

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

(See "GOD" on page 4)

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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God's grace also is sufficient for all human needs. II Corinthians 12:9, "And he said unto me, 'my grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.' Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Also, Romans 8:32, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" He does offer us all things, and he offers them through his Son, Jesus Christ.

Lastly, it will save us. Ephesians 2:8-10 explains, "For by grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." It is the grace of God that saves us. Do not misinterpret this passage to mean that works are not important for salvation, James 2 states that works are important. What this means is that Christ did not decide to come to this earth because of the actions of a man or men. Instead, it was a plan that began before the creation of the universe. John 1:17, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The important thing is that through Christ we have the grace of God available to us. And, with this grace we have the opportunity to be saved. Do not overlook the opportunity that is available. Follow Jesus, love him, and keep his commandments. This is the way to receive the grace of God, and the salvation that is available through it.

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

—Romans 6:23—



Excelsior Springs Church of Christ

Melodies in our Hearts by Louis Garbi

Speaking to One Another

It is always a pleasure to meet with a congregation where the singing is enthusiastic. A sense of interest and zeal is conveyed through being filled with the Spirit of God. (See Eph.5:18-19) It is not measured by the quality of harmony, pitch or volume. It is perceived through the congregation's involvement. Their love for the Lord and desire to serve are evident in this act of edification.

It may not always be that we can teach the church publicly, or deliver a sermon, but we can always sing. This helps to build up the church. It communicates to all in attendance that being there, among our brethren in the presence of the Lord, is a good thing.

Perhaps some of us are shy, and feel that our voice isn't good enough to be mingled with the rest. Maybe there are those of us with the token mentality. As we would take a crumb of bread or

just the squeak of a sip for the Lord's table (demonstrating that the elements aren't valued for the quantity of intake), so we mumble a song underneath our breath, supposing that volume doesn't matter. Being heard by one another does matter. "...speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs..." "...teaching and admonishing one another..." (Eph.5:19 / Col.3:16) These passages denote our need to hear one another and to enjoy this mutual participation. This is not to confuse loudness with zeal. However, the quiet approach seems to be the greater malady.

Through my brother-in-law, I was introduced to a style of singing called "Sacred Harp". This is practiced by folks of religious persuasion who meet with a similar conviction about singing as the churches of Christ. They use no mechanical instruments and utilize shape notes to facilitate the finding of pitch. I do not mention this to endorse this group or the tradition of using shape notes. Rather, they

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Nuf & Buz

by Ray Elliott



'NUF SAID?

"RACE" (Continued from page 1)

pation handed out when this race is over. You're either going to be a winner or a loser. To be a winner, you've got to remove thoughts of defeat, failure or something else you'd rather be doing. If there is something else you'd rather be doing than being a Christian, you'd might as well do it. An absence of determination results in uncertain running and the uncertain spend as much time turned from the goal as they do towards it. We must understand that any strength spent in any other direction than towards the goal is lost! Jesus said, "No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:62). He also admonished us to "Remember Lot's wife" (Lk. 17:32). She turned back and died. God's message in all of this is "Keep your eyes on the prize."

How is such determination manifested? In the same way the runners of a temporal race reveal their determination to win--proper preparation. Paul said, "... everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things" (1 Cor. 9:25a). The athlete who runs to win is self-controlled; he denies himself any pleasure that would later hinder his performance. Victory depends upon the greatest self-denial in preparation. The same applies to our race. Jesus said, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself..." (Mt. 16:24a). To turn from the sin that jeopardizes my relationship with God is the only way. This goes beyond denying only action, however. Since we are to "[do] the will of God from the heart" (Eph. 6:6d), we must deny thought, as well.

Ever heard someone say something like, "Well, if I weren't a Christian, I'd..."? How sad and revealing that such thoughts would enter the heart of an individual. Not only should we not participate in sin, but we should have no desire to. Christians should hate sin! It spots our garments of white, and makes us filthy in the eyes of God. We shouldn't think of the things that we don't participate in as things that we wish the Lord didn't prohibit. That's mental hypocrisy and just as incriminating in the eyes of God as the acts themselves. Jonah is a good example. He went to Nineveh as commanded, preached as commanded, and brought about a great return to God. He did it all right. Yet, when he saw that God was relenting from destroying the city, he was angry. For such thoughts God was angry with him. Motions and motives must both be right.

The race is going on right now. How are you doing? How hard have you been training?

How much are you exerting yourself? I read on a shirt several years ago the statement: "I've never lost, I've just been a little behind when the time ran out." Please don't be behind where you can and should be when your time here has expired. Now is the time to prepare. God simply wants to see through your life that you want to be with Him more than anyone else. Don't worry about how you stand in comparison to those around you. God will give the crown to the first and the last of those who have run to the best of their ability. We don't all run the same speed, but we can all win. Praise the Lord, we can all win!



Evangelist-in-Preparation
Murray Road Church of Christ

MELODIES (Continued from page 5)

do have an example which might be well to follow. When they sing, they are forthright and unvarnished. You can hear the elderly, working men and housewives, and young people, singing with gusto. Certain hobbyists (many of whom have little if any conviction about God) prize the raw power of these singers, and scorn the moderate attempts to smooth and polish the sound. It is ironic, that the plain sounds of humanity mingled in devotion to God, attract those who are enamored of the human content, not appreciating that it is devotion to God which makes the thing go. By the Spirit of God we enter into adoption, being received by God as His children. We cry Abba, Father. This quality of being sons and daughters of the living God should drive our singing.

The failure to fulfill this tenant has two extremes. There is the tired vacant sound, as if we don't care. We can sound like we are asleep and that our dreams are more important than the living hope of salvation. Conversely, we can manage to delude ourselves through a manic type of zeal, a vibrancy borne solely of the human spirit, and not the Spirit of God. I believe these are habits we slip into rather than blatantly disregarding the service of the saints.

These tendencies can be easily corrected. All we need to do is remember just what it is that Christ purchased with His blood... a people who have been saved from the wrath to come, a grateful people. With all of the attendant thoughts and emotions surrounding this central event of being reconciled to God, let us make a joyful noise to the Lord.



Evangelist of the Church
Eldon, MO Church of Christ

Songs of our Youth

Unto You, O Lord

Lyrics: John Baugh

Music: J. Baugh

Un-to You, oh Lord, my Rock, my Re - deem-er, I will cry.

Be mer - ci - ful to me, and heal my brok - en spir - it,

for with - out Your care the well of life runs dry.

I kneel be - fore You hum - bly now, trust - ing you, Your might your pow'r.

I know that You will hear my plea and be here by my side.

Un - to You my Re - deem - er, I will cry.

"FOOY" Views

As some may have noticed, the publication of FOOY is over one month behind our typical June mailing date. There is a good reason. On the first Wednesday evening in June, your editor was appointed elder, with Bob Cooper, of the flock which meets at Ozark, MO.

The new responsibility leaves little time for extra activities, i.e., publishing FOOY. Beginning with the October 1998 issue, Brother Jeremy Morris will be the new editor of FAITH OF OUR YOUTH. Jeremy has assisted me in the past and will do a good job of getting FOOY out on time and seeing that it is filled with faith-building material by our youth, for the edification of all.

Jeremy invites all young Christians to write and submit articles, poems, or teaching car-

toons for publication in future issues of FOOY. His mailing address is listed below.

The Ozark congregation will continue to fund the publication and distribution of FOOY. We believe it is a worthwhile endeavor in the Lord's vineyard; one that bears fruit to His honor and glory.

I want to take this opportunity to thank all who have shared their talents to make FOOY a success. The encouragement and strength I have received from working with each of you, far outweighs the many long hours spent compiling each issue. In fact, I give a lot of credit to my work with FOOY for lifting me to the heights of faith, strength, courage and desire necessary to fill the office of a humble shepherd of a flock of the Lord's.

I am confident that many of the young people who have contributed work for FOOY will someday be great elders, deacons, evangelists or teachers of truth. Most will be fathers and mothers who will raise their children to fear God and keep His commandments; children who will be future FOOY authors. May this cycle never end until that great and notable day of the Lord; the day when the faith of our youth, and of all, will become the reality of eternity.

My young friends, never forget to stretch forth hands of faith in prayer, always knowing that God is actively involved in the lives of His children. He will never leave you, nor forsake you. Pray without ceasing; for when faith ceases to pray, it ceases to live.

In Love and Faith,
Dwain R. Stoops

Faith of our Youth

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

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