

1969-1989 Twenty Years of

# Integrity

2919 Lafayette Ave.  
Lansing, Michigan 48906

Nonprofit Organization  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106  
Permit No. 189

January/February 1989

1969-1989 Twenty Years of

# Integrity

INTEGRITY, a journal published bimonthly by an independent nonprofit corporation, is intended to be a ministry of reconciliation which utilizes the varied talents of a large community of believers. These believers, united in faith but divergent in opinions, seek to accurately reveal God to both the church and the world so that all may become one as He is one. Accordingly, it should not be assumed that the views expressed by individual authors necessarily represent the opinions of either the editors or the Board as a whole.

## Readers' Response

(Continued from page 18)

Thanks for *Integrity*, and your continued work to encourage and strengthen Christian growth.

Betty Stockstill  
Springfield, Missouri

Dear Diane and Bruce:

Please accept this belated response to Hoy's letter in regard to finances. Also, accept my heart-felt "thanks" for your labor and determination to continue publication of *Integrity*. . .

It was my good fortune which allowed me to associate with the Ledbetters during his service to Brookvalley, and through them to be introduced to *Integrity*. I really do wish you every blessing in your efforts, and I pray that you will be granted peace and joy in that pursuit. Remember, too, there's nothing wrong with having "fun" as you do worthwhile work, so I trust that you enjoy, enjoy!

Jim Love  
Auburn, Georgia

Thanks for another good year of *Integrity* reading enjoyment. The articles cover a good spectrum of interest. We enjoy each issue and appreciate your efforts to continue this publication.

Joann and Ed Weidner  
Searcy, Arkansas

*Integrity's* moderate voice is appreciated: keep up the good work!

Gene H. Peacock  
Little Rock, Arkansas

To: Bruce and Diane Kilmer

With congratulations on *Integrity's* 20th year and with all good wishes for the continued success of your ministry.

Ed and Bobbie Lee Holley  
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

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### Readers' Response



Jan.-Feb. 1989  
Vol. 20 - No. 1

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## 1969-1989 Twenty Years of *Integrity*

Where were you and what were you doing 20 years ago? You remember 1969! Nixon was president, the U.S. was embroiled in Viet Nam, the amazin' Mets won the World Series, gasoline was 19 cents a gallon, and *Integrity* was free!?!?

Remember Gary Freeman's *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to Heaven*? It was published in 1969 by Harper and Row and cost \$3.95 (hardcover!). Two years earlier Sweet had published a book of his essays, *Are You Going to Church More But Enjoying It Less?* (For those of you who are younger, the title was a play off of a popular cigarette commercial of the time. Yes, there used to be cigarette commercials on television, but I digress.)

Gary made us laugh and cry as he sacrilegiously (to some) poked fun at the church ("with a small c and a capital WE") and at Christian colleges. It was almost heresy to be caught with one of his books, unless you could prove you were reading it for refutation purposes. I remember a local preacher seeing one of Gary's books on my bunk at camp and I thought, "Uh oh — here goes my summer job."

It was during this time that *Integrity* was born out of turmoil in the church and out of individuals' struggles of faith. This publication has come a long way from its reactive beginning. We still want to react, but we want to be proactive also. Our goal is to help each of us live lives of integrity. We try to emphasize three areas by including topical and exegetical articles which deal with:

1. How Christians should repond to issues facing our society, such as poverty, war, racial relations, homosexuality, divorce, roles of men and women, environmental responsibility, substance abuse.
2. Encouraging believers toward personal spiritual growth and ministry.
3. Issues of particular interest to those in the Restoration Movement or to anyone who is interested in unity among all Christians.

During 1989 *Integrity* intends to assess the last 20 years by examining where we have been as a magazine, as people in the

(Continued on page 8)

# Statement of Purpose

## From the Board of Directors

In order that our readers and writers may have a clear understanding of our objectives, and that we ourselves may maintain a clear perspective and a balanced journal which both reflects and inspires integrity, we issue the following statement.

We intend to provide a refined and respected literary medium for sharing the Good News of God in Christ to people of varying needs: to all who are searching for the abundant life; to believers who require reaffirmation of their faith and the reassurance of the Christian message; and to the corporate body of Christ whose mission is to witness his message to the world.

Since the Word of God is the ultimate criterion for determining the authenticity of everything the church is and does, our aim is to publish articles that are the result of keen exegetical study of the Scriptures and are at the same time interesting and understandable to our readers and related to their moral and spiritual needs.

In order that our efforts may be directed toward the mission of Christ, and not our own, we will encourage intensive inquiry into the origins of the Christian community and our religious heritage. This goal implies a recognition that dogma is often formulated as a defense against what is considered heresy, that the interpretation of Scripture is conditioned both historically and ideologically by the context in which it is articulated, and that multiple pressures are exerted on the conscience to remain loyal to the particular religious tradition one has embraced.

Since the Christian life essentially involves right relationships, we will make a concerted

effort toward providing Biblical answers to questions of fellowship and unity.

We believe that all Christians must share the responsibility of determining the meaning of Jesus Christ in our lives and that the Spirit of Truth is not confined to any enclave of believers. Accordingly, we encourage response from all who recognize Jesus as Lord, irrespective of their convictions or affiliation.

We will continue to provide a forum in which sincere yet different points of view may be stated with Christian candor and competence. This policy necessarily entails publishing some conclusions at variance with our own, which will ordinarily be done without editorial judgment under the assumption that our readers are capable of evaluating diverse viewpoints for themselves.

We will provide an opportunity for the publication of at least limited amounts of reader response, negative as well as positive. This freedom of expression will be restricted only in terms of irrelevance, undue repetition, blatant crudeness, personal attack, and shallow treatment of subject matter.

Our writers will speak with dignity, sincerity, and seriousness, honestly expressing the truth they have received from God, in words that are rational because they reflect His perspective and bear conviction to reasonable minds. Since a valid teaching ministry requires continual awareness of an adaptation to the needs of a changing world, we expect to constantly adjust our emphasis so as to remain pertinent to the serious issues our readers face.

Finally, it is our unwavering aim to remain totally under God's guidance and dependent upon his grace.

*He who walks integrity walks securely.*

Prov. 10:9



# Growing Up — In the Church

DEBORAH JANE CHOATE SHEPHERD

**“Oh, grow up.”**

My teen-age son was annoyed (aren't teenagers always annoyed?) by something his younger sister did. “That is so dumb, why does she do that?”

He did the same dumb, annoying things when he was her age. He doesn't remember why. He does some dumb, annoying things now, too. I did, too, when I was his age. It's part of growing up.

*When I was a child, my speech, my outlook, and my thoughts were all childish. When I grew up, I had finished with childish things.<sup>1</sup>*

**“Everybody has to grow up sometime, nothing lasts for ever.”**

On the block where I lived when I was growing up, there lived within sight of the front door of my house: an aunt and uncle, a bachelor uncle, a grandmother, another aunt and uncle, a cousin and her husband, and three more families who went to the same church as we did. I didn't know then how remarkable it was that we all got along so well with each other. In the middle of a crowded urban neighborhood, I lived in an island of love. I was almost a grown-up before I really knew there were people in the world who didn't love me. It came as a shock.

*I tell you this: unless you turn around and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.<sup>2</sup>*

**“I grew up in the church.”**

When I was a young adult, I was part of a group of other young, excited Christians who began to see and grow beyond the sectarian attitudes of our background. We shocked our families with our pronouncements about what was wrong with the churches where they raised us. The things we did sometimes caused controversy in our churches (we didn't mind, in fact it was part of the excitement). We met together in house churches. We talked about liv-

ing together in Christian community. We stayed up all night sharing our faith in Jesus with each other and with non-believers. We learned new songs and sang them everywhere—on mountaintops, on city streets, and in hospital rooms. We gave away our possessions. We embraced all those we met who claimed to love Jesus. We loved Jesus and each other with intensity.

We outgrew all that.

*We are no longer to be children, tossed by the waves and whirled about by every fresh gust of teaching.<sup>3</sup>*

**“Don't be so childish.”**

Being one of the first of my friends to have children, I have been considered by some to be a veteran parent with some wisdom to share. My best advice is always this: Don't believe what they say about children passing through stages—what they really do is keep all the most annoying parts of every stage and then add the next one to that. Anyone who has seen a teenager act like a two-year-old knows what I mean. Of course the best advice truly is: Love them the way they are, even when they are making it hard—they have to do some of this stuff to become fully developed human beings.

Can we use a developmental model to examine our life of faith and see what “stage” is coming next? Do we grow by moving further and further from where we started, or by adding inches to our spiritual stature? When we are taller will we be closer to God? Can we do both — finish with childish things, *and* become like little children?

Little children have one thing in common: without being told, they take the nourishment and nurture they are given and they grow. We can see it. When they don't grow, people who love them worry, because growth means life and health. We can do that in Christ. We can

feed ourselves on the Word of God and grow in grace and truth and love. We can see it. And when we don't grow, people who love us pray, because they know growth means Life.

The most childish thing that children do is to hate being children, despising anything they think they have outgrown. The worst thing one child can call another is “a baby.” (Teen-agers accuse each other of being “immature.”) It is a form of what C.S. Lewis called “chronological snobbery,” and is one childish thing we can leave behind. We must learn what to outgrow as Christians without despising those who are still growing through what we think we have outgrown. Love them the way they are — even when they are making it hard. They have to go through some of this stuff to become fully developed children of God.

The discussions we once had about living in Christian community made me feel quite advanced and spiritually mature. I was smug and a little self-righteous about how we were growing beyond the boundaries of the old ideas of what the church was all about. It was only years later I realized I had grown up in Christian community. Remember my neighborhood? It wasn't just “blood” that made them get along so well, lots of families live in constant conflict. It was the blood of Jesus that bound them together with a commitment to the love that lasts forever. If my friends and I had been less childish, we might have been able to learn grace and truth and love from those very people we thought we had outgrown.

Paul's references to growth and maturity come most often in the context of love and unity. We cannot grow if we cherish inflated ideas of our own importance. We must never outgrow our love for each other. Most often, the smugness and self-righteousness that hurt and divide come when we compare our growth to each other's instead of to our full grown brother Jesus. Remember the way the apostles were arguing among themselves about who was the greatest? Sounds a little childish to me. Maybe it did to Jesus, too, because *He called a child, set him in front of them, and said, “I tell you this: unless you turn around and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom*

*of heaven. Let a man humble himself till he is like this child, and he will be the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven.”<sup>4</sup>* I can picture that child standing in the crowd of arguing adults, with his eyes on Jesus.

We can outgrow sectarianism without despising the special blessings of our particular heritage. We can outgrow the love of stirring controversy without giving up the desire to stir each other to love and good works. We can grow to behave responsibly toward our families and jobs without making ourselves slaves to Mammon. We must do it by realizing the gifts God has given each of us in the church and let Him use them to *equip God's people for work in his service, to the building up of the body of Christ. So shall we all at last attain to the unity inherent in our faith and our knowledge of the Son of God — to mature manhood, measured by nothing less than the full stature of Christ. We are no longer to be children, tossed by the waves and whirled about by every fresh gust of teaching, dupes of crafty rogues and their deceitful schemes. No, let us speak the truth in love; so shall we fully grow up into Christ. He is the head, and on him the whole body depends. Bonded and knit together by every constituent joint, the whole frame grows through the due activity of each part, and builds itself up in love.*<sup>5</sup> Then we can truthfully say “I grew up in the church.”

Grow in the grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory now and for all eternity.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I Corinthians 13.11 (NEB)

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 18.3 (NEB)

<sup>3</sup> Ephesians 4.14 (NEB)

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 18.2-4 (NEB)

<sup>5</sup> Ephesians 4.12-16 (NEB)

<sup>6</sup> 2 Peter 3.18 (NEB)

Debi Shepherd grew up in the Churches of Christ. She attended Michigan Christian College and Harding University before receiving her degree in Human Resources Development from Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan. She is presently the Community Education Coordinator for the Troy Public Schools in Troy, Michigan. She, her husband Don, and their two children, Taylor and Emilie, attend the Troy Church of Christ.



# Report: Restoration Forum VI

LLOYD KNOWLES

“Behold, how good and how pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

These thoughts initiated “Unity” Forum VI in Cuyahoga Falls (near Akron), Ohio, Nov. 1-3, 1988. According to the statistics announced by John Fisk, minister of the a capella “Church In The Falls” and host of the Forum, a total of 195 people registered from 30 states and Canada with 75 from the “a capella” churches, 112 from the “instrumental” group, four listing “Disciples of Christ” as their background, and four more not declaring (for whatever reasons). Around 250 actually attended.

I went to this Forum — my first, by the way — with great curiosity and guarded optimism wondering just what we hoped to accomplish by these meetings. I mean, *what could we unite*, even if we decided to? We have no political structures like synods or presbyteries which could be merged. There are no written creeds to be adjusted. And who would sign whatever documents might be involved anyway? Furthermore, the individual churches of both groups are often so independent, even of each other, that they don’t co-operate very well on common programs, projects, or organizations to be supported! Marshall Leggett, president of “instrumental” Milligan College in upper East Tennessee, recognized this problem in his opening address when he said:

“. . . it would seem to be more fruitful for the two bodies to talk less about unity and more about family fellowship. I am not sure all of us brethren have a definition, much less a consensus, on what we mean by unity. Is it a spiritual unity which Paul described in Ephesians when he wrote, ‘Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace’ (Eph. 4:3)? Or is it a creedal unity whereby one defines

points to which the other must subscribe?”\*

The general nature and tone of this forum in comparison with earlier ones was, according to many who had attended them, quite upbeat and positive. Our worship and singing together was magnificent, and we did *not* use instruments. The cumulative effect of these forums seems to be breaking down many barriers between the two brotherhoods. As Marvin Phillips, minister of the “a capella” Garnett Church of Christ in Tulsa, Oklahoma, said in his presentation:

In 1984 we had that historic first Restoration Forum in Joplin, on the campus of Ozark Bible College (since called Ozark Christian College). The discussions were open and great. But all could tell there was a reluctance on the part of many non-instrumental brethren. We had simply equated you with the Disciples of Christ. We imagined you baptized babies, had women elders and cared nothing about Bible authority! So after a quick huddle by the “fiddlers,” a fine brother gave a comprehensive speech identifying the Independent churches, and their difference to [sic] the Disciples. It was like a bolt out of the blue for many to find, as one non-instrumental brother put it, “I’ve learned today I have about a million brothers and sisters I didn’t know I had!”\*

That was the first of three encouraging signs I saw for *real* unity. **Men and women from both fellowships were intentionally and openly calling to each “brother” and “sister.”** Now while this may not seem like much to some folk, those of us with a personal knowledge of recent Restoration History will recognize a rather gigantic step here toward unity. I had not been in the door ten minutes when John Fisk was shaking my hand and calling me his

“brother” in Christ, an experience which I have never had before regarding one of my “non-instrumental” brethren.

The second of the three encouraging signs for true unity among us has to do with willingness to fellowship. A few speakers from the a capella persuasion even went so far as to blame themselves and their group for the disunity among us. Olan Hicks, an a capella editor and author from Searcy, Arkansas, attacked the idea of an absolute Law of Exclusion to be found in the Bible, though a “principle of exclusion” may be applied:

The LAW OF SILENCE/LAW OF EXCLUSION is found wanting for biblical authorization and is therefore condemned by its own major premise, that whatever is not expressly authorized is forbidden.\*

And Walt Yancy, a fourth generation member of the Church of Christ who is presently active in the Highland Oaks Church of Christ in Dallas, Texas, emphatically denied the existence of any law of God regarding the “Law of Silence.” Furthermore, he stated that there is nothing inherent in the use of the word “sing” that implies or denies the use of the instrument.

. . . A cappella singing is not wrong. . . It is the anti-instrument doctrine which is wrong. . . The anti-instrument doctrine is divisive, it is a false doctrine, and yes, it is probably even sinful because of its divisive nature.

On this issue we in the Church of Christ have been wrong. We have taught a false doctrine. We have caused division. . . \*

At one of the last workshops held, one older man stood up and pardoned himself for interrupting Don DeWelt, the workshop leader. He “confessed” to us that all his life he had been a member of the non-Sunday school, one-cup brethren which didn’t even fellowship with other a capella churches; and then he proceeded to apologize for being part of dividing the body of Christ, and to proclaim that he was proud that “two of our own men are leading out in this unity effort.” This testimonial proved to be very moving and humbling to us all as we

each could identify ways in our own lives where we have probably hindered the preaching of the Gospel to a lost world by diverting or sublimating it to one or more of our heartfelt “pet” opinions.

But the viewpoint that the a capella brethren had somehow erred in their beliefs was, I believe, reflected by only a minority of a capella people present. Probably the more typical viewpoint expressed from that side of the question was that *we still do disagree* on some very important matters of faith which may even prevent our corporate worship together, but **no longer will these issues be made tests of fellowship or roadblocks to brotherhood between us.** As Marvin Phillips (“a capella”) said regarding his relationship with Don DeWelt (“instrumental”):

He’s my brother! And not because I’ve decided to “brother” him. It’s because he was born into the Family of God the same way I was. He was added to the church by the same Lord. We’re in the same Family. And he’s trying to do and be the same thing I’m trying to do and be! And Don makes a lot of mistakes. He’s wrong about a lot of things. He’s wrong nearly as many times as I am.\*

Finally, the third encouraging sign I see for genuine unity stems from the actions of **men and women from both fellowships who are beginning to recognize, personally encourage, participate in, and even financially support some missions and benevolent works of “the other side.”** The president of one of the “instrumental” Bible colleges told me of their intentions of hiring a full-time “a capella” professor to join their faculty next year. Kay Watts of Good News International impressively encouraged all who attended her workshop entitled “What We Are Doing Together on the Mission Field” as she related instances of one “instrumental” group entering a “closed” African country for mission work through the kind invitation and auspices of an “a capella” mission already registered there, as well as many other co-operative efforts.



I returned home from the Forum excited, envisioning a day when I will be counseling a young Christian student that we have *two* Michigan colleges in our brotherhood (the other being Michigan Christian College in Rochester) and *seven or eight* Lansing churches to choose from (instead of the three or four we usually think of as "our" churches). Perhaps we yet will see the day when one of Christ's final prayers for us shall be fulfilled:

"Holy Father, keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. (John 17:11b, RSV and NAS).

## Editorial

(Continued from page 2)

Restoration Movement, and as a culture. Our aim is to learn lessons and gain wisdom for the future.

In this issue, we begin looking back by reprinting our "Statement of Purpose." Having first appeared in the February 1975 issue and again in the Jan/Feb 1984 issue, it still conveys, we think, (along with the above description of the three types of articles) what *Integrity* is trying to do. Also in this issue, we look back with Debi Shepherd, as she describes "Growing Up in the Church" during these years. Joseph F. Jones, who has counseled many in (and out of) the church through difficult times over the past 20 years, gives practical, Biblical advice about anger.

Many articles in *Integrity* over the past 20 years have advocated unity among Christians, especially among those as close in belief and practice as the Churches of Christ (a cappella) and the Christian/Churches of Christ (instrumental). Lloyd Knowles' report is further evidence that these are times of breakthrough toward this unity. We think you will appreciate Michael Murphy's article as he takes us back in church history a bit further than 20 years with a look at the prayer life of Antony the Hermit in the late third century.

\*These quotations were not reconstructed from memory alone, but rather are pulled from transcripts of the speeches compiled together in a book entitled *Restoration Forum VI* published by College Press Publishing Company in Joplin, Missouri, Don DeWelt gave his kind permission for their usage herein.

Lloyd Knowles is in his 19th year as professor of history at Great Lakes Bible College in Lansing, Michigan. He spent his undergrad years at Milligan College; received his M.R.E. from Emmanuel School of Religion and a masters in history from Michigan State University. Lloyd, his wife Deborah and their two children fellowship with the West Lansing Church of Christ.

The two writers of "Intercepted Correspondence" recognize, as did C.S. Lewis, that they need our prayers as they try to make us aware of the twisted thinking and temptations of the Evil One. Board member Laquita Higgs reviews a book which discusses how the church can deal compassionately with members who are homosexual.

Throughout this year we want to remind you, as well as ourselves, that we are all seekers. We are all in the process of change together. What we have learned over the past 20 years, we want to use for the present, even as we seek to learn for the future.

"The world is not divided between those who have the truth and those who don't; it is divided between those who are looking for the truth and those who aren't."

— Gary Freeman  
*Are You Going to Church  
More but Enjoying It  
Less?* (Sweet, Austin, TX  
1967)

Bruce Kilmer and  
Diane Kilmer  
Co-editors

## "Never Go to Bed Angry"

JOSEPH F. JONES

"If you are angry, be sure that it is not out of wounded pride or bad temper. Never go to bed angry — don't give the devil that sort of foothold." (Eph. 4:26,27 Phillips Trans.) Though not really translating, Phillips does get to the essence of the apostolic exhortation about certain emotions and the new life in Christ. The writer recently asked his Sunday School class on the general theme of "The Christian and His Emotions," how many present had been angry that week; and without hesitation all twenty-two members of the class quickly raised their hands. The response of this class may reflect the universal nature of anger as an emotional state, experienced at times by everyone, but very difficult to define with precision. Nevertheless, most Christians struggle with anger turned to sin, not understanding the nature or dynamics of anger, and certainly not always able to discern whether our anger is being dealt with constructively as in the life of our Lord, or destructively to the hurt of ourselves and others.

The words of the text, "Be angry but do not sin," are quoted by the apostle from Psalm 4:4 (LXX: Ps. 4:5) and applied to his own purpose as he encourages the new believers in Christ to put off their old ways of thinking and behaving, and to put on the new lifestyle in Christ. The heathen world of Paul's day, like the sinful society of our own day, had little enlightenment on how to handle the emotion of anger. We see anger and bitterness as it develops into hostility and resentment, and finally erupts into various forms of violence. Then again we see Christians who lump all anger into the category of sin, unable to exercise the moral and spiritual distinction between authentic righteous anger and sinful anger understandably condemned in the Scriptures. Consequently, many believers suffer with haunting guilt from the awareness of anger in their lives because of the indiscriminate preaching and teaching about this emotion, namely, that it is sinful for

Christians to get angry.

As an emotional state, anger may be experienced with varying degrees of intensity, from mild annoyance to violent rage. It is possible to employ the term anger as a "catch-all" phrase to include many human feelings which actually are not technically anger, although such feelings may under given circumstances turn into anger and occasion angry outbursts. The physically fatigued parent may out of exhaustion from the day's activities become very "angry" with the small child whose lack of coordination causes him to spill his milk, drop a dish of food, or, even more annoying, break one of mother's coveted plates. The parental upset is often labeled as anger which the Bible so forcefully condemns. Again, extreme frustration can give rise to a reaction which is categorized as anger: the star basketball player who is having an "off night" and nothing he does goes right, thus producing an intolerable frustration; the golfer who misses short putts and loses a vital match, beating his club into the ground (or as my twin brother once did, wrapping a club around a nearby tree, making it look like a perfect "L" in the alphabet!). But frustration as such is not necessarily anger. Various occasions of embarrassment may produce reactions which look similar to anger but are not actually anger which the Bible warns against. A married couple may be very upset with one another, elevate their voices in discussing an issue, feel intensely about their respective viewpoints, yet not be angry in the sense which the Bible forbids. We need clarification to help Christians distinguish between certain feelings being experienced and the amount of anger; and we likewise need discernment between what is carnal anger leading to further sin and the righteous indignation which Jesus displayed and which His followers at times need to experience and express.



## Sinful Anger

While no definitive response can be attempted at this juncture about sinful anger, certain aspects of this sinful emotion can be singled out for clarification and instruction. Hendriksen suggests that Eph. 4:26 be rendered simply, "Let not your rage be mixed with sin." The writer James exhorts us to be "quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, for the anger of man does not work the righteousness of God." (James 1:19, 20) Sinful anger might be defined as that emotional state which motivates us to lash out at others, to hurt verbally or physically another, to become aggressive and vicious in our attitudes and actions, to want to slash and cut and inflict pain on another person. Carnal or sinful anger is an attitude of hatred, a deep desire to hurt and kill and destroy; and multiple are the ways in which this desire to hurt can be expressed without ever laying a hand on another physically.

## Sources of Sinful Anger

The Christian needs to develop an awareness of the numerous stimuli which stir him to action, factors which may be primarily external and beyond his physical self, or factors within him which respond to certain external experiences and stir anger and resentment. (1) In our key verse for this study, Ephesians 4:26, Phillips renders it, "If you are angry, be sure that it is not out of wounded pride or bad temper." When the self has not really died, has not been "crucified with Christ," to employ Paul's terminology, then the human ego can easily be bruised and wounded pride desires to lash back, even to hurt and make the offender pay. During the legal maneuvers of the Sanhedrin commonly called the "trials of Jesus," our Lord had every right to experience "wounded pride," for they belittled and demeaned His person, mocked His claim to Kingship, and heaped every form of ridicule and human insult upon Him which sinful men could devise. Yet, He could genuinely plead with the Father to forgive all of those who so heartlessly shared in the crime of His death. Be sure that your anger is not out of wounded pride.

(2) Distorted perceptions of reality can often lead to carnal or sinful anger. This is one of the major differences between the perfect anger of God and the imperfect anger of man, for God's anger is always a perfect reaction of righteous indignation at some form of unrighteousness; but man's angry reactions to life, though considered to be "righteous indignation" may well be a thoroughly distorted perception of reality. We may not always judge the motives and actions of others with the accurateness we want to believe exists, while God's judgment and discernment are always with Divine perfection. Our perceptions may often be subsumed under a heading of selfishness, or narcissistic self-interest. Dr. Gary Collins well concludes that "because we feel vulnerable, threatened or inclined to be critical, we misperceive the actions of others and jump to angry, perhaps often unjustified conclusions." (*Christian Counseling*, p. 102)

(3) Sinful anger may also be experienced when we realize guilt for our own behavior. Guilt, when healthily experienced, is designed of God to bring us to repentance for our failures to do His Will; but guilt does not always have such a constructive and spiritual result. Guilt may stimulate intense anger at the one who has produced it. Israel's prophets are classic examples of those who stirred a nation's negative and impenitent anger when confronted with the Word of the Lord! Anger, not repentance, may well result from such guilt. The Word of God read with great meaning in worship may convict and either anger us or turn us toward repentance. We may frequently turn on friends, fellow believers, or family when faced with our behavior, and carnal anger is the result of such confrontations with the Word. We can thank God that the apostle Peter, when confronted with the Gospel of Equality in Christ, did not in carnal, sinful anger reject his fellow apostle; but from all indications repented of his hypocrisy in Antioch. Wounded pride, distorted perceptions, guilt misdirected can all result in sinful anger; and the insightful Christian can go on to assess in his own life those persons or situations which result in the sinful response known as anger.

## Jesus and Constructive Coping

Most of us know too well that we must not let our anger (rage) be mixed with sin. But how can we avoid sinful reactions when wounded, when our perceptions are distorted, when guilt leaves us hurting, lashing back rather than repenting? Is there any personal example we can follow, or source of strength beyond ourselves upon which we can draw? We realize well that the apostle has warned, "Don't give the devil that sort of foothold." (Literally, "And do not give a place to the devil.") For the devil will seize the opportunity of changing our indignation, whether righteous or unrighteous, into a grievance or grudge, a nursing of carnal wrath, and most regrettably, an unwillingness to forgive. How then can we heed that injunction, "Never go to bed angry?" We turn to our Lord's own life and example as He dealt with every possible kind of injury and insult, as He saw and experienced injustice, hypocrisy, spiritual and moral blindness, ugly motives, and every evil that sinful men can devise to hurt another.

(1) No matter what the nature of the situation facing Him, Jesus never lost control, never exploded in physical or emotional violence. The two incidents most frequently cited when reference is made to Jesus' anger are the Temple cleansings. Seeing the sham and hypocrisy veiled under a cloak of brotherly service for their fellow Jews who had come to worship, Jesus became livid with righteous anger; and, making a "whip of cords," ("a lash of twisted rushes," as Schonfield renders it) He drove men and animals from the holy precincts (John 2:15). There is no evidence that Jesus struck either man or beast with this device. Commenting on this very point, Leon Morris makes this incisive observation: "It is clear that it was not so much the physical force as the moral power He employed that emptied the courts." (*The Gospel According to John*, p. 194) Another English scholar reflecting on the same incident gets to the heart of Jesus' action and anger. H.E.W. Turner wrote: "It was surely the blazing anger of the selfless Christ rather than the weapon which He carried which really cleared the Temple Courts of its noisy, motley throng."

(*Jesus Master and Lord*, p. 325) What an example of spiritual and moral control over such moments of emotional fire, yet never yielding to lost self control or ugly violence.

(2) Jesus had no problem resorting to healthy, direct confrontation with those who were the source of hurt and anger. It is important to both the offended and the offender that there be healthy verbal confrontation where possible. In cleansing the Temple areas it is clear that His confrontation assumed some physical aspects in that He overturned the money-changers' tables, and released the caged pigeons; but then followed the verbal confrontation recorded in the Gospel accounts. On another occasion He became indignant (*aganakteo*, a powerfully strong word) when His disciples interfered with His blessing the children, and rebuked them with pointed language. I like my own free paraphrasing of this incident: "Let these children be brought to me by their mothers, and don't you dare try to stop them; for it is people with the attitudes like these little children who will get into the kingdom; and if your attitudes don't change, you won't see the kingdom, much less enter it." (See Mark 10:13-16 for the actual account.) Then came a physical display of His warmth and emotion of caring, as He "took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands upon them."

(3) A third dimension of Jesus' healthy handling of anger's energy is seen in His efforts to clarify and correct even while rebuking those whose beliefs, attitudes and life styles were the sources of hurt, pain, and subsequent anger. For instance, Jesus' irritation and anger could be roused by impure motives, or efforts to entrap Him with subtle questions and dilemmas. The Sadducees' efforts to catch Him with a veiled theological inquiry about the resurrection when questioning Him about marriage is a case in point. But note Jesus' way of turning their intent and His consequent anger into clarification and correction. "Is this not why you are wrong, that you know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God? For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like the angels in heaven." (See Mark 12: 18-27) How incisive the Lord could



be in turning very anger-producing situations into clarification and teaching occasions. The Christian must likewise make every effort to handle his own anger and relationships involving anger, to clarify all the variables in an anger situation, and to correct behavior on the part of others which appears to be unchristian. Furthermore, the Christian must teach in the midst of such relationships, where possible, the Will of God as manifested in Jesus when He was similarly hurt and angered. Admittedly, some individuals are not in the mood for listening when they are so frustrated, angered, or resentful; but Jesus at least attempted teaching at times when the situation was emotionally hot.

(4) One further aspect of Jesus' coping with the anger associated with His own hurt or hurt which He observed inflicted on others, was His evident readiness and willingness to extend forgiveness where there was repentance. The Jesus who could speak of the millstone and the Gehenna of fire could also assure guilty yet penitent sinners of divine grace and forgiveness. Love that can be hurt so deeply and become so angered as in the Person of Jesus, can also manifest a caring that leads to the cross. There is cosmic and unexplainable paradox that the very behavior which so hurt and angered the Christ was the behavior for that which He went to the cross in loving obedience to forgive. The same heart and mind that uttered the "woes"

of Matthew 23 also uttered that almost unbelievable prayer, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they are doing." There is a remarkably disarming dynamic with the individual who, though hurt deeply and angered bitterly, can also extend forgiveness to the very one who has hurt. Here then is Jesus' example of constructive handling of His own hurt and anger that becomes our ultimate model. (In a subsequent article I propose to treat the subject of anger and the power of the Holy Spirit to provide a source of constructive coping.)

"Never go to bed angry," urged the apostle Paul. Certainly we can believe, having looked at our Lord's personal, powerful and constructive handling of anger, that He never laid down in peaceful rest with a heart filled with anger and bitterness. At the close of the day and the coming of sunset, which to the Jew was the beginning of a new day, the Lord Jesus could peacefully rest both body and mind, free of anger and all other stresses of Life's mission, and so can we.

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Joseph F. Jones has ministered to the Church of Christ in Troy, Michigan for 21 years. He holds a doctorate in higher education and recently received his doctorate in pastoral counseling from Trinity Theological Seminary. Joseph has worked and written for *Integrity* magazine since its earliest years and has served as president of the Board for more than ten years.

## Finances

Since the mailing of our annual September fundraising letter, we have received responses from 34 states and contributions for the publishing of the magazine of a little over \$3,000. This has come in both small amounts of \$5 or \$10 and a few of \$50 or \$100. We thank you and praise God for your generosity. Though this isn't quite enough for the year, we believe God will provide the needed funds as

long as He wants the ministry to continue.

Several of you wrote that you have been reading *Integrity* magazine for years. Your letters, notes and contributions are very encouraging to all of us on the board as we realize how many of you faithfully read *Integrity* every two months. It is our prayer that *Integrity* continue to serve you and our God. Thank you for your support.

## Characters in Church History: Prayer Champion – Antony the Hermit

MICHAEL F. MURPHY

About 250 years after Jesus' return to heaven, a not-so-young Christian man named Antony trekked out into the Egyptian desert to begin a life of prayer and solitude with God. He had been a Christian since childhood and, even at the age of 18, had dedicated the rest of his life to prayer and self-denial. And he lived that life to the age of 108, still in the desert, still wrestling in prayer.

To us sophisticated moderns, this can seem like a waste of life, well-intentioned, to be sure, but unproductive in the way we have come to measure Christian worth. After all, how can you follow the Great Commission, or perform works of charity, by avoiding human contact? What good is virtue if no one sees it to learn from it?

These arguments are valid, so far as they go. But the point of a life like Antony's is that, without prayer — deep, prolonged, heroic prayer — none of the rest matters very much in the end.

We have all of us been brought up to value activist Christianity. We have somehow been trained to presume a connection between the personal holiness of other Christians and the hours of Sunday School they've taught, the visible results of their congregational leadership, or the number of new members they bring in. And indeed, the assumption is often, if not always, valid to a degree.

But what about our prayer lives? How well do our habits of prayer keep solid our relationship with Jesus, without which all these other things, important as they truly are, lose their meaning?

Prayer, to a Christian, should be as natural as breathing. Prayer is not just for before meals,

for mornings and evenings, for times of temptation, for gratitude, for happiness or sorrow. Prayer is for every moment in our lives. A Christian's life is one long, uninterrupted prayer. "Pray without ceasing," Paul told the Thessalonians — and us.

The prayers of mature and maturing Christians go far beyond the "Lord-give-me-this-forgive-me-that-amen" sort. Prayer is a dialogue; it runs both ways, and is as much an opportunity we make for God to talk to us, as it is for us to talk to Him. We don't have to do all the talking in a prayer session; we don't have to worry about prayer time going to waste if every second isn't filled up with our petitions, our confessions, even our conscious adoration. We don't have to verbalize what we say, either on our lips or in our thoughts. An we shouldn't worry about running out of things to say to God; there is a kind of prayer communication that doesn't need words. And most importantly, we can listen to God, and we will feel His presence and love and guidance, if only we give Him the time.

This is what Antony, and the many others like him, went out to the relative peace and quiet of the desert to learn. But with the busy lives we make for ourselves, we can still learn to become champions at prayer. God will give the guidance and instruction; all we need to give are a willing spirit — and time.

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Michael Murphy has a strong background in history with a B.A. in classical languages and a M.A. in church history (late Roman period) from Michigan State University, and further study at Yale University. He is a professional writer for a corporation. He and his wife, Mary, and their two boys, Patrick and Jimmy, fellowship with the University Christian Church in East Lansing, Michigan.



# Intercepted Correspondence

The following "Intercepted Correspondence" is a continuation of a feature we began in the January/February 1988 issue of *Integrity*. These letters are *Integrity's* version of C.S. Lewis' *Screwtape Letters* and more recently Os Guinness' *Gravedigger files*.

To refresh your memory, we have an im-

aginary setting where Bruce accidentally comes across these letters in his computer class. Bruce thought he should warn the rest of us of what may be going on under our very noses. The nefarious teacher Apollyon continues his instructions to the young devil Ichabod.

Dear Ichabod:

For whatever satisfaction it may bring you, Elder Striker's ball went awry in the twelfth frame because he slipped at the foul line. We were ready to steer it off the mark and give him a 7-10 split; it was unnecessary. He can blame only himself for his failure, but he should have to credit us for three of the strikes he did get. And, as you saw, he got some unusual actions from a few pins earlier in the game. How often have you seen two pins bounce back out of the pit simultaneously, to clear remaining pins from the lane? and *twice in one game?*

The reaction you describe — his profanity — is not altogether rare among some of those who call themselves Christians. Control of the temper is a major problem here and there. It is one of these character traits (anger) which the Enemy's legions call 'The Seven Deadly Sins.' You should understand that Striker, in swearing, is unleashing his subconscious id. Now that we know it's there, we can devise all manner of modes through which it is released, to his embarrassment and shame, and to our glory. Using your ingenuity, you will, I am sure, contrive a circumstance where he will explode in the presence of the 'saints.' It would be a tremendous victory if you could pull this off in the presence of Snugrug herself. Then just watch the matter take its natural course!

You are further urged to get close to Ms. Snugrug. She may be your prime channel for all sorts of scandal, gossip, maligning and derogatory comments; and she does it with such ease and pleasure, having several ears which

eagerly await the next juicy morsel.

A word about the Pietists. The key here is *pride*. Work on turning righteousness into self-righteousness; humility into false modesty; disapproval into condemning judgment. You should become familiar with the part hypocrisy plays in the matter, and for that reason I suggest reading portions of what these Christians call the New Testament. Ordinarily this would be strictly prohibited, but the sole point is for you to learn all you can of the men known as Pharisees at that time. For your own sake, limit your reading now in the book of Matthew, chapter 6, verses 1 to 17; chapter 23, 1 to 32. You will be able to adapt the concepts of hypocrisy, pride, legalism and others to your work without difficulty. They were, obviously, concepts devised and promoted from our own Infernal Council eons ago. They have been effective in every age in various guises.

You will enjoy this one. Remember pointing out the leader of the Protesters as they picketed that movie? He was one of ours! If you will look in the May, 1988 issue of *The Evangelical Press* you will see a full-page spread where he offered to lead such movements anywhere in the Midwest. His 'pep talk' to marchers included a stirring, inflammatory diatribe which incensed and desensitized the protesters until they were indifferent to any personal or property damage they might inflict in picketing. In such an eventuality, the thrust of the protest is usually misdirected, and matters irrelevant to the original issue become focal points. They are

prone to exhibit violent reaction to opposition of any kind and by any person whatever, having rationalized their righteous stand totally. Such a technique is ancient. You will remember the diversion of the Crusades in the twelfth century as a prime example from the past. The principle still works.

I am glad you took special note of that quiet man who offered the protesters everything from calm discussion to a New Testament. Mark him well. He is a prime enemy of ours. He has appeared in his own benign manner at countless such assemblies, and his reasoned responses have blunted many of our most promising incipient riots. To date, we have not penetrated his armor of faith. You are directed to observe him near at hand whenever possible, looking for even the slightest hint of a flaw — moral, social, economic — anything at all we can use. If you find none, you may have to devise some sort of entrapment. But the issue is so important that I must insist you should clear any specific future course of action with me before attempting its implementation.

Regarding the "Pray-ers", I suggest that you work on those who prayed for the candidate(s) *not* elected. But work with care. A few might be persuaded that their prayers were futile: unanswered prayers (or dissatisfaction with the answer they received) mean that they have prayed to deaf ears. A few may be diverted into "gimmie, gimmie" prayers, using this time primarily in asking for "things." Others may be susceptible to the old tricks of praying in ritualistic rote, repetitious and vacuous content, and self-centered requests. You are quite correct in your evaluation of the truly sincere "Prayer-ers": they are potentially our most dangerous enemy.

Work with Brother Whitesoul with great care. To any among our own constituency, the Enemy's toleration of pain and humiliation brought upon His Son defies logic, as does His failure to call His forces into play now to destroy us. Perhaps the point is that we simply do not understand the intensity of a love which can endure extreme shame temporarily in anticipation of an awaiting joy. In fact, maybe we simply do not understand love, period. You

may capitalize upon his dilemma by calling the problem to his attention as often as possible, while you offer no valid explanatory hypothesis. Meanwhile, don't forget to have the legion of kindly ladies commend him regularly for his carefully devised, if not eloquently presented sermons.

I shall eagerly await your next communique, anticipating your continuing progress at Broad Way.

Devilishly yours,  
Uncle Apollyon

Dear Uncle Apollyon,

Thanks for your advice in the last letter. I will, as you suggest, be on the lookout for opportunities to bait Elder Striker into further outbursts of profanity. For the moment, I must say that he seems much more subdued than in the past. Let us hope that he is stewing about being embarrassed, rather than meditating on how he set himself up for looking foolish. And I have already gone over to Mrs. Snugrug's for an after-church snack. She has spotted me as someone who has a knack for gathering scandalous tidbits and has included me in her crowd. I try to stay on the edges of that group, however, because most people in the congregation are aware that it is an incubator for gossip, and I don't want to damage my influence by being identified as merely one of Snugrug's hangers-on. Besides that, the woman is so self-centered that she offers me little challenge. Of course, she has to be that way, or else she couldn't so complacently build herself up by tearing others down.

I read the passages you suggested about the Pharisees. Talk about piety becoming a vice! Reading about them did give me some ideas. I have noticed that Brother Silvertone's eloquent prayers are much admired in the assembly. You can see him beaming after services in the midst of compliments on his beautiful speeches to the Almighty. I am going to encourage the tendency



he already has to avoid grubby specifics in confession, thanksgiving, and petition and to dwell on the grand generalities and self-congratulations which bring the greatest applause, such as, "We thank you, Lord, that you have bestowed upon us a spirit of hospitality toward those who grace our portals"; and, "Forgive us, Dear Father, of those times when the frailties of the flesh cause us to slip from the standard of righteousness which it is our custom to maintain." Even grand phrases might be dangerous if uttered in humility and sincerity, but when they are uttered for show, there are chuckles in Hell. Tripping up the "Pray-ers," however, will be more difficult; they concentrate on private prayer, and they do relish the frequently schedule-bound limitations of public prayer. When they do lead in prayer, there seems to be a power at work in their heartfelt simplicity that goes beyond eloquence and absorbs everybody, including the prayer-leader, into a sense of the Presence of God. It's frightening when that happens! Thank Lucifer it's comparatively rare.

I liked that stuff in Matthew 23 about "whited sepulchres" and "dead men's bones." The Broad Way church has great potential for that kind of discrepancy between appearances and substance. There is an influential set of members who make all sorts of noises about whether the image of the church in the community is what they want it to be (dignified, friendly, doctrinally correct), but whose private lives are so devoted to material gain and getting ahead that they come close to being "dead men's bones" inside. And then, of course, there's the beautiful church building, the debt for which will take up the bulk of the church's resources for several years yet; so while it seems to represent the good health of the church, I suspect that the building actually covers up a failure to give priority to the spiritual — rather than the social and organizational — purposes of the church. The bitter arguments and broken relationships resulting from the church's sinking so much into a physical plant are a delight to behold!

That brings me to some observations on how decisions are made in the church and how these

methods lend themselves to our cause. If a bad program once takes hold, it has a very good chance of lasting forever, since in the church's decision-making process the basic questions of why an activity is necessary and on what grounds it ought to be continued are rarely asked. It is merely taken for granted that what has been done long enough to become customary and expected ought to be done year after year. And these customary things usually carry with them the necessity of staff, committees, and money to support them. Is there a position designated as "senior minister," to be filled by someone who will preach us a prescribed number of sermons each week? Then it has to be filled, and his salary and home have to be provided. No questions are asked as to whether God's present purpose for the congregation includes such an arrangement, nor whether the pressure to have two sermons every Sunday, resulting from the presence of someone on the staff designated to do it, is actually the best way to approach the worship services. Is there a music director, and is there a special musical group? Then it must be necessary to have a regular spot for them to sing in and to have special programs to make use of such a group and its director. The beauty of all this is that one thing requires another, and only by a great corporate act of faith, spearheaded by wise and spiritually sensitive leaders, can a congregation engage in what might be called (Far be it from me to put it in their heads!) spiritual zero-budgeting. The ordinary practice is to go on doing these things (or going through the motions) without even making sure that the spiritual purpose and justification for them is continually reaffirmed. So long as people are unthinkingly comfortable about *what* they are doing, and the only serious discussions (or rather arguments, let us hope) are over *who* does it, it seems to me that my job is pretty easy. Once let these people start, through earnest prayer, laying themselves open without reservation to what the Enemy wants them to do together, and we've got problems. I'm happy to report that people seem for now to be fairly happy with the unexamined status quo.

Brother Whitesoul is perceptive enough to see

all these vulnerabilities of his "brothers and sisters" (how can he be so uncritically inclusive?), and on that perception I think I can build. The inertia resisting the power of the Enemy is tremendous. If I can convince him that the congregation is hopelessly mired in enervating mediocrity, perhaps he will give up, or even lose his faith. (In his case, I wish that the church *would* decide it doesn't need a minister.) He must be getting unfair help from

the Enemy, or he wouldn't have held on this long.

So you see that I have many good (should I say "bad"?) opportunities here at Broad Way for promoting hypocrisy, disillusionment, and complacency. What more could a devil ask?

Yours for eternal hate,

Ichabod

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## Readers' Response

Dear Bruce Kilmer,

The inadequate reply of Ronald Fisher's article to your 1987 splendid examination of "Freedom for Men and Women" sent my mind wandering back over the years. In *Integrity's* young days I published an article under the title "Set Our Women Free" which may have produced the widest public response of any article in the paper's history. The demand for that issue was tremendous. Hoy republished and republished (he received one order from California for 1,000 copies) until the cost required his announcement that the article was subject to free reproduction, but *Integrity* could no longer supply copies. Thousands of copies were mimeographed or otherwise reproduced and some still circulate today, and I still get letters asking for copies.

It was not the profundity of the article, but the mere fact that after so long a silence, a voice was heard that particularly stirred suppressed women. The wife of a prominent Oklahoma preacher wrote me in confidence that with her husband's reluctant consent she had decided to attend another congregation where she could breathe fresh air. I received hundreds of letters from women which, if printed, would have roused the church no end. There were also letters from men in agreement as well as from

others angry and hostile. At any rate, that one article made my name known all over America. It led to an invitation to read an article at a 1974 Preachers and Elders Workshop at Abilene, which *Integrity* published as a booklet titled "The Role of Women in the Church.\*"

An immediate consequence of the *Integrity* article was an ultimatum from the elders of the church I attended which banned me from teaching any Sunday school class, forbade me from publishing any kind of religious article in any publication, either local or national (i.e. *Integrity*), or teaching any group in my home or anybody else's home at any time on pain of excommunication on the first offense. My reply used Shakespeare, "Upon what meat hath these, my Caesars, fed, that they have power so great." When I went to Abilene and read my paper, I was excommunicated. If this sounds unbelievable, there was an aftermath. One elder led a crusade to revoke the "withdrawal" and after the congregation forced two others out, the excommunication was revoked seven years later.

Every month I get letters asking for copies of *Integrity's* booklet. One woman from Atlanta came in person two weeks ago asking for a copy. I suppose you have long since exhausted



your supply. I feel particularly regretful when I get orders for first copies from a women's group meeting in homes. The orders come from both Church of Christ and Independent Christian Church groups.

Things have vastly changed since I published the first article almost 20 years ago. American culture itself is forcing changes on our churches and the end is not in sight. Look how many churches today have women superintendents of Sunday School or ministers of education and serving as chairpersons of committees.

I once published an article in *Mission* on my grandmother's church (she was baptized in 1832), whose minutes are preserved in the state library in Nashville. These minutes reveal women serving as head of committees, making out reports to the monthly business meetings attended by all members, voting for the election of elders and deacons, and speaking their minds. These minutes are in detail from 1828 to 1869 and reveal how much more free women were in the Church of Christ in that period than they are today. The answer: women were of critical importance on our pioneer frontier and the culture of that environment found room for their leadership.

Fisher's claim that *deacon* meant only male ignores the fact that the Greek word applied to both men and women and that the translation "deaconess" for Pliny's letter is really a mistranslation. There were women *deacons* in the primitive church. And since the Greek word "elder" is actually an adjective, there were "elder men" and "elder women" in the primitive church, the latter bearing particular responsibility for the younger women.

Thanks for your fine article. Please keep the issue alive. Nothing is more nonsensical in my local congregation than women with Ph.D.'s teaching men and women in the local university but forced into silence in Sunday School classes while some half-literate male bumbles through a subject on which such women could throw a great deal of light.

Norman L. Parks  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

\*Norman Park's booklet, "The Role of Women in the Church" is available through *Integrity* for \$2.

Thank you for your faithfulness in publishing inspirational and insightful articles.

I particularly enjoyed "Characters in Church History" in the Sept./Oct. issue. So glad it will be a regular feature. I'm just now reading "Confessions of St. Augustine" and am being stirred to catch-up on some church history. It's good for us to know who pioneered the way before us.

Helen and Everett Champney  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

Dear Bruce and Diane,

I have received *Integrity* ever since its inception and it has brought me through discouraging times of turmoil in the church, along with uplifting articles that have given me hope that transcends this mortal life into a joy that can only be experienced through the nearness that brings me out of the earthly to the "glorious." I pray you continue to enrich our lives in Christ Jesus.

Robert S. Rash  
Riverside, California

Dear Hoy, Diane, Bruce, et. al.

Thank you for again furnishing many hours of inspiration and encouragement to me throughout the year. Many of the articles are like precious gems that I hoard, then go back to peruse them again and again. Many are shared with friends, relatives, and with co-workers whom I feel would be particularly helped by the illumination. You can't keep it unless you give it away; you know. . .

May God continue to bless you and the work you have committed your service to push forward. With His help, you are victorious.

Coy Warren  
Ft. Worth, Texas

(Continued on page 20)

## Book Review

*Beyond Rejection: The Church, Homosexuality and Hope*, by Don Baker. Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1985. 95 pages.

LAQUITA M. HIGGS

"Do we shoot our wounded?" was the title of a recent article by Leroy Garrett in *Restoration Review* (Sept./Oct. 1988). He was referring to a remark by an Oklahoma state representative, ". . . you Church of Christ folk are the only people I know who shoot your wounded." Garrett took that to mean that we all too often use condemnation rather than compassion when dealing with those who are not adhering to our standards of belief or behavior. Have you ever been guilty of shooting the wounded? I suspect we all have been.

Homosexuality is one of those moral issues which is all too easy to condemn. After all, who can forget the shocking story of Sodom and Gomorrah? On the other hand, homosexuality is not the *unforgivable* sin which some, by their attitude toward it, have made it to be. It is quite possible that there is even someone in your own congregation who is a homosexual. Do they trust us enough to share their story with us? Have we dealt compassionately with them? Or have we shot the wounded?

Don Baker's book, *Beyond Rejection*, is a true story. Baker wrote it while serving as pastor of Hinson Memorial Baptist Church in Portland, Oregon, but it could just as easily have been any Church of Christ or Christian Church. It is the story of Jerry, a member of that church in Portland; Baker knew Jerry as a devout Christian, a former seminary student, and a zealous worker in the church. Baker had counseled Jerry and his wife, Rosie, before their marriage and had performed the marriage ceremony. It was a shock when Jerry and Rosie came three years later to tell Baker that Jerry was a practicing homosexual. They pleaded for help.

It then becomes Baker's story, too. Baker was a militant crusader against homosexuals. He wrote, "I was, to say the least, unsympathetic to the whole homosexual community and found myself becoming increasingly angered by their militant tactics. And now right in front of me sat one of my dearest friends, one of Hinson's active workers, acknowledging that he had been a practicing homosexual for more than twenty years" (p.55).

Baker felt helpless, but he realized that he was caught in a trap quite as much as were Jerry and Rosie: he had been viewing homosexuality as an evil that needed to be extinguished, not as a need to be addressed. With Baker we go through the Biblical teaching on homosexuality, and we see how one minister and, finally, the whole church, dealt with this homosexual among them. With the church, we begin to understand and have compassion for the homosexual caught in the trap of sin.

It is a powerful story, but the greatest power is in the hope which it offers. Through the power of Christ and the dedication of a forgiving wife and caring friends, Jerry *did* change. Others can do it, too.

Do read the book. We have friends who even read it aloud to their teenage children. It will make you think, and feel, and pray that you might be more like Christ. Let's not shoot any more of our wounded.

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Laquita Higgs, a graduate of Abilene Christian University, has a doctorate in Medieval European history and teaches at the University of Michigan (Dearborn). She has worked and written for *Integrity* magazine for nearly ten years.