesn’t a tight, confessional, editorial policy that places the responsibility for theological content squarely upon the editorial board squelch creativity in the ministry and academic freedom?

In a word: No.

It can if we are legalists. It will not if we are zealous for Christ’s mission and genuine in our confession. Confessional integrity and creativity in ministry dare never become antithetical. Confessional integrity without creativity ends in scholasticism. Creativity in ministry without confessional integrity replaces the means of grace with well-intended pragmatism. God wants one without leaving the other undone.

As to the matter of academic freedom, Dr. Siegbert Becker preached a marvelous sermon at the Seminary’s opening service in 1970 entitled “Academic Freedom at a Confessional Seminary.” [4] It is well worth the 15 minutes of reading time. Dr. Becker states:

“It (the Word) is not bound; it is not subject to any limitations, just because it is the Word of God. Also in the matter of academic freedom, we must never lose sight of this that God is Creator and lord and that man is creature and servant. And because man is a creature, his freedom is never absolute. Even before the fall man’s freedom was limited to make clear that even at his best state he is a creature under authority. After the fall, when man became depraved and corrupt, restraint became even more necessary. And because of the fall, the freedom that man claims for himself is an illusion. The Bible makes it abundantly clear that fallen men are victims of their own perverted reason, slaves to their own depraved hearts, servants of their own corrupt imagination. In the words of Paul in Romans 16, they ‘serve their own belly,’ to say nothing of the bondage of the devil. To grant unrestrained freedom in the academic world to men who wear those shackles can be far more dangerous than to allow bombers to roam unrestricted through our streets.” [5]

Briefly said: Christian academia gives us the freedom to confirm our teaching, debate and practice to the Holy Scriptures (as the ruling norm), the Book of Concord, and our officially
adopted synodical statements (as the norms that are ruled). That is genuine freedom. We are not free to err or “debate” outside of that sphere. To propagate debate outside the realm of public confession backed by personal conviction is to return to the bondage of sin. (Scholasticism, Pietism, Rationalism, Secular Humanism, Relativism, Higher Criticism, Etc.) This issue is of real importance to the mission of Christ and the work of our fellowship, because the institutional victims of academic freedom are legion. (Valparaiso, Carthage, Luther, St. Olaf, Adolphus, Marquette, Etc.) Their freedom expands far and wide, but the saving truth is scarce with them. Sadly, the Castle Church Door has become too big for many. Fortunately, the world, not the debate of the church door, is our mission. May Jesus help us all to that end.

Prepared [by Pastor A. Christie] at the request of the Shoreland Pastoral Conference, Southeaster Wisconsin District


Editorial Policy

As noted above, several writers to the editor questioned the editorial policy of this journal. Specifically, some concerns were registered regarding what was argued to be an incorrect understanding of several Bible references by Mr. Bruce Eberle in his article on pastoral leadership. As we noted, we appreciated the correspondence and accepted the instruction. But the larger issue of responsibility for journal content must be addressed. The editorial board of this journal understands its responsibilities as an extension of Wisconsin Lutheran College and its affiliation with the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. In doing so, it fully supports the philosophy of ministry of the College, adheres to the doctrine and practice of the WELS, and makes every effort through its publications to advance the same. This editorial board will never knowingly publish anything that is contrary to Scripture, advocate unbiblical teachings, or promote disorder or disruption in the church. At the same time, the editors reserve the right to publish materials which evoke discussion, present alternative viewpoints within the parameters of church doctrine, and challenge the means and methods by which the church carries out its ministry. If some readers are unhappy or offended by what is published, they are invited to express themselves in letters to the editor. In the meantime we will strive to develop a more clear and concise editorial policy in an attempt to assuage the sincere concerns of some readers.