

INTEGRITY, a journal published by an independent nonprofit corporation, is intended to be a ministry of reconciliation which utilizes the varied talents of a large community of believers who seek accurately to reveal God to both the church and the world so that all may become one as He is one.

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We continue to enjoy reading your publication. Bruce and Diane have done a splendid job as co-editors. Their remarks and thoughts have been very meaningful to me. Keep up the good work.

Joann Weidner
Searcy, Ark.

Thanks for providing refreshing reading.
Harold H. Hardison
Columbia, Tenn.

For almost three and a half years I have been blessed by Integrity. Thank you so much for this ministry.

Ann Marie Hartman
Oelwein, Iowa

This is a small gift but my husband and me enjoy reading it and wish we could do more, but he is a retired minister and we can't help much. May God bless you and the ones helping you.

Mr. and Mrs. Grover C. Ross
Portales, N. Mexico

Keep up the good work. The magazine offers inspiration and a fresh look at the Scriptures and contemporary issues.

Martha Jo Smith
Houston, Texas

I'm 82 years of age. My eyes are such that I see to read very little. I can and do read Integrity. I give it to one of our elders who reads it. I thank you for reminding me to send a check.

Fred M. Engle
Roswell, New Mexico

November/December 1987

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Following The Pillar of Cloud & Fire

Recently we have reread some of the earliest issues of Integrity from 1969. The magazine was clearly born out of a desperate need for members of the Churches of Christ to freely wrestle over spiritual questions without the loss of love or fellowship. Folks then simply needed a way to discuss what the Bible seemed to be saying to them and they needed loving responses that could correct, balance or affirm each other's studies.

We still need to be this to each other. No matter what the exact circumstances — one-on-one, writer-to-reader, or even church-to-church — our attitude must be one of wide-opened arms, quiet listening ears and a heart and tongue interested in learning to please God.

Our goal for Integrity's use is to help build a supportive fellowship that offers individuals the freedom to grow in the Lord in order to face whatever today's issues are with honesty and courage. We need each other's help when responding to the sin that sneaks into our own lives and the lives of our family and neighbors and co-workers.

The articles in this issue of Integrity, for example, are addressed to issues that most of us must face and that cannot be ignored. Throughout the year we have tried to bring you a mix of articles that could be broadly categorized into three areas:

- (1) Biblical themes which contribute to individual spiritual growth and maturity in Christ.
- (2) Application of Christian principles to 20th century situations in the home, church, neighborhood, nation and throughout the world.
- (3) Issues of special concern to those people interested or familiar with the "Restoration" or "Stone-Campbell" movement.

It is our prayer that in the past year the articles you have read in Integrity have had a helpful part in your study, prayer life, and growth in our Lord. We have emphasized change in many of our articles and editorials — change that reflects a continuing process of maturation. In a fast-changing world where changes are often for the worse, Christians can feel afraid of change. Our tendency can be to flee from the present crises by trying

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"In Christ"—Galatians 3:28

DEAN F. SMITH

"There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; there is no male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). Perhaps no other statement in the New Testament has so reverberated through church history, provoking actions and reactions. Nearly twenty centuries later we are still experiencing its aftershocks. This is not surprising considering how radical and sweeping are the implications of this bold affirmation. These implications continue to excite the imagination of all those who long for the freedom of the children of God. For Paul's affirmation represents the dismantling of those barriers of hostility and domination that alienate human beings from one another. It remains, even today, a revolutionary ideal of what it means to be "in Christ."

Being "in Christ" is at the heart of Paul's letter to the churches of Galatia. Specifically, Paul is responding to an attempt on the part of some Jewish Christians to make being Jewish, by circumcision, a prerequisite (or in their case,

an addendum) to inclusion in Christ. Paul's response to this teaching is strong and uncompromising. It is a position with which Paul can make no concessions because it threatens fundamentally the "truth of the gospel." From the abbreviated opening of the letter, in which Paul omits much of his familiar greeting, to his use of sarcasm and even a curse, it is clear that his tone is one of profound anger and concern. For this reason his letter demands close attention and great weight, because it is from such circumstances, when Paul's mission and proclamation were being undermined, that he reveals the very heart of his theology and faith unencumbered by other issues.

The statement made in Galatians 3:28 is located precisely at the climax of his letter. Prior to Galatians 3:23 Paul had marshaled an array of arguments to make his case that faith in Christ is the only prerequisite to inclusion in Christ. From Galatians 3:23-29 he draws his conclusion that all who have been baptized into Christ have "put on" Christ and have

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to relive the past, thus avoiding dealing with the future. As society pulls up its moral roots and chases after "progress," will we be taking advantage of the opportunities to be salt and leaven and light? Or will we be busy seeking to duplicate "the way it's always been done?" The past has familiar memories for us and can teach us much, but the past is not our home. Clinging to the past will only produce stagnation and death. Without our own continual renewal we will become as the writer of Hebrews warned, incapable of repentance.

Let us live fearlessly on the cutting edge. Let us not be honed by the disintegrating change of the world around us, but by change from

"one degree of glory to another" brought about by the God who is the Spirit.

We pray that together we can change, be renewed, mature and persist in the race. The goal has been set before us — shared glory with our King. The way is forward. We need not look back, because we are headed for a better country. We need not tremble as the world crumbles around us. We need not fear change. God has always gone before His people. He is with us now even as He waits for us.

Bruce & Diane Kilmer
Co-Editors

become children of God and heirs of Abraham — two distinctly Jewish designations. He draws his conclusion not upon some abstract ideal of unity or equality but, much like his conclusion in Romans 3:21ff, upon the assumption that because all are included in Christ in precisely the same way, therefore, all are “one in Christ.” The application of this for Paul is embodied in the three-fold formula of verse 28.

It has been suggested by scholars that this affirmation was actually a baptismal formula employed primarily in Gentile churches. Assuming this, there can be no doubt about the radical effect it must have had upon one who was either a Gentile, a slave or a woman, or some combination of these. Additionally, Scott Bartchy has suggested that this formula is actually an inversion of a familiar prayer of Jewish males in the synagogue, thanking God that they were not born a Gentile, a slave or a woman. This suggestion is particularly significant when one notes Paul’s assertion earlier in this letter that he was, prior to his conversion, a zealous advocate for Judaism. Judaism was one of two competing philosophies of the ancient world, Hellenism (the word translated “Greek” in this verse) being the other one. As a sort of Jewish “evangelist,” Paul enthusiastically promoted such distinctions as relevant, for it was only “in Christ” that these barriers were removed.

A New World in Christ

The concept of being “in Christ” appears repeatedly, in one form or another, in nearly all of Paul’s correspondence, and thus, it is very important to our understanding of Paul’s theology. One of the most revealing expressions of this idea is found in 2 Corinthians 5:17 — an oft-quoted, but frequently misunderstood verse: “Therefore, if anyone (is) in Christ (it is) a new creation (world); the old has passed away, behold, the new has come.” The sense of the word *ktisis* (which referred to some created order or world), as well as the meaning conveyed by this verse’s conclusion, lend themselves to this translation. (Hearing this verse reminds me of the promise repeated by God throughout the Bible — “Behold, I make all things new.”) This idea is also echoed in

the conclusion to the Galatian letter where Paul speaks of the world (here the word *cosmos*) being crucified to him and he to the world — all of which brings him to his final restatement of a now familiar conclusion: “For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation (world or order).” Thus, being “in Christ,” for Paul, is not simply a reference to one’s religious affiliation, as this phrase is so casually employed today, but signifies a believer’s introduction into an entirely new realm of being and perceiving where former assumptions and distinctions have “passed away” and are no longer normative.

Evaluating Paul’s Statements

It is my intention in three subsequent articles to explore this revolutionary Galatians 3:28 concept of Paul by examining the original context and by discussing its implications for the church today. Three presuppositions will affect my analysis of Paul’s declaration. The first assumption is that we must make some attempt to prioritize the statements made by Paul in his letters. This is not an attempt to discount or discard certain statements, but simply to acknowledge what is easily recognized in our own communication. Each of us has certain fundamental values or beliefs that serve as the basis for most of our actions and decisions. Often these values are most obvious in a crisis, particularly if they are being threatened as they were for Paul in this letter. Although each of these values may be important, they are not of equal importance. For example, punctuality and honesty may be two of my values, but they should not be given equal weight if one is to understand my actions and decisions. In the same way, we cannot adequately understand and apply the teachings of Paul if: (1) we give greater weight to his specific applications than to his underlying principles or (2) we regard each teaching as having equal weight in our interpretation. While we may all disagree as to exactly the system of weighting we must apply to Paul’s teachings, surely we are not willing to equate Paul’s teaching on baptism, for example, with his instructions concerning the binding of women’s hair. In order to understand

Paul’s teaching concerning the way in which we relate to one another in Christ, we must begin with the principles which informed his actions and decisions, not with his specific application to a particular problem. We must begin with a principle such as the one in Galatians 3:28, which is at the heart of Paul’s theology and faith, in order to understand his application of the principle to a particular situation.

Trajectory Statements

Thus I am assuming that Galatians 3:28 represents a sort of trajectory in Paul’s thinking. Just as plotting the trajectory of a rocket allows us to determine its destination, so statements such as this allow us to glimpse the leading of God’s Spirit toward a specific goal. Such an assumption naturally rejects as normative the kind of “pattern theology” which allowed interpreters to reason, for example, that since slavery existed throughout most of the history of the church, it must have been ordained by God. Rather, Paul’s teaching in Galatians 3:28 informs us of an ideal which is not dependent upon human acknowledgement or practice for its validity. The failure of human beings, even in the church, to fully live out the will of God, perhaps even for centuries, does not in any way invalidate God’s goal for humanity.

The goal of this Galatians 3:28 affirmation is liberation — the freedom of God’s people “in Christ.” Throughout the letter Paul hammers away at this theme, admonishing them to hold on to their freedom against all attempts by others to weaken or destroy its power. Liberation has always been God’s intent from the Exodus to the present day. It is inherent in Jesus’ mission and teaching and in Paul’s as well. It is part of the “new world” that one enters at baptism. But the “new world theology” of Paul was not being put into practice within the Galatian churches. Accepting the old world norm of domination and exclusion in relationships allowed the barriers broken down by Christ to remain. One may argue that while the egalitarianism proposed by Paul is a noble ideal, it was not generally reflected in the historical perspective of the church. After all, Christians,

although they were themselves redeemed, had always lived in an unredeemed world and were, to some extent, subject to its restraints. This is certainly true and may help to explain why this radical ethic was so quickly compromised and eventually abrogated by the church. However, today many voices in our society are calling for greater recognition of the equality of all human beings. And we must ask: is the church in the tragic position of defending inequality and domination as the “truth of the gospel?” The church today finds itself in the midst of inequality and exclusion based upon racial, socioeconomic and gender distinctions. In future articles we will explore whether it is the goal of today’s church to be guardians of an oppressive past or harbingers of a new future.

Personal Experience

Finally, I bring with me the bias of my particular background and situation. I was raised in the Church of Christ (non-instrumental) and have been a minister for a Church of Christ in the Chicago area for the past eight years. During this time I have witnessed this church become more diverse and, along the way, struggle with the racial, socioeconomic and gender differences which Galatians 3:28 addresses. The struggle has not been easy nor is it in any way complete, for it is not just the struggle of ideas or interpretations, but of praxis as well. For the past fifteen years I have enjoyed the privilege of being a husband to a wonderful Christian wife, and together we have struggled to understand and live out the meaning of mutual submission, calling no one Lord except Jesus. Finally, I am the father of four marvelous children, two boys and two girls. As they grow older I am made increasingly aware of my role both as their father and as their minister to teach them, both by word and example, the “truth of the gospel,” leading them into this new world “in Christ.”

Dean graduated from Michigan Christian College and Abilene Christian University and has done graduate work at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago. He ministers to the Church of Christ in Matteson, Illinois with his wife Carolyn and family.

Christian Responses to Homosexuals and AIDS

ELTON D. HIGGS

Conservative Christians are faced with an unparalleled public challenge to their integrity, compassion, and wisdom in the current coupling of the spread of AIDS with the increasing visibility and aggressiveness of the homosexual segment of our population. Although "gay rights" organizations were manifesting their influence long before the AIDS epidemic surfaced, the current rate of the spread of the disease and its high incidence among homosexuals has radically increased the volume and the stridency of discussions of both homosexuality per se and the association of AIDS with those who practice it. Christians who follow a strict interpretation of the Bible need to sort through the tensions between articulating the Biblical teaching about homosexual activity, avoiding self-righteousness, showing compassion toward those who suffer, and being responsible as both Christians and citizens in dealing realistically with the frightening plague of AIDS.

It seems to me that several points of confusion (or ignorance) in these matters need to be cleared up at the outset, because in each case a mistake in perception brings about an ineffective or even pernicious response to the problems. An initial set of misconceptions has to do with the proper Christian response to homosexuality itself, even apart from the question of AIDS. We are prone to accept one of two rather easy opinions about the relationship of inclination and will in homosexuals, both of which opinions are dangerously misleading.

Inclination and Will

The first opinion is that all active homosexuals have come to their way of life through purely voluntary perversion, and that because their sin is the worst imaginable, they should therefore be shunned and made to suffer

whatever punishments can be heaped upon them by a justly outraged, God-fearing public. Such an attitude ignores the fact that in our flawed human state we are all equally sinful and subject to God's judgment. Only our acceptance of Christ makes any difference between us, and that is not a matter of our merit but an operation of His grace. Martin Hallett, Director of the True Freedom Trust in England, a ministry to homosexuals, frequently points out that homosexual sins are merely one type of the fallen sexuality that we all struggle with to some degree or another. And a number of heterosexual Christians have no more success than those who are identified as homosexuals. Furthermore, we must not overlook the fact that the orientation of some homosexuals seems to have developed before they were even aware of sexual options, and that they have a special kind of struggle with sin. An overemphasis on this observation, however, easily leads to a second kind of error.

The opposite form of misconception about inclination and will in homosexuals is that there is a kind of inevitability in being drawn erotically toward members of the same sex. In the last couple of decades it has come to be taken for granted by most secular psychologists and psychiatrists, by many in the general public, and even by an alarming number of Christians, that so-called "inverted" homosexuals — those who have never felt an erotic attraction toward the opposite sex — can never be changed and therefore must be accorded the right to act on the only sexual inclinations they have. Christian supporters of this argument can hold it only by reinterpreting the Scriptural prohibitions against homosexual activity, and they say that since only in the last hundred years has the concept of involuntary homosexual orientation

come to be understood, the Bible cannot be expected to give specific guidance on the matter. The crucial point to be made here is that there is nothing new in the problem of having sexual inclinations which ought not to be acted on; indeed, the heterosexual person who for some reason has to remain unmarried has to deal with a sexual dilemma very much like that of the involuntary homosexual. If they are Christians, both must come to terms with the fact that there is no one with whom it is permissible to satisfy their erotic desires. It is to be hoped, of course, that in neither case will they be left to struggle alone with their deprivation. Especially within the Body of Christ, we must be ready to give special hands of support to those caught in the whipsaw of singleness and sexual desire; the fellowship of the Spirit should envelop them in an active love that transcends the frustration of their dilemma.

AIDS and Community

I will deal briefly with three misconceptions about the relationship between AIDS and the homosexual community. The first is that since the disease in the United States was initially associated with practicing homosexuals, and is still claiming more victims among them than among any other group in the nation, we can therefore somehow isolate the disease (and its consequences) by suppressing or at least targeting them. The specific responses arising from this misconception range from off-the-cuff suggestions that homosexuals should be left to take the consequences of their perverted actions, to recommendations that they be actively treated in some specially restrictive way as a class. Aside from the injustice of dealing with people as members of a labeled group rather than as individuals, this approach ignores the number of AIDS sufferers who have contracted the disease through no action of their own, and it distracts us from the necessity of actually combating the epidemic, no matter how it came to be among us. Realistically, we have to separate our treatment of AIDS as a public health problem from our judgments of the actions (sexual and drug-related) by which many have contracted it. Even though we can't ignore that

some people have AIDS as the result of activities that are both immoral and self-destructive, to stop with that fact and to set it up as a roadblock to any further action is to escape into a cloud of self-righteousness.

On the other hand, a second misconception is that the suffering of the homosexual community from the ravages of AIDS precludes any moral considerations at all. The grief of men for the deaths of their lovers and friends, as well as public mourning for well-known figures who have died of AIDS, strikes a chord of commonality, and one tends to be persuaded that people who are suffering so much and can feel so deeply are surely not engaged in a way of life that needs to be rejected, except perhaps in its most promiscuous forms. Is it not calloused and inhumane at such a time as this (we are asked) to invoke a narrow, dogmatic stance based on a strict interpretation of Scripture? Sensitive Christians may easily wonder whether compassion should not take precedence over conscience in this case. But we must remember that the two are not mutually exclusive. Although one should not refuse aid to a community stricken by typhoid, even when lack of proper sanitation has brought it about, neither should one neglect to give the proper instructions about cleaning up the water supply.

A final misconception is that AIDS is much more contagious than we have been led to believe, and that all AIDS carriers must therefore be identified and isolated. The most pathetic victims of this hysterically propagated idea have been the school children who have been harrassed, tormented, and even hounded out of town by frightened parents; but equally mistreated are those adults who have lost jobs and friends because they have been identified as having AIDS or even being AIDS carriers. Such people have not only to live with the disease, but with sudden rejection by the people who are in the best position to offer them help. Certainly much remains to be learned about the transmission of AIDS and about its period of incubation; but Christians ought to have no part in actions arising primarily out of fear, especially fear that eclipses love and concern for people who are at a disadvantage and

in danger. Until there is documented evidence of AIDS being regularly transmitted by ordinary contacts with infected people, Christians should be content with the precautions advised by the U.S. Surgeon-General and the National Centers for Disease Control; and even more to the point, we must remember that where the welfare of other human beings is concerned, the love that God gives is not divorced from the taking of risks.

What is a godly response?

How are we to put all of this together into a reasonable-but-spiritual, firm-but-compassionate, godly response? First of all, AIDS is an evil within itself, and as Christians we can take no comfort in its afflicting anybody, even if it comes as a result of sin; and that is to say nothing of those who suffer innocently. If we are not ready to do what we can in the physical realm, who will listen when we address the spiritual? Secondly, although we must articulate the Biblical identification of homosexual activity as sin and raise our voices against the acceptance of the homosexual lifestyle as a morally neutral option, we must also hold the hands of those who suffer, and not be numbered among those who cast them outside the camp because we fear more than we love.

And finally, we must be clear about the fact that we are not facing merely an epidemic, or people with whom we disagree, but spiritual powers which threaten to destroy both us and our opponents. If we seek in these matters merely to find some compromise according to human wisdom, we will be crushed by the pressures from those who single-mindedly pursue either complete justification or indignant and detached condemnation of homosexual activity. If we are to engage the real enemy, Satan and his

forces, we must in the power of the Holy Spirit be willing to be vulnerable to those whom God wants to heal, either spiritually or physically; and we must not be misled by appeals to our fears, nor even to our merely human compassion, but be constrained and sustained by the toughness, the tenderness, and the sufficiency of God's love.

Works for Further Reading

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Elton is back as professor at University of Michigan (Dearborn), having just returned from a one year research sabbatical in England. He and his wife Laquita have been members of the Integrity board and contributing writers for several years.

Audio tapes of the seminar, "Biblical Interpretation and the Restoration Plea for Unity," held in Fenton, Michigan, in October 1986 are available. They feature Dr. Leroy Garrett, Dr. Walter Zorn and Dr. J. Harold Thomas. The cost for the six, 90-minute tapes is \$20 and includes a storage case and shipping charges for the set. Send your order and money to Amos Ponder, 1269 Pickwick Place, Flint, MI 48507.

To Judge or Not to Judge

Matt. 7:1-5; 1 Cor. 5:1-2, 9-13

CRAIG M. WATTS

"Judge not that you be not judged" are among the most familiar words of the Bible. That does not necessarily mean that this command is generally obeyed. But it is a useful one. It is repeated most often when someone makes a critical remark with which we disagree. Then we can appear to take the high ground by citing Jesus' words, "Judge not." However, we are not so quick to cite that scripture if we happen to agree with a criticism we hear directed against another. When it comes to judging, consistency is not one of our more notable characteristics.

The fact is that judging and counter-judging is common, even in the most civilized of circles. There is a story about Winston Churchill that is set in a rather significant social gathering. The Chancellor had had more than an adequate amount of drink and his behavior was beginning to show it. The hostess of the affair, a prim and proper, somewhat prudish upper-class lady, confronted the tipsy politician. "You, sir, are undeniably drunk," she said in an indignant and scolding tone. "And you, madam, are unbelievably ugly," responded Churchill. And with an impish grin continued, "The difference is—tomorrow I'll undoubtedly be sober."

Setting Ourselves Up

When we issue our judgments on other people, we set ourselves up to be judged in return. It was not just some sort of heavenly economy that Jesus was speaking of when he said, "For with the judgment you pronounce, you will be judged and the measure you give will be the measure you get." (Matt. 7:2). This is common wisdom. Right or wrong, we tend to treat people the way they treat us. And so when a person takes our faults and failings in stride and

doesn't take every opportunity to criticize our poor grammar, or sloppiness, or bad spelling or whatever, then we are inclined to be kindly and accepting of them in their shortcomings. But the person who shakes her head with disdain or otherwise makes note of our every blunder or omission is likely to be viewed by us with a doubly critical eye. It is so much easier to notice the specks of dirt on the person who judges us with spit and polish standards.

But condemn it as we might, nevertheless, we do put ourselves in the judgment seat. And often those who complain the loudest about other people's judging are themselves the very worst offenders. Though hypersensitive about what they take to be judgmentalism in other people, those folks are amazingly insensitive to their own harsh and destructive comments of condemnation. "I can't stand people who judge," they say, missing the irony of their own words. It is not judging that they oppose, but, rather, being judged.

The great Christian scholar Karl Barth once wrote, "It is our basic sin to take the place of the judge, to try to judge ourselves and others. All our other sins, both small and great, derive ultimately from this source." Without a doubt the only one whose judgment is of final value is God. And the only one whose right to judge is beyond dispute is God. This is why in the epistle of James we read, "Do not speak evil against one another, brethren. . . Who are you to judge your neighbor?" (James 4:11-12). The apostle Paul likewise asks, "Who are you to pass judgment on the servants of another? . . . Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God." (Rom. 14:4, 10).

Must We Judge?

It would seem from this that judging the behavior of other people is utterly wrong and completely forbidden. But is it reasonable to entirely cease from judging? Is that even possible? Don't we have to make judgments every day? When we attempt to train and guide our children, we judge when we discourage them from associating with certain people that we see as unsavory. We judge political candidates before we vote. We ask ourselves, "Do I want this kind of person in the leadership of this country?" We judge when we choose our friends, our employees, our church officers and others. Is all of this inappropriate? Should we throw our standards to the wind or treat them as no more than personal preferences for our own lives which have no relevance in relation to others?

One thing is for certain: that is not what the biblical writers did. Despite the fact that the apostle Paul warned against judging, his letters are filled with criticisms, chastisements and judgments. For instance, we find him being stingingly critical of the people of the Corinthian church who neglected to judge the gross sin of one of their members. The people had evidently been patting themselves on the back for their broadmindedness and tolerance. But they received no praise from Paul. Instead he told them "not to associate with anyone who bears the name of a brother if he is guilty of immorality or greed, or is an idolator, reviler, drunkard, or robber — not even to eat with such a one" (1 Cor. 5:11). Does this involve judging? Certainly. Yet Paul tells them it is their responsibility in the church to do such judging. And the story is no different when we turn to Jesus. Judgments abound in his teachings and in his encounters with his contemporaries.

What are we to make of all this? Are we to judge or are we not to judge? A simple "yes" or "no" will not do. For the fact is that some judging is utterly inappropriate and self-righteous, while other judging is godly and constructive. Well, if that's the case, how do we tell the difference? We need to recognize some biblical principles to guide us. Otherwise

nothing better than our own hang-ups will determine how we judge. I believe there are at least four considerations that must come into play in order for our judging to be proper.

When & How

First, our judgments must be based on what we know of God's judgment. Clearly what is needed here is a knowledge of scripture. For it is in the biblical testimony that we learn of divine standards. Apart from these standards our judgments will arise from our ideosyncratic quirks or from a culture-bound bias. For instance, some people are early risers, energetic in the morning, "up-and-at-em" sorts. I have occasionally heard some of these folks accuse us slow-to-get-started types of being lazy. What they are doing is making their own personality characteristics into their standard of evaluating others. This is misguided. They impose ideas of right and wrong where there is no real right or wrong.

Sometimes people absolutize the styles or traits of their culture, class or era and use these as a basis of judging others. A turn of the century biblical commentator, Albert Barnes, once told a story about a conversation he had with a group of older ladies. They were morally outraged at the practice of some younger women who were neglecting to wear stockings. Barnes remarked to them, "You know, the virgin Mary didn't wear stockings either." With surprise they gasped, "She didn't?" "That's right," he said. And then he rehearsed a bit of the history of the use of stockings, beginning with their introduction among prostitutes and their growing acceptance in broader society to the point where they became a part of the standard Victorian styles of these older ladies. After that conversation he heard no more of the complaints about the dress of the younger women.

When the apostle Paul wrote to the Romans and insisted that they not judge one another, he was addressing a particular problem. They were judging one another about matters of opinion and taste, on matters where there was no command from God, such as dietary codes and the observance of special religious days (Rom. 14).

They were speaking words of judgment where God had not spoken. That was the judging the apostle forbade. But he did teach the need to judge in matters about which there is a Word from God. Thus all proper judging rests on God's revealed judgment. Other standards lead to unrighteous judging.

Second, our judging of others must be preceded by self-judgment. Too much of the judging we do is a means of avoiding serious self-examination. We judge others in order to exalt ourselves in comparison with them. Jesus took a stand against this practice when he said, "Why do you see the speck in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?... You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matt. 7:3,5). Jesus knew that much of the judging that goes on is a form of self-justification. It is not that we deny that we ourselves are sinners. We wouldn't go that far. Rather it just so happens that our sins are rarely as bad as the sins of other people. We commit misdemeanors; they commit felonies.

Late last year the results of a poll conducted by USA Weekend magazine was published. The results are revealing. Of Americans who believe in heaven, seventy-two percent rate their chances of going there as good to excellent. However, when asked about the chances their friends had in going to heaven, their friends didn't fair nearly so well. According to the poll Americans believe that no more than six out of ten of their friends will go to heaven and about one in four will go to hell. I don't know what happens to the remaining 15 percent. But you can imagine what the respondents think about the odds their enemies have for seeing the "pearly gates." I think the results of this poll are reflective of our tendency to judge others more harshly than we judge ourselves. In the face of this Jesus counsels us to consider our faults as large as logs while viewing the failings of others as having no more magnitude than flecks of dust. Rather than concentrating our attention on condemning others, we need to give ourselves a long hard look and acknowledge our own need for mercy.

Third, our judgment must remain tentative and open to revision. There is a lot going on in other people's lives that we can't see and that we don't understand. Too often we assume the worst about their motivations. Perhaps that is one of the reasons we are prone to be more critical of others than we are of ourselves. We know the "inside story" about ourselves. So sometimes even when what we do looks bad from the outside, inside ourselves we know that we had good intentions. We don't have that privileged information when assessing others. All we have to go on is what we can see with our eyes. And often that is not enough. Thus Jesus warned, "Do not judge by appearances but judge with right judgment" (John 7:24).

Frequently our prejudices lead us to jump to the wrong conclusion about others. We decide what their looks or actions mean without having sufficient information. William Barclay, the popular Bible commentator, once told how he was on the night train from northeastern England to London. The only other person in the compartment was an ill-shaven, shabby looking man. Barclay was distrustful and decided it would not be wise to try to sleep during the trip. It was a very cold night. When the train made a stop, Barclay's traveling companion asked him if he would like some hot tea. When he answered that he would, the man dashed out and then returned with two cups of tea. He refused Barclay's offer to pay him. Some while later the man asked the scholar if he would like something to eat. Again Barclay said yes. The man generously shared his food with him. As it turned out, this man who was at first seen as a potential danger turned out to be an exceptionally kind and considerate person. Barclay, like so many of us, had allowed outward appearances to prematurely form his opinion. In view of this, we can see the wisdom of the apostle Paul's words, "Do not pronounce judgment before the time" (1 Cor. 4:5).

Fourth and finally, our judgments must be motivated by love. When we judge people behind their backs, run them down to other people, question their motives, and otherwise smear their character, our judging is out of keeping with the will of God. When we judge in a way

that is appropriate, what we do is for the good of the other person, not for their destruction. But when we broadcast our negative opinions of others, this is gossip and has nothing to do with love. Righteous judgment is not done to discredit or harm the person judged. It is done in order to help that person live more faithfully.

When the apostle Paul told the Corinthians to cut off the immoral man from their fellowship, this was for the man's good and their good. This becomes more apparent when we look to a following letter the apostle wrote to that church. Paul confesses that he himself suffered as he made the needed judgment: "For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love I have for you" (2 Cor. 2:4). Evidently the man responded by changing his ways. Thus Paul urged the church to receive him back with open

arms. When judging is done in bitterness and apart from a real loving effort to lead the one judged to a closer walk with God, then that judging is out of place in Christian life. But when we judge in order to heal, in order to encourage faithfulness, in order to care, then that judging is necessary and good.

And so when asked whether or not we should judge, the answer must be, "It depends." It depends upon God's judgment. It depends on our willingness to be serious about judging ourselves. It depends upon our willingness to be tentative and ready to revise our judgments. It depends upon love. Especially it depends upon love, first, last and always.

Craig, long-time writer for Integrity and other publications, ministers to the First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at Carbondale, Illinois.

"Whatever You Ask . . ."

ELMER PROUT

"Whatever you ask..." We know how that verse ends, don't we? The promise sounds straightforward and clear-cut. More than that, Jesus Christ himself said the words.

"And I will do whatever you ask in my name... You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it... the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name." (John 14:13,14; 15:7,16; 16:23)

We read the Lord's words. We listen to His assurance. We pray believing — and yet the child dies, the congregation divides, wars break out, famine spreads...

Was our faith too shallow? Was our interpretation of the promise too broad? Did we miss the Lord's meaning? How shall we deal with the gap between our expectations for prayer and

the realities of life?

The complete answer undoubtedly will not come until "we know as we are known." But one of G. A. Studdert Kennedy's World War I dialect poems may help us as faith seeks for understanding.

The following poem reminds us that prayer is not the neat, simple matter that we would like to imagine. The encounter between life in this world and the practice of prayer often leaves us as baffled as the soldier on a distant European battlefield.

I were puzzled about this prayin' stunt,
And all as the parsons say,
For they kep' on sayin', and sayin',
And yet it weren't plain no way.
For they told us never to worry,
But simply to trust in the Lord,

"Ask and ye shall receive," they said,
And it sounds orlright, but, Gawd!
It's a mighty puzzling business,
For it don't allus work that way,
Ye may ask like mad, and ye don't receive,
As I found out t'other day.
The poem pictures a lull in the fighting. The soldiers were sitting talking when suddenly the warning of a mustard gas attack struck terror into the troops. They attempted to escape and prayed as they ran.

And there I seed it, comin' across,
Like a girt big yaller cloud,
Then I 'olds my breath, i' the fear o'death,
Till I bust, then I prayed aloud.
I prayed to the Lord Almighty above,
For to shift that blinkin' wind...
But the wind did not shift. Overcome by the gas the soldier awakens in a hospital. He asks about his buddies and finds that he is one of the few survivors. He is especially troubled by the death of his pal, Bill.

It weren't for me I were grieved, ye see,
It were my pal Bill — 'e's dead.
For me, I'm a single man, but Bill
'As kiddies at 'ome and a wife.
And why ever the Lord didn't shift that wind
I just couldn't see for my life.

The soldier's spiritual and mental struggle went on and on. The parson's talk about prayer did not fit with battlefield, mustard gas attack and death. Then, somehow, the survivor came on to a copy of the New Testament.

But I've just bin readin' a story 'ere,
Of the night afore Jesus died,
And of 'ow 'E prayed in Gethsemane,
'Ow 'E fell on 'Is face and cried.
Cried to the Lord Almighty above
Till 'E broke in a bloody sweat,
And 'E were the Son of the Lord, 'E were,
And 'E prayed to 'Im 'ard; and yet,
And yet 'E 'ad to go through wiv it, boys,
Just same as pore Bill what died.
'E prayed to the Lord, and 'E sweated blood,
And yet 'E were crucified.

This reference to the Garden prayer of Jesus Christ brings us to the heart of the matter — whatever prayer is, the Son of God Himself fully entered into the struggle of it. Prayer did not

provide Jesus with a convenient escape. Prayer does not let people out of life. Prayer leads INTO LIFE — specifically, into life for others. Jesus did not only teach his disciples to pray in words — He demonstrated the full tension of prayer in the Garden. He calls us to follow Him into His experience of prayer in all its aspects — not prayer defined by our wishes but by His loving truth.

But 'Is prayer were answered, I sees it now,
For though 'E were sorely tried,
Still 'E went wiv 'Is trust in the Lord unbroke,
And 'Is soul it were satisfied.
For 'E felt 'E were doin' God's Will, ye see,
What 'E came on the earth to do,
And the answer what came to the prayers 'E
prayed

Were 'Is power to see it through...
For the only Gawd that a true man trusts
Is the Gawd what sees it through.

The quality of our lives will, of course, never come up to that of the Lord Jesus Christ. Our deaths, if we happen to be called on to die for the gospel, may be noble but they can never be part of the atonement. That sacrifice could be done by the Lamb of God alone. Still, we can enter into the tone of the prayers of Jesus Christ. We may not find the "logical" answers about prayer about which we wonder. But perhaps, after all, the solution does not lie in human logic but in faithfulness. We may come to the point where we join Bill's pal in saying:

And Bill, 'e were doin' 'is duty, boys,
What 'e came on the earth to do,
And the answer what came to the prayers I
prayed
Were 'is power to see it through;
To see through to the very end...

Quotations are from *The Unutterable Beauty*, The Collected Poetry of G.A. Studdert Kennedy, London: Hodder and Stoughton, October 1930.

Since 1958 Elmer has spent half of his time in Japan and the other half in California serving churches of Christ. A long time Integrity subscriber, he presently lives in Hitachi, Ibaraki, Japan and is working with the Numazu church.

The Preacher's Feet

HOY LEDBETTER

Several years ago, so the story goes, the proprietor of a general store in Tennessee noticed that a farmer who entered his establishment was needing new shoes. Smelling a sale, he set upon him with full vigor. The farmer held up well under this onslaught for a while, but when the merchant offered to sell him the shoes on credit, he could no longer resist. As the newly-shod farmer started to leave, the smiling salesman quipped, "Now, John, you can go home singing How Firm a Foundation." To which John quietly replied, "Yes, and you can sing A Charge to Keep I Have."

Such stories can bore people for generations because they are so hard to forget. I thought of this one the other day when I bought some new shoes. Since I have very sensitive feet, buying new shoes is always an ordeal for me. Lately I have decided to put comfort above looks. There is some risk in this; I well remember how the Britons complained about Andre Previn rehearsing the London Symphony Orchestra in his sneakers. My wife has already ruled that my latest pair will not do for weddings, and she is not too excited about them in the pulpit. As for myself, I am not sure whether the congregation would prefer for the minister to appear to

understand the problem of pain, or to exhibit the joy of redemption.

But whether the preacher wears Reeboks or Roebucks, whether he comes in Bally's Best or Blue Light Specials, his feet will always look good when he brings good news. "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Moreover, the style and material of his shoes are not important as long as they provide a good foundation, that is, if he has his feet "shod with the preparation (or foundation) of the gospel of peace."

These thoughts, which I believe to be useful for us all and not just for preachers, are a reminder of our need to keep our priorities straight. What could be more important, and what could make us more attractive (at least among those whose opinion matters), than to take our stand on the gospel and proclaim it with diligence? And even as we think on this, the feet are awaiting orders from the head.

Hoy, founding editor and Editor-in-Chief of Integrity for 15 years, presently serves First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Albany, Georgia with his wife Jary and daughter Priscilla.

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Book Review:

The Presence of God in Pastoral Counseling, by Wayne E. Oates, Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1986, 132 pages, \$12.95.

NATALIE RANDALL

Wayne Oates' most recent book might well be a breath of fresh air to the pastoral counselor who has tried different counseling theories and techniques with unsatisfactory results and has lost sight of God's constant and sustaining presence in the counseling relationship. It could also offer hope and encouragement to the discouraged counselor mired in the daily drudgery of depressed clients and difficult problems. The book offers insight to the counselor who may be wondering if the Lord is sending His Spirit to work through him or her.

But this is not the how-to book that it might first appear to be. Oates does not try to offer practical advice to the new pastoral counselor concerned with how to effectively share with a client the hope there is in Jesus, or the saving grace of the Lord and the strength that is found in the sustaining arms of the Lord. But rather, he shows how to communicate the presence of God in the act of reaching out to others who hurt, with quiet listening, and in community with others.

This book consists mostly of Oates' thoughts and meditations on the presence of God in pastoral counseling. The book points toward God's presence, proclaims it, identifies it. Oates calls the presence of God the lasting center of pastoral counseling.

The concentration of Oates' book is advocating the centrality of the Presence of God in the day-to-day work of pastoral counselors, shifting the emphasis from the scientific exploration of interpersonal relationships to the worship dimension.

Oates, who is professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at the University of Louisville School of Medicine in Louisville, Kentucky, and earned his B.D. (Th.M.) degree in Christian Ethics from Southern Baptist

Theological Seminary, offers a twofold purpose for this book: 1) To reflect briefly with the reader on the transient, temporary, unreliable centers of pastoral counseling; and 2) to explore the difference it can make if counselors make the Presence of the Eternal God the central dynamic in their dialogue with counselees. He advocates moving from dialogue to triologue in pastoral counseling.

Oates begins with much clarifying of his meaning of the presence of God, detailing what he does not mean and defining what he does mean: the general, inescapable presence of God; the presence of God as dwelling with humankind; the gospel of the glory of God in Jesus Christ dwelling among us; and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Father and the Son. (John 14:16-17, 23). He talks about the presence of God in a people with a clear identity. He says that a community of concern, of faith and free of pretense is needed — a people of God — the peoplehood of faith. He calls isolated care of an individual helpful, but incomplete.

Oates offers a brief history of counseling preachers and continues with a historical overview of the development of pastoral counseling. He chronicles what he sees as the dramatic shift of pastoral counseling from a commitment to a Freudian or Sullivanian kind of psychoanalysis to the use of client centered therapy as classically stated by Carl Rogers. The 50s, 60s and early 70s were spent in a non-directive approach to counseling, with the Rogerian approach becoming the controlling central commitment of a large number of pastoral counselors. This commitment, he says, has now begun to give way to more realistic use of pastoral initiatives and other more active kinds of approaches.

A later stated purpose of the book is to explore biblical accounts of the epiphanies and theophanies describing the presence of God in living conversations with persons and to interpret the pastoral counseling relationship with the presence of God as its lasting and abiding center.

Oates recounts such biblical events and relationships as Daniel and interpretations of Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and the relationship between Jacob and Esau and points out the presence of God in these encounters and draws parallels to today's pastoral counselor.

Oates believes that a serious reexamination of the spiritual life of the counselor and a reassessment of pastoral counseling in terms of the counselor's unique responsibilities as spiritual director of a person's faith development is taking center. Hence, he expresses hope that his book is a timely encouragement that the presence of God be our central focus.

Natalie has a B.A. degree with majors in psychology and journalism and is pursuing a M.A. degree in counseling. She worships with the Church of Christ in Troy, Michigan and resides in Pontiac with her husband Karl and their two children.

Readers' Response

You have been mailing Integrity to me for over ten years and each issue has been a blessing to me in one way or another. Sometimes instructive — again intellectually stimulating; always comforting, it has helped me to have an open mind, and helped me to keep my determination to not be locked into a sectarian "Church of Christ" mindset.

I love the Lord's church, and am convinced the restoration plea is the correct approach in coming nigh to God — if only we can avoid the impulse to enforce our biases as the law of the Lord.

Thank you for all the encouragement through the years.

Coy Warren
Ft. Worth, TX

Thank you for Integrity. I find the Spirit of cooperation demonstrated by members of the Churches of Christ, independent Christian Churches, and the Disciples of Christ through Integrity to be very refreshing. May God continue to bless your work.

Greg Childers
Morgantown, Kentucky

Thank you for the Sept./Oct. issue of Integrity. I especially enjoyed Hoy Ledbetter's article "Looking Out for Number Two." May our Lord bless you and give you the comfort of the presence of His Holy Spirit.

C.A. Van Horn
Brooksville, FL

Integrity has improved in that the articles are more positive and not as much self-righteousness toward the self righteous or "legalist." Thanks.

Jerry Owen
Wilmington, Delaware

I have appreciated your work over the last several years...Sometimes I am filled with despair at the future of the "Church!" At other times I am filled with joy when I hear one of the younger preachers struggling where I was some twenty years ago. I'm certain the Lord is not done with us yet!

May the Lord bless you in your search for Him!

R.D. Ice
Philippi, W.V.

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