

# Spiritual Subversives

Dub McClish

[**Prefatory Note:** As indicated in the publication note at the end of the article below, I wrote it in 1973, almost exactly 50 years before the time of this writing. In the intervening half century, all the radical periodicals I named have ceased publication (much to the joy of all lovers of “the old paths” (Jer. 6:16). Sad to say, however, others have arisen in their place (the devil never sleeps!), and the warnings against these replacements are just as appropriate as were those concerning their predecessors. Principal among these replacement “Spiritual Subversives” are *Christian Chronicle* and *Wineskins*.]

In writing to Timothy, Paul warns him about words that are of “no profit,” but that are “to the subverting of them that hear” (2 Tim. 2:14). To Titus, he writes of “many unruly men, vain talkers, and deceivers...whose mouths must be stopped; men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not... (Tit. 1:10–11). Spiritual subversives are not confined to Paul’s time. Such an element has emerged and has become increasingly emboldened in the church in the past six or seven years. They have done and they continue to do their damage through pulpit and printed page. I will address myself only to their principal periodicals in this brief article.

*Mission Messenger* has been edited by W. Carl Ketcherside for several years. When I was a “preacher boy,” still in college, during the mid-fifties, this man was tearing up churches (especially in the mid-west) with his anti-located preacher, anti-Christian college, anti-orphan home hobbies, and most brethren learned to steer clear of him. However, in the early sixties, as his influence waned low on those worn-out issues, he swung to the opposite extreme. He now seems to be opposed to nothing (but “ugly Church of Christism” as he puts it), advocating fellowship apart from doctrinal soundness.

*Restoration Review* is Leroy Garrett’s publication. Leroy, like Carl, opposed almost everything until about ten years ago, but now he is feverishly working to get the Lord’s church to oppose almost nothing in the realm of doctrine. He was such a troubler of brethren when I was in college that during the college lectureship one year, he spent a night in the local jail at the invitation of the college administration. These are the older generation subversives that are being read far too much to please those who love the Lord’s church.

*Mission* began publication rather mildly about five years ago, but each issue has seemed to out-distance the previous one in doctrinal derring-do. It not only carried an article by a

brother defending the evolutionary hypothesis in 1969, it awarded the author second place for “outstanding literary achievement in bringing the Christian message to bear on the world of 1969.” Last January, **Mission** published an article in which a “brother” made an outright attack on the inspiration of the Gospel narratives. It has become so rank with liberalism that both *Firm Foundation* and *Gospel Advocate* fired “broadsides” at it and its directors in recent months.

*Integrity* is a misnomer if there ever was one for the free monthly edited by three malcontent brethren (one a former classmate of mine), published in Michigan. It is anti-authoritarian in its major thrust, seeking to do in the church what the left-wing revolutionaries have done in society in recent years.

I have been hesitant to mention these even in a negative way because of the notoriety they derive therefrom. It is indeed sad that such subversives have caught the imagination of many in the churches, especially among the young. Some of these are distributed free to any address they obtain. One of our families mysteriously began to receive *Integrity* this month. If you should be so “honored,” bear in mind Paul’s warnings! These are indeed SPIRITUAL SUBVERSIVES.

[**Note:** I wrote this article for, and it was published in the February 20, 1973, edition of *Sentinel*, weekly bulletin of the Sunset Church of Christ, Carlsbad, New Mexico, of which I was editor.

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