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Integrity

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We need to be conditioned through faithful endurance like Anna's to see in an obscure child the assurance that God's plan has been brought to birth and will grow to maturity in God's good time and in God's perfect way. We must remember, however, that that process is never without sacrifice, and rarely without doubt along the way.

-Elton D. Higgs

Elton D. Higgs, a graduate of Abilene Christian University, is a professor of Medieval Literature at University of Michigan, Dearborn. As a member of the *Integrity* board, Elton has dedicated time, skills, and wisdom to this magazine's ministry for nearly 20 years.

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Simmering Toward Redemption

As we approach the Christmas season once again, I find myself attempting to reconcile some thoughts about redemption and endurance.

One of the little-noticed events connected with the infancy of Jesus is the encounter of the prophetess Anna with the baby Messiah when she was 84, evidently having lived in the temple fasting and praying for most of her life. Luke 2:38 tells us that after seeing him, she "spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." I would suppose that Anna died before Jesus even began his ministry, and thus, though she had met the Messiah, she was nevertheless among those who did not see the complete fulfillment of God's promise but "greeted it from afar" (Heb. 11:13).

If I had been Anna, I think I might have wondered how this baby was going to be "the redemption of Jerusalem" if he was going back to Nazareth to be raised in an obscure setting by parents of no apparent distinction. I might have asked, "Why did God keep me around until the age of 84 just to see this baby and then to die?" But in this briefly described incident I find a paradigm of what Jesus meant when he told his disciples that "he who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matt. 10:22).

In my experience, God typically fulfills his promises of redemption through a process (to use a cooking analogy) closer to simmering than to boiling. That is, God's accomplishment of his purposes and designs is usually a slow-cooking rather than a fast-cooking process. I suspect that most people, like me, would rather be boiled than simmered—if, indeed, they have to be "cooked" at all! We wait, and we wait, and when some sign from the Lord finally comes, what we see is the beginning of another process, another call on our faith, rather than an end to our waiting.

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"Immanuel" and the God of Incarnation

THOMAS ROBINSON

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it (I Corinthians 12:27).

Carols and decorated trees and gifts and wise men and visits to family and tinsel and red ribbons and wreaths and manger scenes and stars and angels and shepherds and jingle bells and choirs and city lights and Santa Claus and cards and mistletoe and wish lists and stockings and decorations and happy children and maybe even snow.

What are all these wonderful signs of the season that fill us with that unmistakable glow that we call the Christmas spirit? They are the wrapping paper in which our culture both celebrates and hides the greatest and most mysterious gift of all, the astonishing, incomprehensible truth that God became one of us, one with us, one for us. Divine Incarnation! The interweaving and union of holy spirit and flesh, the mingling of time and eternity. I walk among the throngs of people on Fifth Avenue beneath the brilliant snowflake of lights, past the alluring colors and expensive wares of store windows. I hear the throb of traffic and smell the roasted chestnuts at a sidewalk vendor. I stop at Rockefeller Center and look down the corridor of angels with trumpets to the ice skaters whirling beneath the thousands of lights on the towering Christmas tree. Such expensive wrapping! My cynical head tells me it is all money-driven, the incarnation of mammon, but my heart won't let me fully believe that. Even in our selfish, extravagantly materialistic world,

we humans know there is something more. A mystery hidden beneath the brilliance, something quiet and profound, something more valuable than all the colorful wrappings.

Something More for All

As Christians we say, "Of course there is something more! Come and listen. We will tell you." We naturally want to take advantage of this time of the year when, however marginally, our secular neighbors turn their thoughts higher and deeper than the normal focus on now and mine. We have been caught by the mystery, changed, and given new life. We want others to know about that wonderful experience.

But the truth is that for Christians no less than anyone else, the mystery remains incomprehensible, beyond our explanations, lodged deep in the character of our astonishing God. It is the wonder of God that runs from the beginning of the Bible to the end. The God who is sufficient in himself, who needs nothing, who is all in all, who "In the beginning" is already there, chooses from his own love to create a world of people. The people are so much that he is not—physical, limited, mortal, flawed, fickle, capable of incredible evil, but also able to recognize and respond to beauty, goodness and love.

God begins the mystery of incarnation by making people in his own image, breathing his breath into them, choosing to give them a freedom that is part of his own nature, but that they can use to rebel and destroy themselves. God chooses to woo these creatures with tenderness and love, firmness and discipline.

Choosing the Inglorious

Over and over again, God chooses the unexpected way, the un-Godlike way, the way of incarnation. He chooses a single man of flawed character but faithful heart—Abraham. He chooses to dwell among a tiny nation, perennially rebellious, tossed about by powerful empires. They are called Israel, named for the man who struggled with God. God lets his plans seemingly fail: Israel is divided, destroyed, exiled, and David's supposedly everlasting throne is left desolate and empty. God hurts with the sufferers, calls them back to his sheltering arms, weeps with the tears of Jeremiah, comforts his tiny, harassed people. Why?

Why does a God of such unimaginable power and splendor choose such an inglorious way of showing himself in his world? Why is he a God of incarnation? And of course it does not stop with Israel. The story of Jesus' birth and death brings to fulfillment all that had gone before in the revelation of the nature of our God of incarnation. God would not leave us alone in our self-inflicted misery. He insisted on being among us. And when the eternal, creative, powerful Word of God, God's own Son, appeared, it was not as some glowing being of cosmic energy and limitless force worthy of Star Trek, but as a physical, limited *baby*, born—in a stable of all places—as a physical, limited man capable of being seized and scourged and nailed to a cross.

God finds his glory and power through defeat and death. His love is poured out in self-sacrifice. Why? Such an astonishing God, this God of incarnation! The incarnation does not even stop with Jesus. God continues to dwell in his people. Weak and

faulty and flawed as we are, he says that we are the "body of Christ" and his Spirit lives within us. In our limited bodies and lives the unlimited God chooses to show himself to the world that he created. God entrusts his work in the world to us human beings. God's choice of incarnation is no less amazing today than it ever has been in the past.

We Show the Story

God's choices are surprising, seemingly incomprehensible, but right. God knows who he is and how he wants to be made known in his world. He did not have to choose Abraham or David or Paul or us, but he did. We have been called to be a part of God's story of self-revelation to the world. It is a joy and a great challenge. When we carry out our ministries as part of the body of Christ, we become a living part of the wisdom of God that shines through all the ages. In our moment of time, in this glittering, materialistic, and violent world, God chooses to work through our hands, our love, our minds, our enfolding arms. Our weakness is nothing new for God. God is an expert at using the limited and faulty to show his eternal divinity.

We have learned to look at that baby cradled in a trough and realize that God is there. God is also here. His work has not ceased. And just as that seemingly weak and poor child eventually transformed our world, so also God can and will work through us to transform our cities. That child, that Word become flesh, was Immanuel—"God with us." It is he who promises "Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matthew 1:23;28:20).

Thomas Robinson serves the Manhattan Church of Christ in New York as an elder and associate minister. He is a graduate of Harvard and Union Theological Seminary, and holds a Ph.D. in New Testament and Christian Origins. Tom works as a freelance writer and editor for *Reader's Digest's* religious publications department.

Thoughts About the Christmas Season

HENRIETTA AND WILLIAM PALMER

The Christmas season is a special time of year to honor the greatest giver of all time—God, our Heavenly Father. Families and friends join together to celebrate God's greatest gift, Jesus, his precious Son! Jesus, savior of the world, brought a message of love, compassion, peace, and hope. During the Christmas season we feel God's presence as we gather with our family to read Luke's account of the birth of Jesus. We enjoy the beautiful Christmas carols which remind us of God's great gift to the world. The words and music of Handel's great "Messiah" bring alive the Old Testament scriptures

which prophesied the coming of Christ. Because of God's great gift to us, we enjoy sharing our blessings with others. As parents and grandparents, it is always a joy to surprise our loved ones with gifts especially chosen for them. Financial gifts to missionaries and to others who are less fortunate are a way of thanking God for the blessings he gives each day. God's great love was an example for us. He chose his Son as a special gift to all who believe, and he promised salvation and an eternal home with him to all who believe in the redeeming blood of Jesus.

Henrietta and William Palmer are retirees who actively serve the Troy, Michigan, Church of Christ as teacher and elder, respectively, and the *Integrity* ministry (more than 16 years).

What Christmas Means to Me

KEITH PRICE

To understand what Christmas means to me, you have to know a little of my background. I grew up in a non-religious home where Christmas was a time of gifts. It was also a time of getting together with my father's family and watching the men play poker or shoot dice while the women socialized. I dreamed of the day when I would turn 18 and be allowed to sit in with the men. The only reference to Christ and his birth came as we watched the animated version of "The Little Drummer Boy" on television.

When I became a Christian, I really expected Christmas to have a special meaning. You can imagine my surprise when there was no sermon on the birth of Christ,

no decorations or posters celebrating Christmas. And the real kicker was being told "the Bible doesn't tell us to celebrate his birth. We celebrate his death every week around the Lord's supper. Besides, Christ wasn't born on December 25th."

And although it's nearly impossible to be a humbug with a wife who is constantly cheerful, I gave it my best effort. So what does Christmas mean to me? It means that at a point in time God sent his son and that his Son entered into our history. "But when the time had fully come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman" (Gal. 4:4). God didn't wait for us to respond first. He injected himself into human history. December 25th, September 4th, April 1st—

the exact date really doesn't matter. The fact that Christ came, the Word who was God become flesh and dwelled among us, shows God cares.

To me, Christmas is now a time of showing love. Eventually, many members of my father's family came to know Jesus. Christmas has become more of a time of sharing and being a family. My father's eyes light up as he tells stories of the families he's met at a Ronald McDonald House or the people he's helped on a construction project for an inner-city church. We are all like Jesus' early disciples—imperfect but learning.

Finally, to me Christmas means opening the heart. What can cause people to open

their hearts and be more considerate, kind, patient, and understanding? What can cause people to open their wallets and give? A local radio station parks a semi-trailer in a parking lot and people fill it with food for the hungry! What can cause people to make extra special efforts to reach the needs of people? The birth of Christ is one of the most heart-warming stories in the Bible. It can open the hardest of hearts. So go ahead—celebrate Christmas; reread the Christ story. Let the day mean more to your children than the giving of gifts. "And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him" (Col. 3:17).

Keith Price serves the Troy, Michigan Church of Christ as a deacon and teacher and serves on the *Integrity* Board as secretary.

Making a World of Difference at Calgary

GARY PEARSON

Someone at the World Convention of Churches of Christ held in Calgary, Alberta, Canada, this past summer made the statement that once you attend a World Convention, it's in your blood from that point on. I have definitely found that to be true for myself. The Calgary World Convention will be one of the defining points for my spiritual journey.

My wife, Becki, and I were privileged to attend the 14th World Convention of Churches of Christ in Calgary, Alberta, Canada from July 29 to August 4, 1996. The theme was "A World of Difference." This convention or lectureship is the only forum that regularly brings together Christians from all parts of our Stone-Campbell movement. It is a truly international gathering. Future World Conventions are scheduled

for Brisbane, Australia, in 2000 and Brighton, United Kingdom, in 2004.

Nine main sessions were held. Music was a big part of each session with numerous American and Canadian choirs and special singing groups being featured, as well as a generous amount of congregational singing. There was something for everyone in terms of musical preferences, from classical hymns to contemporary praise songs to songs with a Caribbean beat. In two of the evening sessions the instrumentation was too much for our "a cappella ears," but was more subdued and conducive to hearing the lyrics we were singing most of the rest of the time.

Two sessions were entirely a cappella: the Thursday evening session in which

Rubel Shelly spoke and the concluding Sunday worship assembly.

Each session featured a keynote speaker. The speakers reflected the diversity of our movement representing five nations as well as all three streams of our divided American and Canadian movement. These speakers were sometimes styled as lecturers, but they didn't lecture. They preached, and for the most part magnificently. High points for me included the preaching of Cynthia Hale, John Killinger, and Gordon Moyes. Rubel Shelly delivered an outstanding message calling for Christian unity that likely surprised many of those present who had never heard an a cappella minister preach.¹ If World Convention were nothing more than a preaching event, it would be worth attending.

International Commitment

Perhaps 30 percent of the more than 2,000 who registered were from American and Canadian "independent" Christian Churches and Churches of Christ (instrumental). Sam Stone, editor of the *Christian Standard*, told me that, to his knowledge, this percentage was the largest number ever present from these congregations for any World Convention. One percent of those registered were from Jamaica. Given the exchange rates (\$35 Jamaican equals \$1 US), this represented a great financial sacrifice and commitment to World Convention. Individuals were also present from Poland, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, Thailand, and Brazil. Another 11 percent of those attending were from Australian Churches of Christ. Considering the distance and expense of coming to Calgary, this showed an impressive commitment to World Convention. Becki and I seemed to find ourselves constantly with Australians, and we didn't meet one we didn't like. My

impression was they, along with the 1 percent present from New Zealand, exercise a very positive influence in World Convention that goes well beyond their numbers.

An Undivided Continent

The Australians and New Zealanders are quick to point out that the restoration movement "down under" never divided, and thus they bring a perspective to World Convention that is quite different from that of Americans and Canadians. They seem to have combined a strong commitment to holding on to basic Bible teachings and practices with an equally strong commitment to Christian unity. This unusual combination intrigues me and leaves me with a desire to know them better.

The amazing story of Gordon Moyes, one of the two Australian keynote speakers, illustrates this dual commitment. He is a Church of Christ preacher who unashamedly proclaims Walter Scott's "five finger exercise" in a historically Methodist congregation of the United Church of Australia. This Sydney congregation, the Wesley Mission, is Australia's largest church, with 55 worship assemblies each week and 50,000 in attendance last Christmas. Moyes has helped this church change from infant baptism to the immersion of believers. His influence has helped change the official stance of the entire United Church of Australia on baptism, so that this historically paedobaptist denomination now views baptism of believers by immersion as the preferred mode of baptism.

Two to three percent of those who came to Calgary were from American and Canadian a cappella churches. This figure may seem low, but it represented their greatest participation ever in World Convention. One of the blessings of going to Calgary for

me was the opportunity to finally meet Leroy and Ouida Garrett in person. Leroy has long been the sole a cappella presence in World Convention's Executive Committee. At their first World Convention in 1974 he and Ouida were the only two present from an a cappella church. He viewed the approximately 60 present in Calgary as tremendous progress.

Given the numerically minor presence of those from a cappella churches, the openness and sensitivity shown toward us was remarkable. Having a cappella singing in two out of nine main sessions and including an a cappella keynote speaker were clear signals that our presence was warmly welcomed.

Strong Disciples' Support

Almost all of the remaining majority present were American and Canadian Disciples. World Convention is heavily dependent on the Disciples of Christ both financially and for providing large numbers of participants for the Conventions. Without the support of the Disciples over the 66 years of World Convention, it is highly

While almost no one is breathing aloud the word merger now, it does not take a prophet to see that this is the likely outcome . . .

unlikely that it would have lasted to the present. At the same time, this dependence on the Disciples raises one disturbing question for the future. It was rare to meet a Disciple at Calgary who was under the age of 50. Many were in their 60's and 70's, and had faithfully attended over the decades.

As this generation passes on, it remains to be seen whether younger Disciples will replace their elders as World Convention supporters.

A related cloud on the horizon is the likely merger between the Disciples and the United Church of Christ. While almost no one is breathing aloud the word merger now, it does not take a prophet to see that that is the likely outcome of the ecumenical partnership between the Disciples and the UCC. Such a merger would likely gradually subsume the Disciples identity within the numerically larger UCC and leave little interest for maintaining ties with their more conservative brethren in the rest of the Stone-Campbell movement.

What does the future hold then for the World Convention of Churches of Christ? Only time will tell, but my hope is that, whether the Disciples' support diminishes or not, support and participation from the independent and a cappella churches will continue to grow. With the spadework for unity that has been done by leaders such as Victor Knowles, Denny Boultinghouse, Rubel Shelly, Marvin Phillips, and others, as well as the late Reuel Lemmons and Don DeWelt, the conditions appear fertile for a much larger presence in World Conventions of the next century. As an a cappella preacher, I especially hope to see the day when hundreds from a cappella churches are present.

Kudos to the Jacobs

No review of Calgary would be complete without mention of the extraordinary commitment of Lyndsay and Lorraine Jacobs, New Zealanders who have served as General Secretaries since 1992. They are the sole full-time staff and, on a limited budget, they have spread the news of World

Convention, handled an immense amount of correspondence and done all of the preparatory work necessary to make Calgary a successful reality. Their accomplishment is all the more remarkable given the circumstances of their own personal lives. Lorraine had traveled back to New Zealand in January to be with her ailing mother, who died of cancer just days before the Convention began. Lyndsay was hospitalized for stress earlier this year. They will continue to serve as General Secretaries through the next World Convention in 2000.

Keep the Vision Alive

As heirs of a noble vision of Christian unity passed down to us from Stone and the Campbells, we have made a sorry mess of things by our many divisions and petty arguments. For six days, however, that vision came alive again in Calgary. If Stone and Campbell could see this gathering from their eternal rest, I know that they were pleased. While flying to and from Calgary, I read some selected writings of Carl

Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett that Cecil Hook compiled in *Our Heritage of Unity and Fellowship*.

These words of Carl Ketcherside seem to me to capture perfectly the spirit of the World Convention of Churches of Christ:

I have steadfastly set my face in the direction of the unity of all believers in Christ Jesus my Lord. I shall pray for it, plead for it, and proclaim it. I shall never be deterred. I shall never become discouraged. I will never be satisfied until all of us regard one another as God regards all of us. And when the time comes that the pen drops from my nerveless fingers, and my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth, I shall rest content, if on the gray marble above my head can be chiseled the words, "He preached peace to them that are afar off and to them that are nigh!"²

¹ According to Leroy Garrett, this was the second World Convention to feature an a cappella keynote speaker. The first was in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1965, when Carl Ketcherside spoke.

² W. Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett, *Our Heritage of Unity and Fellowship*, edited from *Restoration Review* and *Mission Messenger* by Cecil Hook (New Braunfels, Texas), p. 104.

Gary Pearson has served the Westminster Church of Christ in Westminster, New Jersey, as an evangelist for more than 13 years. He holds a B.A. from David Lipscomb University and a J.D. from Vanderbilt University School of Law. He and his wife, Becki, are also therapeutic foster parents for the Kennedy-Kreiger Institute.

"May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."

-John 17:23

Bending the Twig

LAQUITA AND ELTON HIGGS

Winter is upon us, and it is a good time for parents to set aside some evenings for reading aloud to the children. One of the best memories our older children have is of those evenings when Dad would read aloud and Mom would do needlework while the children spread out on the floor with their crayons and coloring books. Over the years we read C.S. Lewis's delightful "Narnia" series (7 books) and, when the children were a little older, J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*.

Even though they were able to read the books themselves, our children never tired of that special family time, when Dad's voice brought those stories alive. Reading aloud to children helps them develop an "ear" for language, which will make them more capable readers and better writers, and nothing gives moral instruction more effectively than a good story, if the book is well chosen.

Honey for a Child's Heart

To help you choose the right books, Gladys Hunt's *Honey for a Child's Heart* is unsurpassed. We recently re-discovered it in the church library and were delighted to learn that it is still in print (\$9.99; 3rd ed., 1978; Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI 49506). We're ordering several copies to give to others, as it is such an inspiration for family reading.

Hunt emphasizes that well-chosen words are a gift of God which minister to the spirit, and she gives examples of how family reading can draw the family together and teach great lessons of courage, honesty, and

faith. Hunt believes that good literature which has stood the test of time teaches our children, even though it may not be overtly religious. But she also has an inspiring chapter on the possibilities for family Bible reading. At the end, Hunt includes an extensive annotated bibliography for various age groups which alone is worth the price of the book. As Hunt wrote:

Children and books go together in a special way. I can't imagine any pleasure greater than bringing to the uncluttered, supple mind of a child the delight of knowing God and the many rich things he has given us to enjoy. This is every parent's privilege, and books are his keenest tools. Children don't stumble onto good books by themselves; they must be introduced to the wonder of words put together in such a way that they spin out pure joy and magic (p. 14).

Highly recommended.

The Enchanting Land of Narnia

Since we've mentioned C. S. Lewis's "Narnia" series for children, let us tell you a little more about it, just in case it is unfamiliar to you. Narnia is a land of both humans and talking animals, and the first book of the series, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, describes how four children from our world are magically transported to Narnia, which is caught in the grip of the White Witch, so that there is always winter in Narnia but never Christmas. Never, that is, until the great lion, Aslan, comes. Just the coming of Aslan brings spring, but the

power of the witch is totally defeated when Aslan dies a sacrificial death and then comes alive again.

One of the books has a beautiful retelling of the creation, while another has a splendid description of heaven, but all in the context of enchanting stories.

The cartoon video of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is quite good (we're not so fond of the videos which use real children as actors), but it must be emphasized that the videos are no substitute for the books, which should be a "must" for every elementary school-age child—or for any age.

Lewis believed that no book is "really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally worth reading at the age of fifty" (Hunt, p. 39), and we might as well confess that the adults in our household have reread the Narnia books several times. Truly delightful!

Recommended for Pre-Teens

A good gift for a pre-teen girl is a trilogy by Wanda Luttrell: *Home on Stoney Creek*, *Stranger in Williamsburg*, and *Reunion in Kentucky* (1995, Chariot Books, A Division of Cook Communications Ministries, Colorado Springs, CO 80918). Set in the exciting days of the American Revolution and the first settlement of Kentucky, the well-written books are engaging and instructive about life in the early times, but they also deal with Sarah's maturing faith in God, though not in a "preachy" kind of way. After being unhappy and even a little angry with God about her family's move to the wilderness of Kentucky, Sarah gradually comes to appreciate the working of God in her life.

Heard Through the "Bending the Twig" Grapevine

We heard from a friend in Oklahoma, Kenneth Franklin, who wrote about the parenting advice that his father gave him years ago. He mentioned two items which are worth consideration: (1) Never question a child too hard and too closely, else the child might be pushed into telling a lie. (2) Better to tell a child to do two things

... no book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally worth reading at the age of fifty. . . .

and have him do only one, than to tell him to do ten things and have him do only five. Sage advice. We do need to set high expectations for our children to encourage them to do their best work, but we also need to be wary of unrealistic expectations, which only set them up for failure. We need to pray for wisdom to get the right balance.

David Finch in Taipei informs us that the book by Lynn Clark, *SOS! Help for Parents*, mentioned in an earlier column, can be obtained only from the publisher (Parents Press, P.O. Box 2180, Bowling Green, KY 42102). Sorry we didn't check on that sooner. If you cannot find the books and videos mentioned in this column in your local Christian bookstore, let us know, and we will be happy to send you the address of the Christian mail order discount house that we often use. The prices are good, and delivery is usually quick. Don't forget to give us your ideas and hints for better Christian parenting. We need to help each other. Write us (9 Adams Lane, Dearborn, MI 48120) or e-mail ("Ehiggs@umich.edu").

Music Review: *Out of the Quiver*

REVIEWED BY KATHLEEN BLAKELY AND DIANE KILMER

How did we ever get along before cars came equipped with cassette decks? I use mine constantly, to listen to sermons, for memorization, and to get lost in praise and worship music. Recently, I popped a new cassette tape into my deck called *Out of the Quiver*, a new collection of acapella praise and worship music from the Abilene Mission Church of Christ/Caravan Ministries. This is music for the thinking person, rich in four-part harmony, syncopated rhythms, and beautiful Old Testament imagery.

The Church's Praise Team recorded this grassroots-style music. Several of the songs stuck in my head right away, always a good sign. I didn't get tired of the tape after the first couple of times, either (also a good sign). Because I am interested in kids' music, I particularly loved both "I Am an Arrow" and "Sound the Trumpet." The press release which accompanied this sample tape states that these 14 original songs were written in direct response to prayer by the leadership of Abilene Mission Church in 1995. They had asked the Lord for new worship songs for their congregation to sing which reflected their own members' spiritual journeys.

Each song has a story behind it. The following testimony by Abilene Mission Church member Russell Stowers explains the background of the recorded song "Make Me Whole":

In February, 1996, while at my regular prayer meeting, a faithful brother prayed for me. He shared that while praying he had the impression that I was like a torn

paper doll. I was taken aback, because that had been exactly how I was feeling. Like so many times in my life, I was feeling desperate for God and needed him to rescue me from my demise. In fact, just the week before, I had written in my journal, asking God to please put the broken pieces of my life back together. When my friend finished praying for me, a memory came back to me that overwhelmingly confirmed what God was trying to tell me; I went into my room and found an old paper doll that I had kept since high school. It was torn in half. I had kept it because it symbolized the anger and brokenness in my life at the time. I had no idea that God would use that torn doll to tell me of his desire to make me whole.

The song "Make Me Whole" came from my unending gratitude for my Heavenly Father's faithfulness. He is making me whole daily and has released me from the bondage of homosexuality, hatred, unforgiveness, fear, and greed. May this song be your heart's cry as you receive God's mending.

Although *Out of the Quiver* is recorded acapella, an instrumental version is coming out soon. Cassettes cost \$10; CDS, \$14; sheet music and transparencies are available for \$12.95; add \$2.50 for shipping and handling of each order. To order, contact: Caravan Ministries P.O. Box 2299 Abilene, Texas 79604; (915) 670-9601.

Editorial

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Abraham didn't get the promised Isaac until he was 100 years old, and even after that he had to endure the test of being asked to give him back to God. Even Jesus, the "pioneer and perfecter of our faith," had to learn "obedience through what he suffered" (Heb. 12:2, 5:8), living a life of quiet preparation for 30 years, being rejected by those he came to save, being forsaken by his own disciples, and finally dying in ignominy. The end of God's promises seemed far away

when he was on the cross. When we are in the midst of one of God's "simmering" processes, it's often hard to do anything more than just hang on. And that's exactly what it means to endure—we focus our attention on what we know of God and on what he has already done and we hang on to that. Redemption is a process before it is an end, a process by which God prepares us to recognize the end for what it is: God's results—not our accomplishment and not

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"Are you still holding on to your *Integrity*?!"

-Job 2:9

Job's wife couldn't believe her husband's tenacity.
But with Job, holding on was a good thing.
With you, dear reader, it's *not*!

Please pass on your issue of *Integrity* to someone you
know who would benefit from this ministry.
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Pass it on!**

