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his cross (Col. 2:15).

Now we no longer regard anyone from a human point of view (II Cor. 5:16). In Christ there is new creation (II Cor. 5:17). The consequences of the gospel do not stop with our intellectual acknowledgment of Jesus, nor with our emotional or psychological "experience" with him. The gospel changes our social relationships with each other, as well as our relationship with God. The old has passed away. Behold the new has come! By God's power, let's live like it!

J. Bruce Kilmer
Co-editor

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The Emancipation Proclamation of Galatians 3:28

The last two issues of *Integrity* have dealt with overcoming the social and cultural barriers between the races and the sexes brought about by sin, and which Paul mentions in Galatians 3:28. This issue of *Integrity* is concerned with the other barrier mentioned in that verse: the one between slave and free or between those in different economic and social classes.

The social implications of the gospel can get lost in a doctrine of salvation that emphasizes what one must do to be saved, or even in a doctrine that emphasizes a personal relationship with Jesus. All of us must respond to the gospel as individuals. We must surrender and we must obey. We should cultivate a personal relationship with Jesus. However, an emphasis on us and what we must do, think, and believe can cause us to miss the social ramifications of our surrender and of our relationship with the God of this universe.

When we surrender to God, we are surrendering to his rule and authority. The kingdom has come for us. When we have a relationship with God, we find that we are also in relationship with the rest of humanity and even with the rest of creation. All races and both sexes were created by him and must, therefore, be honored by us. Economic status does not change our relationship to and with him. The creation and environment we live in are his, and therefore, we must respect it.

With sin and the fall of Adam and Eve came barriers between the two of them and between them and God. Even their relationship with the environment was injured. As time went on, these barriers continued and even grew higher. Cain killed his brother Abel. War, slavery, polygamy, pollution, and exploitation of humans, animals, and the earth itself were all the result of the sin that entered the world through this first "Adam" (see Rom. 5:15-21; I Cor. 15:20-22).

But the possibility of the destruction of these barriers and the restoration of right relationships came with the "second Adam" and his victory over sin. Jesus made a spectacle out of the powers which had played upon broken relationships and exploited the barriers. He triumphed over these powers with

(Continued on back)

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Menonites' Declaration on Christian Stewardship

We believe that everything belongs to God, who calls us as the church to live as faithful stewards of all that God has entrusted to us.

As servants of God, our primary vocation is to be stewards in God's household.

1. God, who in Christ has given us new life, has also given us spiritual gifts to use for the church's nurture and mission. (Luke 12:35-48) (I Cor. 4:1-2)
 2. The message of reconciliation has been entrusted to every believer, so that through the church the mystery of the gospel might be made known to the world. (I Peter 4:10-11, Tit. 1:7, 2:5)
 3. We believe that time also belongs to God and that we are to use with care the time of which we are stewards. (II Cor. 5:18-20, Eph. 3:1-10)
 4. Yet, from earliest days, the people of God have been called to observe special periods of rest and worship. In the Old Testament, the seventh day was holy because it was the day God rested from the work of creation. (Ps. 31:15, Eph. 5:15-16, Col. 4:5)
 5. The Sabbath was also holy because of God's deliverance of the Hebrew people from slavery. (Exod. 20:8-11)
 6. Through Jesus, all time is holy, set apart for God and intended to be used for salvation, healing, and justice. (Deut. 5:12-15)
 7. In the present time, the church celebrates a day of holy rest, commonly the first day of the week, and is called to live according to Sabbath justice at all times.
- We acknowledge that God as Creator is owner of all things. In the Old Testament, the Sabbath year and the Jubilee year were practical expressions of the belief that the land is

God's and the people of Israel belong to God. (Mark 2:27-28)

8. Jesus, at the beginning of his ministry, announced the year of the Lord's favor, often identified with Jubilee. Through Jesus, the poor heard good news, captives were released, the blind saw, and the oppressed went free. (Lev. 25:23, 42, 55)
9. The first church in Jerusalem put Jubilee into practice by preaching the gospel, healing the sick, and sharing possessions. Other early churches shared financially with those in need. (Luke 4:16-21)
10. As stewards of God's earth, we are called to care for the earth and to bring rest and renewal to the land and everything that lives on it. (Acts 2:44-45, 4:32-37, II Cor. 8:1-15)
11. As stewards of money and possessions, we are to live simply, practice mutual aid within the church, uphold economic justice, and give generously and cheerfully. (Ps. 24:1, Gen. 1:26-28)
12. As persons dependent on God's providence, we are not to be anxious about the necessities of life, but to seek first the kingdom of God. (Phil 4:11-12, II Cor. 8:13-14, James 5:4, II Cor. 9:7)
13. We cannot be true servants of God and let our lives be ruled by desire for wealth. We are called to be stewards in the household of God, set apart for the service of God. We live out now the rest and justice which God has promised. (Matt. 6:24-33)
14. The church does this while looking forward to the coming of our Master and the restoration of all things in the new heaven and new earth. (Matt. 11:28-29, Rev. 7:15-17)

---from *Confession of Faith in a Mennonite Perspective*, copyright 1995, Herald Press, Scottdale, PA. Used by permission.

A Call to Compassion

PERRY C. COTHAM

"When the white Christian church looks at itself in the mirror of race, the reflection which comes back to it is clearly that of a sinner!" This startling declaration by Kyle Haseldon, uttered in the turbulent '60s, deeply impressed me at the time. Each generation is likely to face one or more widespread problems of such vast dimensions that a mirror is held before the church to see itself in light of both its historic faith commitment and the reality of its response to contemporary challenge.

AIDS presents just such a challenge to this current generation. When the contemporary Church of Christ looks in the mirror of AIDS, what countenance does the church see? A sensitive, loving church? An indifferent church? A fearful church? A judgmental church? A silent church?

The question is profoundly significant. The answer is anything but an easy one. The phenomenon of the AIDS epidemic has tentacles which reach into the worlds of medical science, disease prevention, treatment, care giving, public policy, and even moral judgment. Though much public information about the spread and prevention of AIDS is available, the issue remains a sensitive one; nonetheless, the issue has been exploited by both special interest groups and mass media for their own purposes. The issue refuses to go away and for good reason--

despite advances in controlling the progression of the AIDS virus by a variety of new drugs, especially protease inhibitors, estimates of infected Americans are in the 650-900 thousand range and worldwide 22 million are infected with the AIDS virus (the latter figure growing by 8,500 new infections occurring each day).

The Christian church presents a face to the general public of a loving, caring, benevolent body of people. There is a shadow to that face, however, where lurks a cluster of attitudes and feelings that many Christians hold about AIDS victims--confusion, fear, and hatred--the dark side that we find so difficult to bring into the light of God's truth and grace.

How should the church, as a congregation or as individual Christians, respond to the general phenomenon of AIDS and to specific individuals who have contracted HIV, the AIDS virus? Without dealing with all the complexities of this widely publicized issue, we will briefly consider four responses Christians have made to incidents of AIDS and then conclude with some practical suggestions.

Four Responses

(1) Indifference. "AIDS is just not my problem; I'm simply not going to think about it," is an attitude adopted by many. Hidden within

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this apathy is denial. Both denial and apathy are unhealthy, damaging escapes from reality. Denial may result from our discomfort with the subject of sexual morality.

The assumption that only others--specifically homosexual men and intravenous drug users--were at risk led many people to feel unthreatened and to fail to amend their behavior to protect themselves; such an assumption worsened the epidemic. Our Lord summons us to identify with the hungry, the sick, the destitute, and even the imprisoned. "I assure you, as often as you did it for one of my least brothers, you did it for me," he declared (Mt. 25:37-40). Apathy is a luxury Christians cannot afford!

(2) Fear. No disease of the twentieth century has stirred more fear, even hysteria, than has AIDS. Little wonder: a disease which spreads so rapidly and is invariably fatal, and which cuts indiscriminately across all social and economic boundaries, and which has received massive media attention, would understandably occasion misunderstanding, prejudice, fear, and discrimination.

Despite all the evidence that AIDS is a fragile virus that cannot survive outside a human body, a virus that is not easily transmitted, many Christians, just as the general citizenry, have cautiously maintained their distance from infected individuals.

When Jesus encountered those who were sick, he engaged in an

immediate, hands-on ministry of healing. This outreach included the leprosy men and women whose plight had ostracized them from the mainstream of society (cf. Mk. 1:40-41). HIV/AIDS sufferers are modern-day lepers who need us to confront the myths and fears about this dreaded disease and touch their lives in ways that instill comfort and hope. We may honestly admit that there are people who make us uncomfortable; on the other hand, from gospel narratives it is instructive that the more unsavory the character, the more that person was drawn to Jesus.

(3) Judgment. Judgment emerges in both blatant declarations and subtle insinuations: "AIDS is nothing more than the curse of God's wrath upon blatant sinners" or "AIDS is God's condemnation upon sick homosexuals" or "I resent all the talk about spending more funds for AIDS research when innocent people have been dying all around us with cancer." We've heard these statements. Perhaps we've even uttered some of them.

As Christians we must disapprove strongly of the forms of behavior responsible for most transmissions of the HIV virus: intimate homosexual behavior, promiscuity, extramarital sex, and drug use. It is imperative to teach our youth that to decide not to have sex until one establishes a loving, committed, exclusive marital relationship is a divinely mandated, highly moral choice. We need not compromise our moral standards

on these issues. And yet, if we follow the example of a kind and loving Master, we must (to borrow the old cliché) "hate the sin and love the sinner." One must not minimize the difficulties inherent within this paradox--loving the sinner but hating the sinner's wicked ways is a formidable challenge, for indeed the greatest dimension of the person that we must love is based on what the person does. The person we love, however, is also a composite of what he or she has been forgiven of, is struggling to overcome, and intends by the grace of God to be from this point on.

The simplistic idea that AIDS is directly attributable to the wrathful judgment of God is both untenable and offensive, at least to nearly all who give care to AIDS sufferers, and it deletes "good news" from the gospel. First, we know there are many "innocent" victims of AIDS, people who were not associated with known high risk factors: children who are born to a drug-addicted, HIV-positive mother; hemophiliac recipients of contaminated blood transfusions; and mates of an infected marriage partner, to name a few. Are these people also being punished by God?

The presence or absence of a disease can never be used as a theological benchmark for ascertaining God's favor or disfavor toward specific groups or individuals. The notion that any disease is a direct punishment from God for someone's sin was

explicitly rejected by Jesus (Lk. 13:2-3; 17:12f). One need only think of Job, whose anguish led his friends to question his righteousness, to recognize that a link between personal sin and suffering was discredited in ancient wisdom literature. And though conventional religious thought in the first century had convicted a blind man of major sinfulness, Jesus healed him and exposed the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees for even considering that the victim or his parents had sinned (John 9).

May God convict us of any self-righteousness and moralism that tempt us to identify and label some other group as more "sinful" than ourselves or others. All people stand as sinners before God's moral law (Rom. 3:23), and all of us stand in need of God's abundant grace. We have no theological basis for showing concern and compassion for one dying of cirrhosis of the liver or cancer of the lungs, even though moral choices may have contributed to their suffering, and smugly denying concern and compassion to those dying of AIDS, even though moral choices contributed to their suffering.

(4) Compassion. AIDS is an almost unparalleled challenge and opportunity to the churches and to individual Christians to demonstrate compassion for those who have contracted HIV or are suffering from AIDS or AIDS-related illnesses. Christ is our example. His word commissions us to the ministry of loving,

compassionate, merciful, and persistent caring for those who are suffering and dying, to treat them with the respect and dignity that God has already given them, and to support and encourage those concerned about and caring for them. Is it possible for us to see that AIDS victims are brothers and sisters of Jesus and bear a special identification with him because of their suffering?

If Jesus had conducted his earthly ministry in the 1980s and '90s in this nation, or in Africa or India or the Caribbean for that matter, what would he have said and done amidst women and men suffering with AIDS? In first-century Palestine the Master's love and mercy were so pervasive that they penetrated all barriers--those erected by society as well as those built up in the human heart. The powerful touch of Jesus brought healing and hope.

What Can We Do?

How may churches and individual Christians demonstrate courage and compassion in the midst of the AIDS epidemic? We can only briefly state some suggestions.

For congregations:

- (1) Provide youth with strong moral teaching and guidelines about responsible human sexuality which underscores premarital abstinence and marital fidelity;
- (2) Provide drug awareness and education;
- (3) Provide instruction that builds self-understanding, self-esteem,

healthy interpersonal relations, and the world of ultimate meaning;

- (4) Offer adult education on AIDS and other contemporary issues;
- (5) Provide instruction in lessons and literature which encourages attitudes of compassion and care for AIDS sufferers, not retribution and discrimination;
- (6) Provide support and resources for Christian marriages and for those who opt to live as Christian singles;
- (7) Adopt at least one AIDS patient and provide contact, interest, concern, and, perhaps, financial support for the remainder of the patient's life;
- (8) Provide sponsorship and a meeting place for HIV/AIDS support group.

At the family and individual level, people with AIDS may face prejudice and rejection on all sides. Thankfully, much of this discrimination is abating in the '90s, but it does not lessen the shock and pain experienced by those who learn they have contracted HIV/AIDS or for their immediate family.

As a personal Christian caregiver:

- (1) Educate yourself fully so that you can be physically close to a person with AIDS, even touching and hugging one another, without fear;
- (2) Honestly confront your own fears and prejudices, bearing in mind that AIDS is an indiscriminate disease and not a moral issue per se;

- (3) Allow yourself and the victim you love to grieve openly;
- (4) Allow your loved one to vent anger fully and honestly, knowing that God can handle any anger that is directed his way;
- (5) Do not concern yourself with how a victim became infected;
- (6) Honestly confront your own fear of death;
- (7) Be physically present in a kind and gentle manner for your loved one as much as possible;
- (8) Facilitate and encourage the victim's reconciliation with God and all others with whom estrangement is felt;
- (9) Be grateful for all the lessons God is teaching you through the unique care giving experience;
- (10) Let go and let God control the timetable of each individual and

ultimately of all life.

AIDS is a stark reminder of human frailty. It confirms that we live in a sinful and broken world; that we need Christ and his healing touch. Like other natural disasters, AIDS invites us to pause in our human journey and take stock of ourselves, our priorities, our resources. AIDS reminds us of our need for solidarity with the entire human race and for love and compassion among those victims to whom we are closest.

While our Savior and Great Physician is absent physically from this planet, we must be his hands extended to others in healing touch and his voice speaking words of hope and comfort to all who are willing to receive our Father's mercy and grace.

Perry C. Cotham is a Staff Minister at Fourth Avenue Church of Christ in Franklin, Tennessee and also serves as an adjunct professor of Bible at Lipscomb University. A regular contributor of articles to *Integrity*, Cotham has written several books, including his most recent: *Harsh Realities/Agonizing Choices: Making Moral Choices in a Morally Complex World* (College Press, 1996).

Effective Urban Ministries: The Central Dallas Model

LAQUITA M. HIGGS

Effective urban ministries are hard to develop, and chances for their long-term survival are poor, but the multi-faceted Central Dallas Ministries is truly worthy of notice. The ministry, under the direction of the Preston Road Church of Christ, was initiated in 1992 through the vision and hard work of Carey and Sophia Dowl. Now under Executive Director Larry James, the ministry is designed to serve the

economically depressed area of east Dallas.

At the heart of the program is the food pantry, but it's not just a hand-out. Needy people may receive food once a month, provided that they are trying to fulfill goals which the staff has helped them to establish for themselves. Most of the food is bought at low prices through a non-profit food cooperative, and the

pantry is operated like a grocery store, with people shopping for the food they receive, thus giving the recipients choice and dignity. Over 40,000 people were assisted in this way in 1996, and the service continues to grow. Through the food pantry contact, recipients are made aware of other services and opportunities.

Those services include medical and dental clinics, staffed by volunteer Christian physicians and dentists. A thrift store is stocked with affordable clothing and household items which have been donated; proceeds pay two local women who are employed to manage and operate the store. Services, however, go beyond immediate physical needs. Every month a three-week job preparatory course designed to move people from welfare to work is offered. So far, over four-fifths of the students have found work and almost all have stayed employed for at least six months. The goal for 1997 is to train and find employment for 200 adults in the "Learn to Work" program.

The ministry also has its own business enterprise: YardScape is a lawn service which employs three to five men each week to service churches, businesses, and residences. After expenses, all revenues are passed along to the workers. Another avenue for earning is open to all parents who need help in providing Christmas gifts for their children. By performing community service in local schools, nursing homes,

businesses, and churches, parents earn "bucks" which permit them to "buy" Christmas gifts for their children in the Christmas store run by the ministry, which is stocked with donated toys and clothing.

Children are served as well, through summer lunch programs and an eight-week day camp for about 300 children. Recently a free after-school program for neighborhood children was begun in a local elementary school; the program will include tutoring, educational activities, and a restaurant, the Kids Kafe, operated by the children.

Such a diverse and creative ministry is most impressive, as it helps people while at the same time permitting them to have the dignity of earning their own way as much as possible. But the story gets even better, for the spiritual side of the ministry has been blessed dramatically. Beginning with only eight persons, the Central Dallas Church of Christ now averages almost 150 in its Sunday morning services, with eighty percent of the growth coming from adult conversions from the neighborhood, making the congregation a mixture of blacks, whites, and Hispanics. Currently, Billy Lane serves as the preaching minister.

If you want more information about this vibrant ministry, or would like to send a gift (more funds are always needed), their mailing address is P.O. Box 710385, Dallas, Texas 75371-0385.

Laquita M. Higgs, a graduate of Abilene Christian University, holds a doctorate in Medieval European history and teaches at the University of Michigan (Dearborn). She has served on the *Integrity* Board and written for this publication for more than 20 years.

Ministry, A Secret of Unity

IVAN E. JAMESON

One of the many quirks in my personality has to do with trying to stretch a tank of fuel to its limits. I've done it in airplanes. Once I put twenty-two gallons of fuel in the tank of a Cessna 150 which has a "useable fuel capacity" of twenty-two and a half gallons. The time I have in mind, though, was in a mini-motor home that I used for prison ministry trips.

I was returning from an in-prison seminar at the Federal Correctional Institution (FCI) in Big Spring, Texas. I checked the fuel gauge as I passed through the village of Eden, Texas. The needle was bumping empty. But gasoline was several cents higher in Eden than it was in Brady, a few miles further on. I made the decision to save a few cents and drive on to Brady.

About four miles from Brady, you guessed it--the vehicle's engine sputtered and quit from fuel starvation. After coasting onto the shoulder and locking the doors, I stepped to the side of the road and, with a prayer for mercy on the part of some passing motorist, stuck out my thumb for a ride.

The first vehicle that appeared was a beat-up, old pickup. The driver locked the brakes and the pickup stopped with a squeal. "Need a ride?" the driver called. I opened the door and jumped into the truck. I noticed at once that my benefactor was a Roman Catholic priest in full regalia. As he "burned

rubber" in starting off with a lurch, he asked me where I was going, followed by where had I been. I told him that I was returning home from an in-prison seminar. He grinned and informed me that he was a prison chaplain at a detention center in Eden. So began the conversation.

Somewhere along the line I remarked that prison ministry had certainly taught me a lot. "For instance," I declared, "it has taught me how to love folk who are different. Prisoners, for instance," adding, "and people who minister to these hurting folk." I went on to explain that I had discovered that there were many brothers whom, before I became involved in prison ministry, I would not have recognized as being in the family of God.

"You, for instance," I addressed the priest. "Thirty years ago I wouldn't have gotten into this truck with you." He grinned again. "And," he said, "thirty years ago, before I got involved in prison ministry, I wouldn't have let you in." We had a good laugh.

That story illustrates a truth that I think most religious folk often miss. Paul, in Philippians 2:1-4, in the NIV, says:

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness

and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

More than once I have observed that prison ministry, and certainly other ministries to hurting people, bring together "in one spirit" those of differing religious persuasions.

Experiencing Unity

Some years ago I was involved in an in-prison seminar at the Bastrop FCI, Bastrop, Texas, where Chaplain Glenn Crook, a Southern Baptist chaplain, was leading the Sunday worship. He called on the volunteers with me to help serve the bread in the Lord's Supper. A Seventh Day Adventist, an Independent Baptist, a Church of Christ prison ministry leader, a Methodist, a Southern Baptist, and a Roman Catholic layman all participated. Then the cup was passed by inmates--white, black, and brown. Preceding the Lord's Supper, Chaplain Crook had immersed three inmates in a waterproof laundry cart, one black, one Hispanic, and one white. My mind went to Paul's statement about how those who partook of the Lord's Supper without "discerning the Lord's body" ate

and drank damnation to themselves. I felt that these brothers were truly "recognizing" the variety in the Lord's body.

The other day I was talking to Emmett Solomon, former prison chaplain and Director of Chaplaincy for the Texas Prison System who now works with the Baptist General Convention of Texas, promoting church involvement in prison ministry. Emmett told me of a North Texas coalition of churches, made up of many denominations, including Baptist, Churches of Christ, Methodist, and Roman Catholic, to name a few, that had been loosely put together to facilitate prison ministry and to avoid duplication of efforts. I asked him, half in jest, how he could get all of these churches to work together when most of them had trouble agreeing with themselves. He said, "Ivan, these are ministry people."

There it is! That is the answer. Ministry people are interested in serving the risen Christ. They understand the need for "being like-minded," for they are interested in having the mind of Christ, and in being what Christ Jesus spoke of in Matthew 25:31-40. They have seen the necessity and the meaning of "having the same love," for they have tasted the love of God demonstrated toward us when we were "helpless, ungodly sinners, and enemies of God" through the death of his Son for our justification and reconciliation (Romans 5:6-10), and want to let the Holy Spirit

and want to let the Holy Spirit duplicate that love in their lives. These insights cause them to appreciate their own inability to do anything without the enabling power of God's Holy Spirit. Hence, they are willing to become "one in spirit and purpose" with others who have come to appreciate that same love of God, and to rely on that same Holy Spirit.

Religious divisions are not promoted by "ministry people." They have caught the vision of being like the Christ in their loving, their service, and their humility toward other folk. All else, to them, is like the sinking sand.

True ministry promotes full recognition of, and participation in, the whole family of God.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Moving Violations

by John Hockenberry, (Hyperion Publishing, New York, c. 1995).

REVIEWED BY KAY KENDALL

What would it really feel like to wake up paralyzed after careening off the proverbial cliff? As a 19-year-old hitch-hiker, John Hockenberry started to find out, and says the answer will take a lifetime to comprehend.

What would it be like to grieve the demolition of your wheelchair under the front tire of a city bus, all the while trying to assure the onlookers that you yourself were really quite unharmed, even though unable to leave the scene unassisted?

Just how much grit, physical accommodation, flexibility, and perseverance would it actually take

to cover Desert Storm, the Gulf War, the Kurdish refugees and Somalia as a reporter in a wheelchair? And what would it be like to win the spot as "first journalist in space" (beating out Walter Cronkite) only to see the offer canceled after the money ran out?

How hard would it be to go to extensive effort, extend unusual sacrifice and reach out to help someone in even more exceptional need, only to discover that it was not quite good enough? In fact, it eventually resulted in 16 innocent deaths.

How long would it take for

someone to "reinvent life," without the familiar trappings of sensation and (alleged) control, and come one moment to delight in the art and grace of rolling designs in the snow?

Which would prove to be harder--being rejected from a sealed room in Israel in a non-hypothetical "lifeboat" encounter, or trying to navigate the New York subway?

Moving Violations is subtitled War Zones, Wheelchairs, and Declarations of Independence, and all these themes are explored at all levels--from intensely personal, to family and community, to national and political, to global and universal. The insights along the way are harrowing and triumphant. Though decidedly NOT a spiritual report, the reader will not escape the prompting to repent and seek the Father's forgiveness for currently held prejudices. This account takes us years beyond that compelling "gawker" curiosity at a roadside accident, and into the stereotypes and deeply ingrained social heritage which confront our attempts to recognize "who is my neighbor?"

As a rehabilitation nurse, I have laughed out loud at the antics and wept softly for the struggles overcome. I have read this book to my peers at parties, and returned to its pages for subtle descriptions of paralysis and neurological deficits which I could understand far better than medical texts.

Free standing essays on many

arenas of life's complexities emerge and linger on one's mind. It's not a "G"-rated essay in every chapter, and two explicit sections will stretch the personal convictions of some. But the treatment of life and suicide, access, freedom, hatred, success, failure, expectations, world views, family secrets, and "crip" jobs is surprising and enlarging at every turn. This is a book to read with pencil in hand, marking up the margins, tucking away a treasure here, a challenge there, and gathering in a prayerful attitude--both for the suffering revealed and for the joyful possibilities envisioned:

The idea that humiliation is some capital crime of the spirit is a fiction. The sentences we hand down for losing control and succumbing to physical limits in life are arbitrary acts of self-loathing. All human beings have bodies that define their existence and which can veto the best-laid plans of the mind and soul. We are taught to view our physical life as the edicts from some committee of biological saboteurs who were once our allies in youth, but as we age or physically change, only conspire to depose the mind from its throne as President for Life.

Physical limits are a natural binding force in society, bringing people together. The arrogance of presuming that physical limits are somehow in opposition to life and to be

hidden away is tragic. When people succeed "despite their physical limitations," just as when crips "have the courage to go on despite their disability," they are celebrated by the group. But when people's physical limits become obvious, they expect to be shunned and left to their solitary self-hatred. It should be just the other way around. Separating oneself through personal triumph over some physical limitation is an act of isolation that repudiates the influence of family and community; openly acknowledging limitations binds and draws people together, as an emblem and reminder of just how

similar we all are (p. 256-257).

Life seen from this perspective, with excruciating sensitivity to world events, is described in sobering yet sometimes hilarious scenes ranging from the Ayatollah's funeral (where the wheelchair is pushed by a friendly Iranian chanting "Death to all Americans"), to personal encounters with a significant Palestinian patriarch, to unveiling personal family tragedies. I found myself amazed that all of these stories were true and actually happened to one individual.

on those "less fortunate" than I.

Kozol's engaging style kept me glued to the pages. With literary sensitivity he introduced me to names and faces that were real, names and faces that struggled for survival, names and faces that hurt and cried. The "less fortunate" were no longer abstract and ambiguous. They were specific people who lived on a specific street with specific problems.

In order to keep fresh in the reader's mind the extraordinary world to which she or he is being introduced, Kozol employs what I call "unsettling metaphors." In order to do this review justice, I want to tantalize you with some of those metaphors. Then I will highlight what Kozol believes are the positive character traits of poor children. And finally, I want to mention the societal assumptions upon which American culture operates that Kozol finds offensive.

Unsettling Metaphors

The first metaphor is found in the rain-soaked teddy bears hanging from the branches of trees in a vacant lot in the tiny park of Mott Haven. These stuffed animals were added one by one as lives were snuffed out in the neighborhood. Many were innocent children whose lives were mercilessly cut down by a stray bullet from a drug dealer's gun. The gray, forlorn, despairing atmosphere of lifeless, stuffed

animals swaying quietly in the foggy mist, testifying to a forsaken generation, provides the immediate setting for the entire book.

The waste incinerator not far from Mott Haven is viewed by the residents as a slow-burning metaphor. The toxins spewed forth are blamed for the diseases and intolerable air in the neighborhood. With the incinerator are the waste dump site and the sewage plants. This collage of the ugly and unwanted cloistered around the worst section of town is a visible reminder of how dispensable poverty-stricken people are. These silent sentinels are tangible reminders of the sources of suffering.

A drug dealer peddling asthma inhalers presents a bizarre picture of daily living conditions. All over the South Bronx young children can be seen to pull the inhalers from their pockets, pausing a moment to catch their breath. The inhalers are easily spotted--yellow and orange plastic units that are as much of the daily attire as tennis shoes. Asthma is as common there as a cold is in Michigan. Wheezing and gasping for breaths are common sounds, the ghastly cry for life-giving air that punctuates the darkness of the night.

Positive Character Traits of Poor Children

When reading *Amazing Grace* I was struck at how Kozol grabbed my heart and not just my

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Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation

by Jonathan Kozol, (Harper/Collins Publishers, 1995).

REVIEWED BY CURTIS D. MCCLANE

I had just seen Jonathan Kozol interviewed on the Oprah Winfrey show when a friend gave me Kozol's book *Amazing Grace: The Lives of Children and the Conscience of a Nation*. This book provided me new windows with which to view our culture. It forced me to draw back the drapes and gaze intently upon a part of the cityscape that had conveniently

escaped my attention.

Kozol gave me the gift of a new world view. Having grown up in middle-class America, surrounded by the secure cocoon of materialism, my past experiences with the hungry and homeless were next to nothing. Apart from the occasional pleas for money and handouts from downtown beggars, I never really put a face with a name

head. The faces and names of children became more than something to write about. I could feel the close relationship he developed with them and the empathy he felt while interviewing and getting to know them.

Take Cliffie: a seven-year-old vivacious, buoyant young boy. On one occasion his mother sent him to the store to buy three slices of pizza--one for himself, his mother, and his father. On the way home he saw a homeless man who was hungry, but too cold to move or talk. The man pointed to the pizza and Cliffie gave him a piece. Kozol asked him, "Were your parents mad at you?" He looked surprised by the question and exclaimed, "Why would they be mad? God told us, 'Share!'"

Or take the tragic case of Bernardo: eight years old and his life ended in a horrifying way. He fell four floors down an elevator shaft and landed on the roof of the elevator. Bernardo was the type of young man that Mott Haven and the South Bronx was putting its hopes in the future on. He took school seriously and never missed a day. He passed all of his tests and kept all of his papers. His body was discovered one evening after Christmas when some residents stepped into the elevator and a dark, sticky substance was dripping on them. Security was called and Bernardo's lifeless body was discovered. So young, so promising a life snuffed out in an instant. His mother attended the funeral with handcuffs on--she was

incarcerated at the time.

Consider David. His mother, Alice Washington, has been suffering with cancer of the uterus. David helps feed his mother. He takes her to the less than desirable hospital setting for her medical care. He is worried because his mother is vomiting and can't keep anything down. David has to stay with her four nights in a corridor before a room is available. He and his sister help nurse her back to health in an unhealthy setting.

Kozol offers numerous vignettes of other children's lives throughout the book to hammer his thesis home: poor children are inexorably woven into the fabric of our nation. They are resilient and get used to public humiliation. They are very intelligent and try to make sense out of a nonsensical existence. They have a strong and urgent sense of justice. They have a clear vision of moral truth and believe in the existence of God.

Societal Assumptions Challenged

After reading the book, it is easy to detect what drives Kozol in this literary quest. There are societal assumptions that too many people accept without question. The author deems these evil and writes to wake the sleeping conscience of a pragmatic society.

One assumption is that if poor people behaved rationally they would not be in the situation they are in. "When it come to the poor,

they can't get nothin' right," says one doctor. One professor of political science at New York University blames most of the suffering that the poor encounter on their own irresponsible behaviors. This was an assumption that I believed for years. Kozol convincingly makes a case for systemic evils that prevail over rationalism and common sense. He shows that many people have no control over the powers that be and government decisions that intensify the factors of poverty.

The mass media assumes that it is helping poverty by stereotyping who the poor are and labeling them clearly. Constant images of poor children from black and Hispanic neighborhoods reinforce the notion of "moral dirtiness and overflowing worthlessness." The media focuses on racial tensions and encourages segregation. Kozol penetrates beneath the sterile images of the media and lays bare the humanity of the "dirty" and the "worthless." We hear their concerns about survival and holding onto some hope for the future. But those hopes are cautious because of unfulfilled promises by the local authorities of better days ahead.

An astounding assumption was actually put into words by a social scientist several years ago: "Some people are better than others and deserve more of society's rewards." This cruel view of people is seen everywhere and operates in all phases of our society. The poor receive the worst and the rich deserve the best. Can this be said of

children? Are poor children not as deserving as rich children? Kozol cleverly undermines this ruthless assessment of humanity with his candid portrayal of the forces beyond the children's grasp. Just as the poor children are not responsible for their poverty, neither are rich children responsible for their plenty.

Government-funded research can pinpoint the problems of them poverty and fix them. If enough public funding can be funneled in the right direction, then social researchers can detect "genetic links" between low IQ's and certain children of racial origins. Kozol is incensed that no one investigates the lead poisoning in the neighborhood and its influence on childhood development. With the incisive slice of a surgeon's scalpel on the pus of scientific insensitivity, he comments, "It is less painful to speak of an unfair test than of brain damage since a test can someday be revised and given to a child again, but childhood cannot."

Another trite and worn-out assumption that gets verbalized constantly is that the breakdown of the family is the cause of the ghettos. This superficial assessment is seen by Kozol as an excuse for individuals with intact families not to get involved. One minister in the South Bronx made this observation: "Of course the family structure breaks down in a place like the South Bronx! Everything breaks down in a place like this. The pipes break down. The phone breaks down. The

electricity and heat break down. The spirit breaks down. The body breaks down. The immune agents of the heart break down. Why wouldn't the family break down also?"

One final assumption: admitting the obvious alleviates the urgency of injustice being challenged. Unfortunately, this working assumption is a pragmatic one that fosters and intensifies the problems. There is the paradox of people being self-deceived: the ones who try (out of guilt) to spruce up the area by planting flowers are the very ones pumping raw sewage into Harlem, disposing of medical wastes and burning who-knows-what in the incinerators. The media mentions these things only in passing, and in such a way that is calculated to neutralize the dangers. In so doing, it creates a situation where the obvious no longer warrants indignation. "Only a very glazed and clever culture in which social blindness is accepted as a normal state of mind could possibly permit itself this luxury."

Theological Threads

I was amazed and astonished at the constant references to God throughout this work. It has been my experience that when reading any work of penetrating social analysis, God is never referred to nor is a God-view allowed to enter into the discussion. But credit must be given to Kozol as a sociologist who is truly in search of

truth--the truth of how America the beautiful has become America the baleful. He has allowed the people of Mott Haven to speak for themselves; he has permitted the children to express their faith.

One day Jonathan Kozol stops by to visit with Mrs. Washington. He asks her bluntly if she believes in heaven and hell. She replies that the residents of Mott Haven have their hell now. The people in the city who do not care about the poor and only give Christmas baskets out of guilt will have their hell later. She indicates that she reads the New Testament and Ecclesiastes mostly. She insists that the Bible plainly describes the current situations of today's culture. She admits that because of her health, living conditions, and family situation, the Bible doesn't give her the strength it once did.

On one occasion Kozol courageously asks Cliffie how he pictures God. Cliffie replies, "He has long hair and He can walk on the deep water. Nobody else can." It amazes Kozol how literal a faith Cliffie possesses and how he literally tries to apply what he senses that same faith implies for him.

Mr. Kozol allows Rev. Overall to drive him around the neighborhood. She introduces him to hurting families, fills him in on the local history, and shares her own struggles of trying to spread herself too thin by responding to so many situations of hopelessness. As she pastors at St. Ann's, she portrays an image of safety in a

dangerous world. Kozol recalls his first encounter in seeing her in the sanctuary: she was carrying a newborn baby in her arms with three little girls running around her. Then he observes, "In one of the most diseased and dangerous communities in any city of the Western world, the beautiful old stone church on St. Ann's Avenue is a gentle sanctuary from the terrors of the streets outside."

The Old Testament story of Hagar in the wilderness seems to provide a potent model for many in the South Bronx. It is a wilderness of despair, depression, oppression, and marginalization. But, true to the Old Testament narrative, it is in the wilderness where one finds the presence of God. This metaphoric appropriation of the Hagar narrative provides a ministerial foundation for Rev. Overall as she seeks to minister to indescribable and undeniable pain of a lost generation.

On one occasion a teacher at P.S. 65 encouraged the author to seek the advice of priests or theologians because they could better answer the questions he was asking. So Kozol returned again and again to the neighborhoods and talked to the ministers and priests. He confides that each time his conversation started with something specific like AIDS, but it always ended with talk of personal pain looking for strength, for faith, for God.

Suffering as Sacred Wine

A seminary friend once told Kozol that suffering is best described as a "sacred wine." But society and the powers that be have successfully watered that wine down to where it is no longer potent.

I see Kozol performing a modern "miracle." He has succeeded in turning water into wine again. Its potency can once again be tasted. Its color has once again been restored. The wine of suffering has been distilled in the life stories of the hurting children of Mott Haven. The wine of suffering has been bottled in the fears of the adults of South Bronx. The wine of suffering now awaits your sampling.

I challenge you to open and taste this wine. If you merely sample Kozol's description of the sacred wine of suffering, you will choke, aghast at its flavor and intrusion into your system. But if you savor its flavor, allow its contents to come into your conscience, I promise you that your world view will never again be the same. Your middle class and innocent existence will forever be lost. Your naivete about a cozy little world will disappear.

It is my earnest prayer that you will immediately purchase a copy of this book. Kozol has given us a glimpse into the lives of poverty-stricken children. He has also pricked the sleeping conscience of a nation that would rather not see

what needs to be seen. This prophetic work, if taken as seriously by its readers as it was by its author, has the potential to radically shake the foundation of

our national conscience. Kozol writes with prophetic urgency. May you and I read it just as urgently!

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BENDING THE TWIG

LAQUITA AND ELTON HIGGS

Some years ago I asked my friend how she was faring since her daughter had become a teenager. My children were still small, but I had heard frequently from other parents about the trials of having a teenager, so I expected Marietta to moan about it, too. Instead, Marietta, a woman close to God, surprised me by saying that she had thoroughly enjoyed every stage of her children's lives, including the present one. I needed to hear that, and I determined that I was going to do the same, if possible. I must admit that I did not enjoy having a rebellious teenager, but now I can see God's hand in that, too, and I can be thankful even for that experience.

I remembered that long ago conversation which so impressed me as I recently read *And Then I Had Kids* (Dallas: Word Publishing, 1988, \$9.99) by Susan Alexander Yates. A mother of five, Yates has written an excellent book of encouragement and practical help for Christian parents, but especially for mothers who sometimes feel overwhelmed (that includes all of us mothers, doesn't it?) with the constant demands and stress of taking care of a home and family, and the feelings of inadequacy and failure which sometimes emerge. Yates

encourages the mother to maintain a positive self-image and, in an excellent chapter on the seasons of life, she points out that diapers and night feedings, or even the teenage years, won't last forever. She gives many practical helps on discipline, and any parent who has bickering children should read her chapter on creating a loving atmosphere in the home (wish I had read that years ago!). Likewise, any mother who feels harassed by too many demands on her time should read Yates's excellent chapter on setting priorities, with its emphasis on putting God first.

We're going to be adopting some of Yates's suggestions on how to pray for our children. Yates and her husband get away from the children once a year to set goals for their family for the coming year. They talk extensively about the needs of each child in five areas--social, mental, spiritual, emotional, and physical and they use those findings to guide their prayer for that child during the year. She also includes a list that they compiled of general qualities that they want their children to have, and they pray regularly with that list in hand. I was particularly struck by this paragraph (p. 172):

As we pray for our children, it's reassuring to realize that God... has given us exactly the children we need to help us become the people He wants us to be. Our children are a gift from God. They are also His instruments in our lives to mold us, to shape us, and to help us grow. So often we think it is only we ourselves who do the molding and shaping. In fact, we grow through the children He gives us. We can't raise these kids alone. There is no guarantee they'll turn out right. There is no perfect formula for parenting. But there's power in prayer and there's comfort in knowing that the Creator of the children is guiding us and has His hand on us and on our children. He will show us how to mold these precious gifts into the people He has created them to become and in the process we, too, will grow.

Other Suggestions:

Jan Van Horn, an *Integrity* board member and kindergarten teacher, has suggested Christopher Churchmouse books and videos for children ages 4 to 9. We found *The Christopher Churchmouse Treasury* (Victor Books, a division of Scripture Press Publications, \$16.99), a compilation of stories, in our church library, and they are excellent. Written by Barbara Davoll, the stories are about a delightful little mouse named Christopher and his family and friends. Character traits, such as obedience, truthfulness, and forgiveness, are taught as practical applications of Biblical truths, and the illustrations by Dennis Hockerman add color and appeal. The publisher

also sells video cassettes, audio cassette and book packages, and individual storybooks. Highly recommended.

Prompted by reading a previous column about the ministry in Taipei to expectant parents, Curtis Lloyd, another of our board members, reports that several churches now have something they call "Prenatal Ministries." The churches find ways to minister to prospective mothers and fathers, and usually special bonds develop. Some also have a ministry to couples who have been unsuccessful at becoming pregnant, and at another stage to couples who are going through an adoption process. These could be significant ministries, especially for more mature Christians.

Curtis also suggests two books. One is, in Curtis's words, "an old, old resource." Curtis remembers that he first heard Bible stories when his mother read *Hurlbut's Story of the Bible* to him. "The heroes of the faith came alive to a young boy and also to his mom," who had not grown up in the church. "Mom found it difficult to read the KJV, the only translation available then, but *Hurlbut's* did the job ultimately on seven children." *Hurlbut's* is still available (Zondervan, 1967, \$29.99), now revised and updated with pictures, and it continues to be a thorough and worthy retelling of Bible history in chronological order. Instructional aids guides to pronunciation of names, questions for every story, and an introduction to every book of the Bible are also included.

Curtis also recommends *Dear Zoe* by Max DePree (Harper, 1996, \$18). The author, the former CEO of a Michigan furniture company, has also written two excellent books on leadership, but in this book DePree

recounts the true story of his premature granddaughter's struggle for life. As a result of her father's desertion, DePree became surrogate father to the 1 pound, 7 ounce baby who was not expected to live. His letters to little Zoe (Greek for "life") are "very, very tender and touching."

Take time to enjoy your children. And remember to send in your suggestions for Christian parenting to us at 9 Adams Lane; Dearborn, Michigan 48120, or by email at "Ehiggs@umich.edu". We need your input.

Readers' Response

The latest issue of *Integrity* (May/June 1997) is far past great-- it's wonderful! For far too long we of the Stone-Campbell, et. al. movement have treated our sisters in Christ as second class Christians. Thank God that some of us are now "seeing the light."

Jim Gregory
Dewey, AZ

I appreciated immensely the article in the recent *Integrity* "Going Through the Maze with God." Very few women have taken the time to detail their journey with honesty, without bitterness. God has taken you on an incredible journey, Diane, that is not over. I pray that this issue of *Integrity* frees some hearts to allow Christian women to use all their gifts.

Daniel C. Massey
Houston, TX

Just read the entire May/June *Integrity* in one sitting. Excellent. All I can say is "right on." I was trained in the Independent Christian Church, but could stand it no longer. I tried to do my part to show what the Bible really says about women's roles, but tradition was just too strong. I am now with the Disciples of Christ. I am thankful to

see change taking place. It just wasn't fast or far enough for me. When the prophet is depending on the paycheck, he or she either has to seethe in silence or move on.

Jay Hoyt
Wagoner, Oklahoma

I really appreciate the editorial stance on women's roles in the church. We now have women in Congress, as professor/scholars, as CEO's, judges, and in leadership roles in nearly every area of American life. Biblical conservatives must either argue that women must be treated differently in the church than outside the church, and justify such an arbitrary position, or that women taking these leadership positions outside the church are in serious error. For me, neither of these two options are live ones.

John W. Loftus
Fremont, Indiana

I loved this issue of *Integrity* (May/June 1997). It will be one of the outstanding ones of *Integrity* and deserves to be reproduced in quantity for distribution. Having a face on the problem, an orderly narration of the progression of a life that has been

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Integrity

Readers Response

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affected by discrimination, may help others to understand. The fact that today women are more aware of the possibilities in life and have the skills and training to teach others makes the patriarchal mode we have followed during the past hundreds of years appear more erroneous and unreasonable and, therefore, in need of figuring out what Paul really meant in the proof texts we have been using.

This comes at a time when I am feeling very discouraged about attending any of the local Churches of Christ. I had about decided to join a local instrumental Church of Christ, which is a change from the church of my heritage of a cappella Church of Christ, but even small things discourage me now. Things could be a lot worse though. There are a lot of good things happening for me in "the world" outside of the church. But isn't it too bad that the Restoration movement churches couldn't be more compatible for the female persuasion?

My problem now is that I'm more "aware;" I notice things that I didn't used to notice before about ten years ago. But with the awareness, I can now gently educate others when the opportunity arises. There are other women like me whom I have been able to encourage and who encourage me, so I'm not alone in my situation.

Keep up the good work and don't get discouraged.

Joan Ellen Morris Morrison
Columbus, OH

I've been a longtime reader of *Integrity*. I really have appreciated the May/June 1997 issue. Diane's story brings tears to my eyes. I long ago determined I was not going to think "gender" but "giftedness." What greater sin is there in our churches than the "Maze" she described?

Jim McKowen
Lafayette, IN

If they are available, would you please send me 15 copies of the May/June 1997 issue? This has information which I want to share.

I have written something similar to what Diane Kilmer wrote--to share, at their request, with our Walnut Creek elders.

Doris Smith
Walnut Creek, CA