

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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.

Dear Sirs,

Saw your ad in the *Directory of the Ministry* — looks interesting! As a son of the Restoration Movement (yes, there are some of us in New England!) I'm most interested in *Integrity*. Please send a sample here as soon as possible to the above address.

Tom Simmons
Edgartown, MA

Dear Brother Ponder,

The back copies of "*Integrity*" which you so kindly sent arrived yesterday. Thank you for sending them. We appreciate your love in so doing.

We are a very small group with no teacher

or preacher. We are doing our best to teach ourselves and reach others. We all find this very difficult as none of us have any communications skills nor are we very well educated (either secularly or in Bible). So you will realize from that, just how welcome these magazines are. We can all read and study the material contained in them. And, we can type copies of useful articles to give to others whom we are trying to win for Christ. (This is, if there is no objection to us using the material in this way. I presume that the articles were given to the Lord's work and can be freely used by all involved in such work).

Thank you again, I look forward to receiving each future issue.

Yours sincerely,
John McCourt
Belfast, Northern Island

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Alton Thompson

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J. Bruce Kilmer

Charlie's Picture
Steve Weathers

Intercepted Correspondence

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Wholeness

Many of the sermons and lessons I heard growing up in the church gave me the impression that the God of the Old Testament was somehow different from the God of the New Testament. This misconception caused me to miss many of the Old Testament insights into the nature of God. Similarly, when we think the New Testament teaches one set of rules for church activities and another set for the rest of our lives, we have misunderstood the nature of the Christian life. Likewise, when we insist that Sunday corporate worship is in a separate category from Sunday school or other meetings of the church, we misunderstand the nature of the church.

Isolating our Christian life from the rest of our life is destructive. It allows us to live inconsistently and to treat people unfairly. Worse, it makes it more difficult for us to accept Christ as the Lord of our whole lives.

However, when we integrate the Lordship of Christ and his teachings into all aspects of our lives, we open ourselves to the consistency and wholeness of God's power for our whole selves. In this issue of *Integrity*, we look at some of the problems that result from the fragmentation of our beliefs and activities. Alton Thompson addresses the destructive division of the sacred and the secular, while I examine the results of this division on the role of women in the church.

Steve Weathers, a Christian who writes fiction, uses his gift for story-telling to impart truth and inspiration. Steve's story about a child's encounter with a group of nuns appeared in our special art issue (Sept/Oct 1989). This month he treats us to another story: "Charlie's Picture." Both of his stories have encouraged me to love people more. We hope many of you continue to find that our fictitious "Intercepted Correspondence" helps you to resist a very real Satan.

We pray that this issue encourages you to use all of your talents, senses, tasks, and activities for the glory of God, and that he will heal the fragments and separations in our churches and in our lives.

"Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut. 6:4).

Bruce Kilmer
Co-Editor

Of Sacred and Secular

ALTON THOMPSON

Many followers of Christ sort their universe into Sacred things, Sinful things, and Secular things. We all know what Sacred things are. They are those things that are holy — the Holy Bible, Holy Spirit, Holy Matrimony — or, that belong to the Lord — the Lord's Supper, the Lord's day, the Lord's table — or, that are otherwise associated in our minds with the spiritual. Missionary work may be spoken of as a 'sacred profession' or church-related topics as "spiritual matters."

Likewise, we know what Sinful things are. They are those things that are not holy, that corrupt a person spiritually. Sinful things are also called "worldly" . . . which stands opposed to "heavenly," of course.

Most people recognize a third category: Secular things. Secular things are also called "worldly," but not in an inherently evil sense. Secular things, being merely material and temporal in nature, are valueless, neutral, and of no eternal significance. Being neither nourishment nor poison, Secular things are a kind of spiritual junk food. But there is one important thing to note: if Secular things are permitted to dominate the Sacred in an individual's life, the result is Sinful.

Although the sizes of the categories — Sacred, Secular, and Sinful — are approximate, the Secular category is by far the largest. Many religious groups like to expand the Sinful category to include more of the Universe, shrinking the other two categories accordingly. The system is commonly applied along these lines:

In professions:
preaching is Sacred, prostitution is Sinful, and computer programming is merely Secular.

In money matters:
the Sunday collection is Sacred, the

Vegas jackpot is Sinful, and the money in your wallet is merely Secular.

In eating:

unleavened bread is Sacred, spiked rum cake is Sinful, and spreadable liverwurst is merely Secular.

In art:

A tract cover illustration is Sacred, a nude is Sinful, and landscape life is merely Secular.

In music appreciation:

the Antioch Christian College A Cappella Choir is Sacred, the Dismembered Death Decrepits (punk rock group) is Sinful, and the Beach Boys are merely Secular. . . and so on.

Note that distinct dividing lines exist between the three categories. Although people argue in a few cases about where to draw them, there is remarkable agreement that such dividing lines do exist. When everything is analyzed like this, the Secular category is the largest. Do you begin to see a problem?

The Setback

Remember that Secular things are spiritually neutral, until they are allowed to dominate the Sacred; then they become Sinful. But how can this be avoided when Secular things already clearly dominate the Sacred *numerically*? Their very profusion guarantees that *the majority of an individual's time and energy will be devoted to the Secular*. Just look at the calendar: the Secular days outnumber the "Lord's days" six-to-one.

Here we have a formula made to order for unlimited feelings of guilt. Here is the source of those infamous sermons questioning how much of an individual's time or money is given "to the Lord" in contrast to work, sleep, family, education, etc. These sermons are designed

to provoke a variety of guilty self-indictments: "Perhaps I should be a missionary instead of an accountant," "Perhaps I should enjoy hymn singing more than jazz concerts," "Perhaps I should have enrolled at Antioch Christian College instead of at Secular State University," and so on. These guilt feelings must be dealt with.

Improving the Ratio

Throughout history people have tried to find ways to improve the Sacred-to-Secular ratio in their lives. They have usually chosen one of two strategies: Sacred Isolation or Secular Saturation. Here is how the strategies work:

Sacred Isolation:

This approach restricts diet to the limited Sacred fare by denying foods from the Secular menu. This is the ascetic approach favored by the monks of all generations. Medieval monks vowed celibacy, poverty, and social withdrawal in an effort to cut off all involvement with the Secular. Modern "monks" are somewhat more tepid — instead of renouncing all pleasures of the senses, for example, they may be content to renounce merely a few, such as dancing, mixed swimming, etc. — but they employ the same basic strategy.

Secular Saturation:

This approach attempts to conquer the Secular with the Sacred, not by denying the Secular, but by expanding the Sacred to crowd it out. This is the preferred approach of our present age, which regards Sacred Isolation as being old-fashioned and quaintly masochistic. As a result, options grow: instead of "socializing" or "mingling" (Secular), one may be "fellowshipping" (Sacred); instead of taking a family vacation (Secular), one may go on to a Church Family Retreat (Sacred); instead of paying a nursing home to care for Great-Grandma (Secular), one may give to the Christian Retirement Home Ministry Fund (Sacred); and so on. Organized religion hopes to offer its conscience-stricken customers an alternative for every

Secular item on the shelf. It's a lot like Weight Watchers.

Both strategies appear in a variety of forms. Both of them go in and out of fashion through time. Unfortunately, neither strategy works. Often the reason the strategies were adopted in the first place was to salve feelings of guilt about spending too much time on Secular things instead of Sacred things. In this, they fail. They actually compound the problem.

The truly committed Sacred Isolationists walled themselves up in monasteries, but they still could not separate themselves from their own physical (and hence Secular) bodies. So they actually flagellated themselves in an attempt to deny their own "worldly flesh." The result: more guilt, not less.

The Secular Saturationists today have a similar problem. With the proliferation of Sacred activities, they have that much more to feel guilty about not doing. Add to this the fact that the organizers of the Sacred activities frequently induce guilt feelings in order to get their pet projects rolling: "If you care about the things of the Lord, you'll be here." Add also the fact that the amount of leisure time in America has dropped considerably since 1970, yielding much less time for these activities. The result is more guilt, not less. So in the Sacred/Secular/Sinful world, even those who would live "Sacred" lives find themselves dominated by the Secular. . . and worried about it.

The Solution

The real problem is that the system was off the track at the outset. The solution comes easily. We must recognize three simple facts:

1. The Sacred is real
2. The Sinful is real.
3. *The "Secular" does not exist.*

The real nature of the disciple's Universe today has only two categories: Sacred and Sinful. Originally, of course, our universe was composed of only one category: Sacred. At that time it was newly created and "God saw that it was good." Then "sin entered the world" through the free choice of human beings.

There are no inherently Sinful objects. All

objects in the Universe are still Sacred in that they have a Sacred origin in God. However, they are corruptible — "moths and rust destroy, and thieves break in and steal" — as a consequence of Sin. For its raw material, Sin has only God's created things to work with. All Sin really consists of is turning something God made toward a godless end.

So now we have a Sacred/Sinful world. All of it belongs to God: "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it" (Psalm 24:1). God will eventually burn off the Sinful corruption, restoring the Universe in a new incarnation that will once again be Sacred only:

"Let both the weeds and the wheat grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First, collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned, then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn" (Matt. 13:30)."

So where did the idea of "Secular" come from?

What Produced Secularism?

The idea of "Secular" came from *narrowing the Sacred to a very small portion of reality*. Many people now think of the Sacred as being only the explicitly "religious," which means, in practice, little more than church functions and evangelism. "Secular" is a category that had to be invented to hold all the things that were thrown out: the overwhelming abundance of human activities and life experiences. The result has been the severe impoverishment of what is now called religion, and its irrelevance to the rest of life in the eyes of outside observers.

If church functions are all that is Sacred, then "the Sacred" by definition has no relevance outside the church. If evangelism is all that is Sacred, the question must be asked: just what, in this life, are we saving individuals *to*? Is it to nothing more than frantic guilt-motivated efforts to clone themselves in a never-ending numbers game — with no more concrete a goal than "church growth"?

Let it be said: Jesus is Lord of all. "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made" — John the Apostle (John 1:3). He is not only in charge

of what we thoughtlessly call "Sacred" or "Secular"; he is also in charge of what we call Sinful! The Sinful belongs to him not because he likes it or because he deserves it, but because he took it upon himself. "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree" — Simon Peter (I Peter 2:24).

Jesus takes our sins off our hands so that we need not be bothered with them anymore. He collects the bad — which is nothing more than the good gone rancid — and gets rid of it. After this purge, the world will be handed over to his Father, restored:

"That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness" — Simon Peter (2 Peter 3:12-13).

"Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority, and power. . . . When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all" — Paul of Tarsus (I Corinthians 15:24,28).

What does this mean for us in our present reality?

Effect of Jesus' Work

For the believer, the effect of Christ's work is that there is no area of life that is not Sacred. Every aspect of life is "set apart for the Lord" because the life itself is set apart for him. Sin is to be shunned and gladly handed over to Christ. But everything that is left — not just "religious" things but the full abundance of life and being — is Sacred. It belongs to the One who brought it forth, and who bought it back when it was threatened. Now all a believer's actions — not just a few — are done for the glory of God: "And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" — Paul of Tarsus (Col. 3:17).

In response to this, Sacred Isolationists protest that we are to "die to this world." Unques-

tionably, we must. But we “die” not to things of which this world *consists* — indeed, this is impossible — but to the corruption which overpowers them. The Bible often speaks of “worldly,” meaning only the power in it that causes destruction. But the vast physical “world” of God’s creation is supposed to be received with thanksgiving, not repugnance:

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant, not to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment” — Paul of Tarsus (I Timothy 6:17).

When Christ empowers us, we see created things for what they are: the work of the Creator. Only then can we truly appreciate them. When received and used with thanksgiving, the physical things of the world acquire an eternal, spiritual significance that outlasts the objects themselves:

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body” — Paul of Tarsus (I Corinthians 7:19-20).

A Sacred Perspective

When taking a Sacred perspective of the world around us, we believers will better understand certain concepts. First, we will know that God is the King of the Universe. He is not a small deity, Lord of a narrow range of doctrinal subjects that have little application to daily life. He is profoundly immense, and his Son is absolutely powerful. So we will keep God infinite in our minds: “Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth” (Psalm 57:11). We will also abandon any idea that the King of the Universe is only the king of our particular sect. The Most High God is not a super-sized version of a sectarian man: “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:9). We will not imagine that God somehow resides “at church” — what

J.B. Phillips called the “God-in-a-Box” syndrome.

When taking a Sacred perspective of the world around us, we will understand that any activity called “Sacred” when it has “Official Church Function” stamped on it is an activity that, when done by believers, is Sacred anyway. Generosity, evangelism, recreation, and mutual encouragement need no organized corporate program (usually with a marketable brand name) to make them worthwhile. These things and many more are already Sacred because they are done by believing individuals. The believing individual is “the salt of the earth:” his presence is a *preservative*, sparing the things of the earth from corruption. If the money in our wallets is truly “ours” instead of God’s, then the money in the collection plate would be the “church’s” instead of God’s. But we know that, since all of it is God’s, our responsibilities are the same no matter where it goes. In fact, we may well be proving ourselves more responsible when we put it toward childcare than toward church care.

When we hold a Sacred view of our world, we will no longer concern ourselves with the “Secular” nature of our activities. Such talk is nonsense to disciples whose very lives are Sacred professions. A manager who serves his supervisor as if the supervisor were Christ is serving Christ. An honest accountant is shining a light. Since God brought forth stones as well as Scriptures, the believing geologist is learning about God in a way as real as the theologian. The believing artist knows she brings forth beauty in her work as God brings forth beauty in Nature. Whether a field’s main subject of interest is “religious” or not is irrelevant. It is Sacred to the individual who discerns the Creator behind the created thing.

Remember the two tax collectors: Matthew left his job for a special ministry; Zacchaeus stayed in his job but performed it honestly, glorifying God. Jesus never called one man’s work “Sacred” and the other’s “Secular.” Of Zacchaeus Jesus said, “Today salvation has come to this house.” Both men honored Jesus, and Christ accepted them both.

In this age of broken homes, we will never suggest that parents vacationing with their

children or a husband and wife making love to one another are engaged in anything less than the most Sacred activities.

Can there be any doubt? If preaching and singing can be done to God’s glory, then so can swimming, farming, driving, building, governing, digging, fishing, studying, drawing, hiking, reading, marketing, repairing, writing, exercising, meditating, and woodworking. In short, the whole range of human experience:

“Therefore, I urge you brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — which is your spiritual worship” — Paul of Tarsus (Romans 12:1).

Some people have a very restricted notion of God’s “authorization” of human activities. But the wise will consider the rich authorization in a passage that reads: “Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Colossians 3:17). *Whatever* — and whatever you choose to call it, “Do not call impure anything that God has made clean” (Acts 10:15).

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable — if anything is excellent or praiseworthy — think about such things” — Paul of Tarsus (Philippians 4:8).

Further readings:

Phillips, J.B. *Your God Is Too Small*. Collier Books, MacMillan. New York, NY.

Lewis, C.S., *The Joyful Christian*. Collier Books, MacMillan, New York, N.Y.

Schaeffer, Franky. *Addicted to Mediocrity*. Crossway Books; Westchester, IL.

Schaeffer, Francis. *Art and the Bible*. L’Abri pamphlets; InterVarsity Press. Downers Grove, IL.

Alton Thompson grew up in the Churches of Christ. He is presently writing his dissertation for a doctoral degree in Musical Arts, Orchestral Conducting, at Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, Maryland.

Women in God’s Plan

J. BRUCE KILMER

PART I — WOMEN IN THE BIBLE

The Old Testament teaches us much about the nature of God. It is the inspired record of God working out his eternal plan for us. From the Old Testament we learn about God’s long-suffering, loving, merciful nature. We see the beginning of his plan for our redemption. The God revealed to us in the Old Testament is the same God further revealed in the New Testa-

ment. Through Christ, we can see the promises of God more clearly than those who “welcomed them from a distance” (Heb. 11:13). Furthermore, in this era of God’s history, the Holy Spirit dwells in all who belong to his Son (Ro. 8:9). However, God is still the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. We need to remember this truth as we study the Old Testament.

Monarchy, Polygamy and War

There are numerous practices recorded in the Old Testament which are not necessarily God-ordained or which are not necessarily the result of compliance with God's law or ideal for his people. Monarchy, polygamy, and war are practices which most would agree are not favored by God. He may use those involved in such practices for his purposes, but the practices can still be sinful. The Old Testament faithfully reports the truth about those practices, about the people involved in such practices, about the working of God in spite of such practices, and about God's use of the practices themselves.

God told Samuel that the peoples' request for a king was not a rejection of Samuel but a rejection of God. He told Samuel to warn them about the dangers of having a king. But when the people would not listen, God allowed Samuel to give them a king (I Sam. 8:4-22). This king was even anointed by God (I Sam. 10:1). Is monarchy to be preferred over democracy and representative government today?

David had numerous wives and Solomon had hundreds of wives and concubines. In spite of this, God used these kings for his eternal purposes. Few would argue that polygamy or extramarital affairs should be tolerated by the church today.

God used war many times in the Old Testament to fulfill his purpose. However, he often showed Israel by its victories and defeats that they should not trust in their own weapons and power for winning wars. Remember Gideon and his 300 men with trumpets and jars against the multitude of Midianites, Amalekites and all the people of the East (Jud. 7). When Israel did not rely on God, it was defeated over and over again by the Philistines. I Samuel 4-6 records a rout of Israel, the capturing of the ark of the covenant, and the fleeing of Israeli soldiers before the army of the Philistines. But in I Samuel 7, after Israel's repentance, the Lord thundered with a mighty voice and threw the Philistines into confusion so that Israel could defeat them. Israel often forgot (as we often do

today) the words David spoke when he met Goliath:

"that all the assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear; for the battle is the Lord's and he will give you into our hand" (I Sam. 17:47).

The "arms" Israel was to lean on were God's "everlasting arms," not their own arms and weapons. It is the same for us today. We are not to rely on the bombs and electronic weapons systems of the United States, but the power of God. Though God uses war, it is not a human activity with which he is pleased. David was not allowed to build the Temple because he was involved in so many deaths — deaths that were the result of God being with him in battle (I Chron. 28:3-4). God has made it clear that there will come a day when people will beat their swords into plowshares and when the lion will lie down with the lamb (Is. 2:4 and 11:6-9).

Patriarchy

What about patriarchy? Is this the eternal, God-ordained way for God to deal with his people and for the exercise of earthly authority?

The creation stories in Genesis chapters 1 and 2 do not hint at any kind of patriarchy. The creation of humans is as male and female in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). The woman is made as a suitable helper (Genesis 2:18). The Hebrew word translated helper is often used in the Old Testament to refer to God as a helper. The first mention of any authority of the man over the woman is in Genesis 3:16, and this is a description of the results of the disobedience of the woman and man.

Is patriarchy the result of sin or is it God's eternal purpose and plan for authority? The Old Testament writers recorded the events of history as they happened, not as they should have happened ideally. Thus, we read of the many wars by and against Israel, the many wives of David and Solomon, the good and bad kings of the divided kingdom, and the good and bad patriarchs.

Deborah, Miriam, and Esther show us that God works through female as well as male leadership.

Women in the New Testament

The New Testament was written in a time when most women were little more than property. Some were required to wear veils in public. The majority had little education and few rights. Thousands of years of patriarchy had taken its toll. If there were to be a change, female leadership would have to emerge slowly. Both Jesus and Paul set the stage for the advancement of women. Jesus had women supporters and followers. Paul worked side-by-side with women missionaries, teachers, leaders, and apostles. Paul lists a few in Romans 16: Phoebe, Prisca, Mary, Junia (a feminine name translated for years as masculine — Junia was probably referred to as an apostle, Romans 16:7), Tryphaena, Tryphosa, Persis, Rufus' mother, Julia, and Nereus' sister. Two women, Euodia and Syntyche labored side-by-side with Paul (Eph. 4:2). Paul declared that in Christ there was neither male nor female (Gal. 3:28). Yet today, despite these examples, we have interpreted I Corinthians 14:34-35 and I Timothy 2:11-15 as describing God's eternal principles, while we have reduced Galatians 3:28 to a reference for who can be saved.

However, from the context of each passage, it is Galatians 3:28 that states the eternal principle, while I Corinthians 14:34-35 and I Timothy 2:11-15 are obviously addressed to specific and temporary situations. In Galatians 3:28 Paul is describing the results of the gospel: in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female. He was not just saying that Greeks, slaves, and women could be saved; no one doubted that. He was saying that in Christ the old distinctions of power, authority, and inequality were not to be made.

In I Corinthians 11:5 Paul refers to women praying, therefore, the "silence" of I Corinthians 14:34 must not be literal. In I Timothy 2:12, it appears that Paul is trying to correct an abuse of authority, not give instructions to every female in the church for all time.

The Results of the Gospel

Paul learned from his conversion to Christ to no longer regard anyone from a human point of view (II Cor. 5:16). He told the Corinthians

that in Christ they were a "new creation." This meant that the old ways had passed away (II Cor. 5:17). The old ways included not only the old law, but such things as polygamy, patriarchy, and all types of immorality (sins of commission and omission). Galatians 2:11-21 and Ephesians 2:11-22 illustrate that one of the results of the gospel is the breakdown of the conflict between different races and nationalities. Paul made it clear that Christians were not only saved, but they (including Peter — whom Paul opposed to his face for not eating with Gentiles) were to treat the Gentiles as equals. Being part of the new creation does not end with our personal justification, it has social consequences. If the gospel had social consequences for the relationship of Jews and Gentiles, it makes sense that the gospel has social consequences for the relationship of men and women. Galatians 3:28 describes those consequences, not just who can be saved.

Romans 5:12-21 and I Corinthians 15:20-22; 45-49 tell us that the things that came by the first Adam were done away with by the second Adam, Christ. Sin came from Adam and Eve and the serpent's influence on them. Their sin resulted in the curse of the ground, pain in childbirth, and the role of the husbands over their wives (Genesis 3:14-19). We do all we technologically can to reduce toil in farming and pain in childbirth, why not do all we can to reduce rule of husbands over their wives?

PART II — WOMEN IN THE CHURCH TODAY

The churches' advocacy for the equality of women does not have to be just an influence of the "Feminist Movement" or the desire to imitate current culture. It can be based on an understanding of eternal biblical principles and a desire to realize more fully the results of the New Creation instead of the results of the Fall.

Today's church lives with the inconsistency of accepting the equality of men and women in some areas but not others. Most Christians believe it is appropriate for women to sing "in

church," the silence of I Corinthians 14:34-35 notwithstanding. Most believe women can attend "church" without a veil, the admonition of I Corinthians 11:5 notwithstanding. Many Christians think it appropriate for women to lead prayer or singing, or to teach. Some even believe women can preach or hold office in "the church." But most conservative evangelical churches stop short of full equality for women, though many claim that women and men are equal with different roles. Interestingly, the role differences usually involve men having the final authority, or holding certain "offices," or being given certain gifts; hardly equality in the way we usually use the term.

The Church of Christ stops far short of most evangelical churches in the roles it allows women. Most Churches of Christ do not allow women to pray aloud or even serve communion (which has become a sign of authority rather than a service). Some Churches of Christ do not allow women to make prayer requests aloud "in church." Some do not allow women to attend business meetings. Teaching classes of male adults or even baptized male children is usually not allowed.

But the Church of Christ is far from consistent. Women can teach adult males through the writing of articles. They can lead prayers in small groups or in a home, though some churches would not go even that far. Most Churches of Christ allow women to read Scriptures in a class setting but not "in church."

Church/World Dichotomy

It is the "in church" rules which warp the logic of the distinctions of what women are allowed to do and not do. This warped logic is very harmful to the church. It says that we have "church" rules and everyday life rules. It encourages us to not bring Christian values into our everyday life. Having one set of rules for "church" and one for the world, or even for "after church" is not justified in the Bible, and contribute to a lack of understanding of the nature of the Christian Way which permeates every moment of our life. As Alton Thompson explains in his article elsewhere in this issue of *Integrity*, there should be no secular/religious dichotomy for Christians.

We are willing to allow equality in some areas (mainly outside the church), but we are sure to maintain male control in our churches. Why? Is it because we believe this is God's eternal way, or is it because both males and females are afraid of giving up male control? Because we have accepted equality in so many areas, I believe we are holding on to inequality in the church out of fear — fear of worldly influence, fear of the unknown, and fear of a loss of identity.

What We Accept

We have given up veils. We accept education for girls and women, and our daughters are growing up in an educational environment of equality. Even Christian schools allow girls to run for student council, to deliver speeches, and to participate in sports. A majority of Christian women work outside of the home and expect equal pay for equal work. We allow Christian women professors in Christian colleges to teach college males everything from biology to Shakespeare. Many men answer to women bosses. We have Christian women who are bank presidents, school principals, district attorneys, police officers, soldiers, and government representatives. In our daily lives, Church of Christ women vote, receive Ph.D.'s, supervise males and females, lead, teach, instruct, serve, counsel, plan, and give.

Yet when women walk through our church doors, they suddenly become second-class citizens. They may be college professors, but they are usually not allowed to teach an adult Sunday School class to both sexes. They may have risked their lives for our country as soldiers, but they cannot serve communion or even pass the collection basket in our churches. They may offer leadership and wise counsel Monday through Saturday, but on Sunday they must be quiet.

How Long?

Recently I read the following announcement in a church bulletin: "Our potluck will be at noon, today, and men, our meeting to discuss our work at (City) will follow immediately." How long will women with leadership gifts and

wise counsel continue to be content cooking for potlucks and washing the dishes, while the men discuss the "church business?" How long can we continue to make decisions without the input of women in our meetings? How long will we quench the gifts of preaching, teaching, exhorting, and leading in our female members? How long will we be comfortable in worship services where women with insights into God's Word are kept silent?

How long will we be comfortable being served communion by men and boys, while the woman next to us, who is given responsibility outside the church doors, is never allowed to participate in serving the communion except to pass the bread and cup to the person next to her? This may sound like a small and unimportant type of participation, but our omission of women in this weekly observance is a vivid, visual sign to visitors and to our young girls that they are not equal when it comes to public church participation. It is symbolic of a deeper problem. We are uncomfortable with any kind of visual leadership by women. How long will those men who know in their hearts that the treatment of women in the church has been wrong, continue to be silent?

How long before our women see the inconsistency and move to where they can use all of their Holy Spirit-given gifts, not just the gifts we have decided they may use? If the women do not leave, you can be sure the girls with leadership gifts will not stay after they grow up. The church will not have any credibility if we continue to accept equality for women everywhere but in the church. Honesty and consistency demand that if we do not allow women leaders in the church, we cannot accept women leaders in the world. Because for the Christian there is no Christian/world dichotomy in the way we live.

Biblical Consistency

We cannot live one way six days a week and then suddenly change when we enter through the church doors. And this is where our understanding of the nature of the church fails. There is not one set of rules for our daily lives and a different set for the church. We are supposed to be the church seven days a week. The nature of our lives does not change when we are in "church activities" and when we are at work or home. We are who we are — in church, at home, and in the work place. We do not leave our gifts at the church door. We are the new creation moment-by-moment, and we worship moment-by-moment, not just in "worship services" (Romans 12:1).

In Christ, we do not have to fear loss of our identity. As part of the new creation, we no longer regard ourselves or others from the old human point of view. Instead, we slowly learn to discern who we really are through Christ's eyes, eliminating distinctions based upon race, economic status, or gender.

The church will only reach the level of maturity which Paul describes in Ephesians 4:7-13 when we realize the eternal principle of Galatians 3:28 and fully utilize all the gifts of women in our churches. Therefore, let us create a church atmosphere where all are free to use their gifts given by God. When our churches create an environment where all of its members may use all of their gifts, then the church will be on its way to being all it was intended to be!

Bruce Kilmer grew up in the Church of Christ (a cappella), graduated from Abilene Christian University, and has served as an elder in the Christian Church (independent). Currently, he lives in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, where he is the Regional State Court Administrator for the Michigan Supreme Court.

There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:28

Charlie's Picture

STEVE WEATHERS

Charlie Pfeiffer was fat. He'd never married. He secretly drank. He was from somewhere like Ohio. And he painted pictures.

Charlie was one of those people so heavy his car had to be altered. The front seat was derailed and reinforced, scooted back and bolted down. Nobody could ride behind him; the legroom was gone for good. And only a scarecrow or one of us kids could sit up front beside him.

He had always been single. People at church were glad, of course, that he wasn't divorced. But at the same time, we wondered why he had never wed. Charlie had a nice, full head of white hair and should have been able to get a fat woman to marry him. Yet he didn't go with girls. Instead, he lived all by himself in a cramped, dark-green travel trailer.

He secretly drank. You could sometimes smell wine on him at the Wednesday night meetings. But nobody brought it up. The church was so small in those days, we needed every male member we could get to lead prayer and serve communion. And Charlie never openly advocated the practice when the Feast at Cana came up in the adult Bible class. So people let him drink in peace.

He was from somewhere like Ohio and lived on some kind of pension. Whenever he wanted, he could hook up his travel trailer and move anywhere he liked. But he said the north Florida climate was good for asthma, and he claimed to be Church-of-Christ, so he placed membership with us and camped in town for the better part of a year.

Maybe he wanted to capture it. People who had gone over and eaten his homemade cookies said Charlie wore a navy-blue beret and held a palette and painted pictures and said "capture it" a lot. It got to be a joke in the church. Sometimes we shook hands with that Sunday's speaker (in those days we couldn't afford a full-

time minister so the men took turns filling the pulpit) and said his sermon had certainly captured it. The preacher usually winked to show he got the joke.

There was another good one we told about Charlie. The year before he showed up, a circus had passed through town. Their fat man — a real professional, a Negro said to weigh over nine-hundred pounds — had died on them. Some of the circus men trucked Skinny over to the colored funeral home and said to embalm him while they contacted his next of kin. But that night the outfit deflated their tents, loaded the yellowed elephant, and left town with their lights turned off. The funeral home was then stuck with a body and no casket nearly big enough. Fortunately, when the local paper ran a story on it, Tadlock Music donated an upright-piano crate. The black mortician managed to winch Skinny into the box, and everybody felt considerably relieved when he was finally underground.

On the Sunday we extended the right hand of fellowship to Charlie Pfeiffer, somebody at the dinner-on-the-grounds said something under his breath about needing to beg another piano crate off Tadlock. After that, any time Charlie coughed damp into his handkerchief or paused winded to lean on a pew, folks were sure to whisper behind their handfans, "Better beg another piano crate off Tadlock." It was a good joke, and I don't think Charlie ever knew about it, so it didn't do any harm.

Fall came. After the first frost, Charlie rushed in with a red leaf caught in his hair and said the church ought to throw a Halloween party for the youth. People didn't like it one iota. For one thing, we were against all holidays except spiritually neutral ones like Independence Day. If Charlie was really Church-of-Christ, he should have known that. For another thing, Halloween glorified the principalities and

powers of the air. But Charlie acted like he'd never heard tell of the devil. He kept on after each service, circulating among the men smoking out front (in those days a man could smoke even in front of the meeting house and still be counted faithful), selling them on the party. And he finally wore them down. Charlie had a kind of a squeaky voice and talked with his tongue stuck too far out of his mouth; you couldn't stand to hear him very long. So he finally got his way. Most families agreed to the party so long as it was labeled a youth gathering and Halloween wasn't mentioned.

Charlie went off like a Roman candle. He boiled hotdogs and iced a number-two wastub of coca-colas. He hung stereo speakers outside his trailer windows. He built a Go Fish booth, painting a big cardboard screen streaked with ocean currents and dotted with deep-sea creatures. But not too many of us went, and it was just as well. The night of the party, Charlie embarrassed everybody to death by dressing as a beatnik — dark glasses, fake beard, blue beret — and by playing the bongo drums. Only a few kids fished in the Go Fish booth. Most of us didn't want to be hooked to the fat man hiding behind the screen. I remember Charlie sat a long time waiting for a bite before he closed up shop and handed out the cheap toys he'd bought.

Our congregation didn't have many baptisms. Mostly when somebody's child reached the age of accountability. One Sunday the McWaters' boy went forward to be immersed, and after the baptismal service Charlie asked if he could make a public statement. In those days there was no set order to the worship, and most anybody could talk. But it always scared everybody when Charlie said anything because you couldn't trust him to say the right things. And sure enough, this time was the worst of all: he said he'd been moved to paint a mural for the baptistry, to "glorify" the gray, cement-block wall behind. He would, of course, charge the church nothing for his services.

A long discussion followed. Some people turned red and said images were an abomination; there were plenty of Old Testament passages to prove it. But others quietly admitted the New Testament was silent on the mat-

ter. In such cases, they said reluctantly, we could exercise our Christian liberty — so long as no Bible heroes were depicted because we did not, after all, know what any Scriptural character really looked like. At this point, Charlie assured us the painting would be strictly pastoral, meaning it would only show trees and rocks and water and such as that. A few folks were then concerned about exalting the created instead of the Creator. If the scene was too perfect, they worried, some might drop their eyes from the heavenly prize. Charlie said in a fallen world no picture is that perfect. "Shadows," he said smiling, "are all I have to offer." At that, several of the women said they wouldn't abide a dark, gloomy picture over the baptistry. Anyway, when it was finally argued out and dinner was long overdue, Charlie Pfeiffer had permission to paint.

That's not to say, of course, that anybody really wanted the picture. Like every other idea Charlie dreamed up, it secretly bothered people. At each church meeting, members looked up at the curtains he had clothespinned together — Charlie wouldn't allow a viewing until he was finished — and shook their heads. Folks talked on the phone about the picture, too. "You reckon he wears that cap in the sanctuary?" some wondered. "You don't suppose he'll try to sneak John the Baptist in, do you?" others speculated. And finally in frustration a few asked, "How long can it take a human being to paint one six-by-eight wall?"

The answer turned out to be three months. On the Sunday the mural was finished, Charlie asked to give a special talk explaining "the rich symbolism" of the scene. It was a time of illness in the congregation, and most of our regular pulpit men had flu, so Charlie was given the go-ahead. He jerked the curtains back then stood and stared as if he too had never seen his picture before. After a hush that made you notice the sputtering of a bad fluorescent tube overhead, Charlie started his talk.

Nobody had ever heard anything like it. A cloud was pointed out. It was supposed to look like an open hand, but the fingers were way too long. Charlie said it was the Lord's everlasting mercies. What a creepy hand like that had to do with mercy, he never explained. Then there

was a stream, overflowing like a cracked culvert, puddling up close to the audience. Charlie got kind of wild-eyed and in a borrowed baritone shouted out, "Living water! Let all who thirst drink."

You can imagine how the talk went from there. To hear Charlie Pfeiffer tell it, every tree or rock was supposed to be something different — something that actually had nothing to do with rocks and trees. I don't remember all the rich symbols Charlie explained for us that day, but it was a talk we discussed for a good while afterward. And it was sort of informally agreed upon that Charlie must be kept out of the pulpit for his own good.

As things turned out, Charlie never asked to preach again anyway. He left town not too long after his picture was finished. Somebody — and later we could never pinpoint exactly who — accused him of bathing in the baptistry. That is, while he had been working on the wall. The news went out over the congregation's telephone-tree, and a special midweek meeting was called.

This may sound crazy to you, but that's because you never saw Charlie Pfeiffer. Just think about it for a minute. A man his size could have never fit into the stand-up shower stall of that travel trailer. People who had gone over and drunk Charlie's imported teas had always wondered how he kept himself decent in such cramped quarters. And then there was the physical evidence.

At the special meeting, displayed on the communion table where everybody could see, were a stick of deodorant and a half-empty bottle of

baby shampoo. They had been found on the steps leading into the baptistry. Charlie was not at the meeting, but the men — the ones who went out to his trailer and confronted him with the thing — later said he insisted the shampoo was for his sable paint brushes. And the deodorant — well, Charlie laughed and said he couldn't stand to smell himself while he toiled for the Lord. In other words, he denied the whole thing. The men who went out to see him were generous and said they would abide by his version. But Charlie must have felt guilty, or maybe got mad after he thought it over. Because sometime before the next worship service, he unchocked the trailer and pulled out for other parts.

That same year, our treasury reached its goal, and we were able to stucco the meeting house. While we were at it, we decided to repaint the sanctuary. The women settled on mint green; it's good for the eyes. And just for fun, the ones who roller-painted over Charlie's mural timed themselves. It took less than six minutes to cover a wall Charlie Pfeiffer had spent three months on.

For a long time after that, whenever there was a baptism, I looked at the green background and tried to make out marks of Charlie's old picture. The paint had gone on good and thick, but some outlines still showed through. You could sort of see a trace of the hand or the cloud or whatever it was if you held your head just right.

Steve Weathers recently moved from Florida to serve as an instructor of writing and literature in the English Department of Abilene Christian University, Texas.

Chips on the Stream

HOY LEDBETTER

Last week put a couple of interesting chips on our stream of life. Jimmy Carter called on my wife to lead a public prayer, and we celebrated our 39th anniversary in the shadow of Bible translators. The prayer caught her by surprise, but surely no more than if anybody had asked her to pray in a church meeting the year we got married. Women were not asked to pray in the church of our youth.

The anniversary celebration prompted the recollection that we got married the year the Revised Standard Version of the Bible was published. It was not universally welcomed; in fact, some folks thought it worthy of death and burned it in public. I remember Harry Orlinsky telling about his conversation with a grieving fellow translator:

"Harry, have you heard? They are burning our Bible."

"Yes, but we should be grateful. They used to burn the translators!"

The present generation knows little of Bible burnings. When the New Revised Standard Version appeared last year, it was surprisingly well received in conservative circles. How it relates to the new status for women may be illustrated by comparing the old and new renderings of Romans 16:7:

RSV: "Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners; they are men of note among the apostles..."

NRSV: "Greet Andronicus and Junia, my relatives who were in prison with me; they are prominent among the apostles..."

The NRSV correctly recognizes Junia as a woman (and also as a prominent apostle!) and removes the unwarranted and misleading word "men" from the text. This revision merely reflects the demands of honest scholarship. It is interesting to note that when F.F. Bruce wrote his Tyndale commentary on Romans (1963), he said it was "impossible to decide" whether the name was masculine or feminine, but when his revision appeared (1985), he had decided: "the feminine Junia is to be preferred." He also favored the view that Andronicus and Junia were apostles themselves and eminent ones at that.

I am too much of a literalist to be comfortable with some options the NRSV has employed to avoid sexist language, but I do applaud its correction of past mistakes. It is a reminder that as we mark our first anniversary since its appearance, we also have much more to celebrate than the fact we have lived together so long.

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We still have a few copies of the January 1973 issue which contains Norman Parks' article "Set Our Women Free" and Hoy Ledbetter's article "The Prophetess." The cost is \$2.00 each, limit of one per person. However, you are welcome to copy the issue.

We also have a few copies of the January/February 1987 issue which has an article by J. Bruce Kilmer entitled "Freedom for

Men and Women," \$2.00 each, limit of one per person. However, you are welcome to copy the issue.

Also available: "Woman's Place in Church Activity" by Norman Parks, \$2.00 each, \$1.50 each in lots of ten or more.

Order the above from Amos Ponder, 1269 Pickwick Place, Flint, MI 48507.

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 would 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.

My dear Coordinator of
Condemning Confusion,

Now that open hostilities in the Kuwait-Iraq arena are in the past, (at least the international involvement in armed conflict), the question about supporting troops while hating war may not seem moot. Please remember, however, that my apparently incredible position was held for one purpose only: to confuse the issue. This will always be my motive, regardless of the issue involved. At times, it is most appropriate to be consistent; again, obvious inconsistency may best serve our dishonorable purposes. Knowing when to use the issues to our best advantage will come naturally to you with continuing experience.

By all means, should such a situation recur, use your "simple solution" method, and any other which may obfuscate the issue. Just now, you may want to discourage any efforts to render assistance to the displaced Iraqis. Let them fend for themselves! Discourage any and all efforts to feed and/or clothe and shelter them. After all, they are Moslems; and you've nothing to lose by fostering a festering hatred for them among the saints at Broad Way. It is always much easier (and less costly) to hate than to convert, and it is infinitely more advantageous to our cause!

You did not claim any credit for the ex-

plosive, self-righteous gaffe committed by Brother Upstrait against Brother Sausbaum. If indeed this was brought about by your design, you have my earnest commendation. If not, I hope you have noted how easily a usually-hidden stripe of self-righteousness may be revealed by the unwary. Upstrait's remarks — and he is a master at this sort of thing — cut to the quick of Sausbaum, who has indeed resorted to what he considers to be his only friend, the bottle. Score another for our side, a victory through an insensitive tongue!

Again, it is amazing how these Christians seem seldom to learn the Enemy's ideal in forgiving AND forgetting. Oh, they'll say they've forgotten a past offense, only to have it dragged out venomously when a second slight pique occurs. Who ever said these human beings have short memories? To our continuing advantage, they seem to forget quickly much which our Enemy would have them remember, and vice versa.

A few words about your furthering greater variety and energy in the worship services. You understand, of course, that neither a very energetic nor an invariably subdued procedure in worship will be an infallible clue as to whether the service itself is achieving what our

Enemy desires. Allowing for individual differences in personality and taste, there are those who worship best in a subdued, meditative atmosphere; others simply fall asleep, or plot the week's activities. We would be utterly foolish not to exploit the "generation gap" here. GO TO IT! Trample on the consciences of the "fuddy-duddies," and make the kids emphatic and insistent in their demands, innovative measures, and Hollywoodesque production precision.

No matter what your plans, always remember: when you can't overcome facts, simply redirect people's minds!

Yours in continuing social cacophony,

Uncle Apollyon

My Dear Waffling Uncle Apollyon,

How delightfully you turn both the pro and the con of every question to evil. How I long to be as shifty as you! I shall continue to soak up your tutelage in the two-faced twisting of facts.

This week our congregation had its annual business meeting. I suspected that the gathering would offer me some sterling opportunities, both immediately and in the future, for turning people's thoughts in the wrong direction, and I was right. Even before the meeting, there was a lot of buzzing around about the people to be newly appointed as elders and deacons and committee chairpersons. And this year, for the first time, two representatives from the congregation who are not already serving as officers are to be elected to sit in on meetings of the elders, deacons, and ministers so that the broadest range of viewpoints can be represented in the official officers' deliberations.

Broad Way has not yet resolved the question

of the extent to which women can serve the church in official capacities (their privilege of serving as kitchen maids and baby-sitters has not been challenged), but perhaps even more upsetting to some is the prospect that the new at-large representatives may not be from the social mainstream. We have recently had some conversions (these take place from time to time, in spite of my best efforts) from among the rather disreputable-looking people in a seedy neighborhood near the church building. They have already made a bad impression on the "better" sort in the congregation by speaking out in classes (and even in church services!) about their thrill in finding Christ, and about the need for greater concern toward people in the old neighborhood. Having been told that we are all "one in Christ," these new converts don't understand the coolness of some of their new brothers and sisters to expressing the Gospel in terms that will be meaningful to people who have never set foot in a church before. Thank badness that Christians rarely transcend the social distinctions that separate them in this worldly kingdom of our Dark Prince.

Good news on the political front: I won the primary election for a seat on the City Council! I managed to say the right things to convince the people at large of my integrity, but at the same time I privately persuaded the political operatives that I was devious and unprincipled enough to carry out their objectives. To paraphrase the Apostle Paul, I am willing to be all things to all people, in order that I may damn some. If I can just win the election I should be able to hang on by making sure that I cross the right palms with silver from time to time — all out of the public eye, of course.

I hope you were as encouraged as I was at the recent national poll which indicated that, although a majority of people still believe in God, a much smaller number believe in the Devil. So long as they're not on the lookout for us, every side is a blind side. They'll find out soon enough how real we are!

Yours in invisible iniquity,

Ichabod

Readers' Response

Dear Bruce and Diane,

The enclosed letter [see letter which follows] explains why I am writing. *Integrity* published my article "Set Our Women Free" in 1973. Hoy [Ledbetter, the former editor] was swamped with requests for copies of that issue, and he republished three times. He then announced that the article could be reproduced free by anybody, because it was too expensive to keep republishing. One California church ordered 1,000 copies. He later brought out a pamphlet which reproduced that article and his article entitled "The Prophetess." I still receive requests for copies.

When "Set Our Women Free" was first published, the preacher of my congregation, who was also an elder, read an announcement which declared, "In view of the trouble Dr. Parks has caused by publishing his article "Set Our Women Free," we the elders, now declare that henceforth, he will publish no article locally or nationally expressing his religious opinions, he will read no paper before any religious group, and he will not speak or teach to any religious group, except his personal friends in the privacy of his own home, on penalty of withdrawal of fellowship of this church."

I arose and said, "I will reply to this astonishing and ridiculous declaration with a quotation from Shakespeare, 'Upon what meat hath these my Caesars fed that they hath grown so great' to tell a free man in Christ what he can and cannot think or do." I added that withdrawal of fellowship was up to each Christian, not to some act of elders.

Later, one of the elders abandoned his wife and moved in with another woman, the church fired the preacher, and a third elder made a public apology and called for a reversal of the act, which took place.

Changes are under way down South. Two churches I know of have women directors of Sunday Bible schools, women in several

churches serve at the Lord's table, a number of women teach mixed adult classes and make public announcements, and in Nashville, one church had a woman fill the pulpit one Sunday morning (Bobbie Lee Holley was the speaker).

If you still have a few copies of the 1973 issue still available, please put an announcement in a forthcoming issue. [Information on how to order this past issue is elsewhere in this current issue.]

Long live *Integrity*,
Norman Parks
Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Thank you for the copy of *Integrity*, January 1973, about Women in the Church, and Woman's Place in Church Activity. I like them both very much. It is so good to read something like this that affirms women as equals in the body of Christ.

The remarks under "Psychological Damage" in "Set Our Women Free" by Norman Parks is so true. It is hard to find words to convey in one little sentence just how true! I am 60 years old and have lived in the church as a dedicated Christian, not quite accepting the "veil" or "hat" or absolute "silence" belief but have experienced many church problems and strife over this difference in opinion, and that is just part of it.

The lifelong psychological damage is there and time is irretrievable. Also, as stated by Norman Parks, anger sets in every time a male child or young man gets in the pulpit to "set everyone straight" including me. Even if he is respectful, the very idea that a kid is allowed to stand there and occupy 20-30 minutes of everyone's valuable time with an elementary presentation when I have some burning issues in mind that I would love to make known is hard to take.

I think some men in the church have been ruined by this doctrine. They get the idea after awhile that if they have the power to occupy the pulpit and receive adulation from everyone that there must be something to it, that they do, indeed, have superior knowledge. I just saw a segment on Albert Einstein on TV and boy HE didn't have that attitude. Even though not a professed Christian, he had Christlike qualities, humility, wisdom, and realization of the worth of humankind.

Joan Morris Morrison
Columbus, Ohio

Dear Brother Ponder:

I am delighted to find that you are still offering Norman L. Parks' *Woman's Place in Church Activity*. Please send me 10 copies (check enclosed).

I can't possibly pick out a favorite article/poem in this (May/June) issue. Each author has enriched my spirit. I was, however, especially moved by George Ewing's "Well-Wrought Woman." I could see a very real person who possessed all the emotions of women in today's world, and not simply theology. I had only one Bible teacher who attempted to do that. She caused us to feel, just as Brother Ewing has done.

I found J. Bruce Kilmer's editorial, "Dialogue," very important. I was one of those who believed that teaching the gospel — conducting a home Bible class — was to tell people what was right and what was wrong. Of course, I was always right and they were always wrong, when they differed with my view! But God was patient with me, and at the right time he sent someone (even a believer in Christ who did not share all of my views towards Scripture, and who was not identified with my Church of Christ congregation) to teach me better. I had learned to teach in a rude and offensive manner, and God guided her to tell me boldly and to my face just that! It was a terrible shock; but I thanked her and confessed by sin, and asked her to forgive me! I continue to thank her and our gracious God.

Brother Kilmer encouraged us to share our ideas within our local fellowship, and I do try to do that. I share this and other articles and publications such as *Integrity*, I speak as I find opportunity, and in February, 1990, I began publishing my own newsletter...

People like you *Integrity* folks have helped a lot, and are helping. I thank God for all of you.

Frankie Shanks
Poplar Bluff, MO

Dear Bruce,

So much enjoyed and appreciated *Intercepted Correspondence*. You get the "big picture" indeed! It's the first I've read of your series. You write well!

Thanks too, for printing Bro. Collison's letter. I am having a little trouble getting an address for him. I tried to call Wauwatosa, WI but he's not listed, I guess. Please forward the enclosed to him. Thanks.

Yours on the Walk,
Kathy Wyler
Kerrville, Texas

Editor's Note: We are happy to forward any correspondence *Integrity* readers may want to initiate with authors of published articles. Open and loving communication with family in Christ is clearly one of our goals!

Also, for the record, several readers have made us realize that the introduction to "Intercepted Correspondence" implies that Bruce Kilmer writes these malevolent missives. Not true! Actually, two individuals on the *Integrity* board (who wish to remain anonymous at this point) write them. But thanks for the compliment, Kathy — they do write well!