You have no idea what kind of doors that will open. Many great churches, serving organizations and social movements have been built simply because someone took their role as an ambassador seriously. After all, our Lord – the One we represent – makes "all things new."
Instead of simply managing our anger, we need to transform ourselves.

Most people are familiar with the term "anger management." In fact, many of us know people who have gone through it. Anger management is big business today, both in psychology and in our pop culture. "Anger Management" is even the name of a major motion picture.

If you read between the lines, the phrase reveals a pervasive deception: We no longer believe in change. At some point, our cultural consensus decided to just settle for managing dysfunctional and dangerous behavior. We no longer have any hope of removing or healing it, so we will just try to contain it.

That kind of thinking does not build great civilizations.

Allowing Christ to transform us

Part of the problem behind our social acceptance of aberrant behavior is that Christians have failed to proclaim and exhibit a biblical faith.

Jesus stepped onto this planet and issued an invitation to a higher way of life. He proposed a whole new way to live. That proposition did not try to accommodate the existing belief systems (even the religious ones). In a grand historical sense, Jesus turned conventional thinking upside down. In so doing, he opened a new road to a higher quality of life.

Jesus was not into "management." Because He came from Heaven, He knew the power of the age to come, and He was very comfortable with that. Jesus knew that when it is "downloaded" into the earth, transformation – not management – occurs. That's why He served physical healing, relational reconciliation, demonic deliverance and other glimpses of the age to come. He taught those who followed Him to do the same things.

I'm sure that's what the Apostle Paul was thinking when he wrote, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind . . ." (Romans 12:2).

Transformation is not the same as management. According to theologian and scholar Dallas Willard, "History has brought us to the point where the Christian message is thought to be essentially concerned only with how to deal with sin: with wrongdoing or wrong-being and its effects . . . The current gospel then becomes a 'gospel of sin management.' Transformation of life and character is no part of the redemptive message." 1

Breaking the cycle

Most of us, whether Christian or not, tends to think in defeatist terms. When we see signs of social decay, we shake our heads, blame the politicians or media and lament the passing era. Instead of mourning our current state of affairs, we can be part of a new order. We can become agents of the new rather than apologists for what is passing away.

One of the great testimonies of Focus on the Family is that it grew out of one man's confidence in a better way. Dr. James Dobson saw a problem and stormed into it; he really believed that America didn't have to lose the family. As a result, he helped to awaken a whole generation (actually about three generations) to a loving, active engagement of the culture about family. It is always more painful and risky to do something than to talk about it. But breaking the cycles of futility means we have an obligation to engage the problem.

Put this in the context of "anger management." How can we help ourselves (or someone else) change an angry spirit? The first step is to extend (and seek) forgiveness. Yes, you. Forgive your father, your mother, your Boy Scout leader, the man who cheated you out of that land, anyone who ever transgressed you.

Next, forgive yourself. Take your knee out of your own chest and let yourself get up off the ground. I don't care what the "issue" is (cruelty, theft, adultery, murder). Forgive yourself. Naturally, you should also ask forgiveness of anyone you've injured or offended.

Forgiveness isn't something you feel; it is something you do. To forgive is to release. Let them off the barbed wire hook which has them immobilized. Permit them to walk away into a brand-new day.

Finally, walk through your life as an Ambassador of Heaven. Represent the values, attitude and power of the higher call. Extend kindness, grace, compassion and healing everywhere you go. Be an agent of forgiveness in an unforgiving world. Let Micah serve as your mantra: "Do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God."