

Faith Of Our Youth

June 1998

"The Voice of Young Christian Faith"

Volume 5 Issue 2

The Christian Race

by Jolui Morris

I will never forget race day. It was a day of nerves and adrenaline, a day when all would be put to the test, and each would learn how he fared in comparison to his peers. For many of the participants, much time and effort had been put into preparing for this day: miles run, weights lifted, calories watched. For a sizeable number of others, however, cutting corners during practice runs, skipping "weight day," and enjoying a few too many twinkies had been the only preparations made. No place was this more apparent than at the starting blocks.

In those seconds preceding the gunshot, each runner would examine his competition. By the looks of some, it was apparent whether or not they had prepared. What every runner wanted to know about the others could always be found in their eyes. Those who had prepared had a burning in their eyes--they were there to win. The others had only a look that screamed "Let's just get this over with so I can go home." With the exception of post-season, it was this way in every race I ever ran or witnessed. Some are determined to win, some are not. In the Christian race, which are you?

"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it" (1 Cor. 9:24). Paul gave only one viable option for the race--running with a determination to win. To run otherwise is vain. There will be no certificate of partici-

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Wisdom of our Elders

by Milford Morris

Time is our most valuable asset. Without time we could not accomplish anything. The scriptures tell us in Psalms 90:10 the days of our years are three score and ten. But, as we look around there are many who don't make it to 70 years, for some of us only 15, or less, some 20 and more. For each life, God has set a time for dying and after that the judgment. It is not so important how long we live, but how good we live.

God has allotted us a period of time to serve Him. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14 says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter; fear God and keep His commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."

In Ephesians 5:16 it speaks about redeeming our time, that is, to make good use of our time. So we walk cautiously; not as fools, but as wise servants.

Remember in Mark chapter four; the parable of the sower, how the sower went out to sow. Some seed fell by the wayside, some fell on stony ground, some fell among thorns and some fell on good ground where it sprung up and yielded fruit. When we use our time wisely, not wasting it away on the ways of unrighteousness and sins of this world, we can be the seed that fell on good ground where we produce good fruits for the cause of Christ and His church.

How sad it is when we see our youth waste the precious commodity of time on non-productive living. Read how the prodigal son wasted away his inheritance on riotous living and became so poor as

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AWAY IN THE DISTANCE

by *Stephanie L. Moody*

Away in the distance
That bright and shining light
The one that leads me home
Is now coming to my sight

Away in the distance
The truth is always there
The one that shows me what to do
With tender, loving care.

Away in the distance
But always with us is
The one true source we need,
The powerful love of His.

Away in the distance
Far off it seems to be
But it's always right within us
If only we choose to see.



Martendale, IA Church of Christ

Wanted: Young Poets

Poetry is an excellent medium to teach truth. It elicits the deep emotions of the soul. It stirs the spirit to action. It strums chords of melody in the heart.

Young people, use your poetic skills and send the results to FOOY for publication.

Editor

**God Does Not
Plant A
Christian
Alone**

by *Lady Dianna Decena*

As we near the end of the summer season, we should not only reflect on the actions of ourselves but of, and with, each other.

Summer is the time of growth. God does not plant a Christian alone. In Acts 2:42, "They devoted themselves to . . . fellowship . . ." Spending time with each other, doing activities, is a way of growing. When Christians spend time together, it's something God wants. As it says in Malachai 3:16, "Then those who feared the Lord listened and heard." Christians need each other: by friendships, bonds, and fellowships. As a result, we grow in faith and encourage one another. "Just as each of us has one body with many members, . . . so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us." Rom. 12: 4-6. This also leads to worship and praises together. Therefore, we "Rejoice with those who rejoice . . . and live in harmony with one another" Rom. 12:15-16.

We not only have to spend time together, but also importantly, we have to know each other on a personal level. As we grow together personally, it creates honesty and trust in one another. Trust is extremely important in relationships. Each of us needs it before we confess our sins to each other. "Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective," says James 5:16. As a result we also, "Carry each other's burdens . . ." according to Gal. 6:2. As we share our tears and laughter with one another, it gives us strength by the comfort, care, and compassion that is provided by our fellow Christians. As Christians, we are one body of Christ, and we must come together.

We can't isolate ourselves from each other, because we need each other spiritually. Fellowship with one another and forgiveness of our sins are what binds us together as we walk

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to eat with the swine.

Ecclesiastes 12:1 reads, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."

Paul told Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers in word, in conversation [manner of life], in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." If only we could meditate on this and carry it with us in our daily living, how profitable our time could be spent.

Happy was the old man who told his children to look sharp, act sharp, and be sharp, as they followed the example he set. So must we set the example of Christianity to the lost and dying world in sin.

Yes, remember now our Creator and our service to Him in faithful duty. In all things show yourself as a pattern of good works in sound responsibility that cannot be condemned, redeeming the time, that no matter whether we have 15 years, 20 years or three score and ten years, when we stand before God, He can say, "Well done thou good and faithful servant."



Elder of the Church
Murray Road Church of Christ

in the light of Jesus. Our forgiveness and fellowship are inseparable. We, with each other, must also be inseparable.

As we reflect on the past summer, which represents growth, we must remember that it is God that makes us grow, and it is God that causes us to grow together.



Member of the Church at
San Jose, CA

PASS IT ON!

by Matt Harvey

John Doe@anywhere.com:
"This e-mail has been around the world 7 times and has been read by over 1 million people. It brings good luck to those who pass it on. Unfortunately, it brings misfortune to those who trash it. A man in Europe passed on this e-mail and 3 days later he won a new car. A man in Mexico trashed this e-mail and a week later he lost his job. Do not neglect this letter! You must pass it on within 5 days to 10 people you know. Get ready for good things to happen! Pass it on!"

The internet has become a very popular way for people to communicate. It is a fast and effective way for people to send and receive mail through personal electronic mailboxes. With the increase in usage of the internet, there is also an increase in the amount of chain mail messages such as the one above which are forwarded by hundreds and thousands of people. These messages vary in content including typical chain mail messages, humorous stories or jokes, or warnings about new computer viruses.

Messages such as the one above (which is fictitious but "typical" of chain mail messages) are not only superstitious, they are false. Some people probably believe in chain mail messages which speak about good luck. They think they will really come true. Such a belief is contradictory to the Bible and is no different than relying on a daily horoscope to decide what to do today. This is a false belief and passing on these types of messages is not a good idea for Christians. Many other messages we pass on

are not necessarily against God's Will. However, with what frequency are we sending those false types of messages but not passing on the message of Christ? Often, we will forward e-mail messages without hesitation. How are we forwarding God's message to the rest of the world?

Isaiah writes "...ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silence." (Is. 62:6) This infers that we need to pass on the message of Jesus continuously. Whether by the words we speak or the actions we take, we are an example to the world. Our age does not matter. If we are Christians, we are set on a hill for the rest of the world to see.

We need not be ashamed to be Christians. Relative to early Christian times, we suffer very minor persecutions. The stoning of Stephen (Acts 7) was a horrific event for any Christian to endure. Stephen showed great faith and boldness by speaking Christ in such an environment. However, threat of this happening today is remote. Are we bold in our belief? Is it evident by our actions that we are Christians? Paul wrote to Timothy, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord..." (II Tim. 1:8) Our message is weak or nonexistent if we are ashamed of wearing the Christian name.

What kind of message are you forwarding to the world? In many instances, we are the world's Bible. Let us all be bold in professing Jesus to the world. Hopefully, we are pure enough that we can reflect God's light to the world on a continual basis and without being ashamed. His message is a joyous and everlasting message if used properly! Pass it on!



Member of the Church at
 Pleasant Hill—Des Moines, Iowa

God the Merciful

by Neal J. Ross

Questions of Mercy and Grace—Is Mercy important to us? Yes. Mercy is an emotion, object, and action, all acting together in one. It is something that a person can feel, for himself or upon others; it is a presence, something that is given from one person to another; and, it is an action, an act of compassion. So, what does mercy have to do with me, and my life with God? Hopefully, I can answer that question, and pose a couple more questions to you in an attempt to explain mercy and the grace of God.

First, is Man commanded to show mercy? Again, the answer is yes. I will again explain what mercy is later, but in Luke. 6:36 Christ states, "Be ye herefore merciful as your Father is also merciful." Here we have a direct commandment to show mercy to those around us. Also, in Matthew 5:7 Christ again says, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." Not only are we commanded, but we are blessed if we show mercy. And, on top of that, when we show compassion to others, we benefit ourselves in the process. Proverbs 11:17 explains, "The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh." If you are not merciful, however, the Father will show no mercy unto you. "For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (James 2:13). It would certainly be unfortunate if you do not show mercy and kindness to the world around you.

So, now that we know that we are to show this thing called mercy, what is it? And is grace the same thing? In Webster's Dictionary, Mercy is defined as a noun; an act of kindness or compassion. Grace is also defined as a noun; unmerited divine help or pardon. These two seem to be similar, but still different in one major respect...Man may only receive grace. Let me try to break this down, and show you what I am talking about.

We are able to perform these acts of kindness or compassion, as we

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News & Notes

Compiled by
Dan Huff

News from the Hawkeye State

From Vandalia:

First, on February 25 Devon Ingle was baptized. His parents are Greg and Margaret. Next, on March 22 Lariann Ingle was baptized. Her parents are Larry and Ila Ingle. On that same day, Melody and Tim Burkman had their first baby boy. His name is Mason Ray. He was born at 6:40 pm at Des Moines General Hospital. He weighed 7 lbs, 3oz. and was 20 inches long. He is very healthy and has lots of dark hair. The lucky first-time grandparents are Greg and Margaret Ingle. The other lucky grandparents are Don and Wanda Burkman. The first-time great-grandparents are Marvin and Melda Ingle. We had quite a joyful day that day.

Word from The Prairie State

From Itasca:

Javier Diaz Jr., Andre Bowling, Christy Wheeler will have graduated from High School, and Carrie Young will graduate from college this May.

Report from the Sunflower State

From Topcka:

Emery Wright won the 800 meter run in the first track meet of the season. The development class recently did a reading of the 119th Psalm, with complimentary passages going along with each letter of the Hebrew alphabet. It was very interesting and helped us understand that loooong

Psalm much more. Angie Meeks is attending college at Emporia State. She is a Junior this year, and plans to graduate in May of 1999. She was accepted into Alpha Kappa Delta (national honor society).

Note: Sent your news & notes items to Dan Huff.

dhuff@lakcozarks.net.

There are several good web pages on the internet that are worth your visit. These are some of them:

FOOY Online by Ariel Bown: <http://members.aol.com/ddeis1234/index.html>

(Includes past issues of FOOY)

Bread of Life by Dan Huff:

<http://www.lakeozarks.net/~dhuff/bol.htm>

(Includes Gospel Message On-line!)

Living Waters by Charles Fry

<http://users.aol.com/cfry/livwat/index.html>

(With connections to several other good sites.)

Tikvah by Louis Garbi

<http://www.lakeozarks.net/~tikvah/>

(New songs on-line)

"Prayer helps to establish character and fashion conduct, and both for their successful continuance depend on prayer."

—E. M. Bounds—

"GOD" (Continued from page 3)

are commanded. Thus we are able to give mercy to one another. However, we are simply not able to give grace.

Grace must come from someone or something divine, by definition. Now, we are not divine, nor above anyone else. Also, grace must also be given to someone who is unmerited. Our help is merited, people deserve our help, it would be sin to think otherwise. However, there is no possible way that we could be worthy of God's help. Man can give and receive mercy through acts of kindness; God can as well. However, God is the only giver of grace. Men are incapable of giving grace to other men or God. Now let us discuss the grace of God. Who receives this grace from God? First, those that humble themselves before God receive this grace. James 4:6 states that, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." And he continues to tell them to submit unto God and he will lift them up. Also, it is mentioned in I Peter 5:5. As stated earlier, Matthew 5:7 informs us that those that show mercy will obtain mercy. So, if we are compassionate and loving, we will be blessed with mercy from God. Additionally, it is given to those that fear and believe in him. Psalms 103:17 quotes, "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting upon them that fear him." Also, it is important to understand that God does not play games. I Peter 4:10 speaks of every believer having the same gift, God distributes his grace evenly and fairly.

What does this grace and mercy do for those who receive it? It will forgive sin. Hebrews 8:12 reads, "I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." God forgives our sin because he loves us, and he extends his mercy through Christ. Also this thought is mentioned in Ephesians 1:7. This is another thing that people cannot do: forgive sins committed by people against God. Thus, again, man cannot give pardon or grace.

God's grace also teaches us how to live. Paul tells Titus, in chapter 2 verses 11 through 13, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ."

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