



We Young Guys Can Learn From Some Old Guys

Constantine, who brought Christianity into respectability in the Roman empire, governed for 31 years and died in bed of natural causes. That was unheard of in those days. Most reigns were short and the emperors usually met with violent deaths.

Coincidence that Constantine outlived his peers? No. Christians in the ancient world regularly lived longer than their pagan neighbors. If life expectancy is any indicator of quality of life (which both reason and social scientists say it is), then that simply means that Christians lived better lives than just about anyone else.

In fact, as scholars look back on life in the ancient world (says Rodney Stark in an article in last month's *Christianity Today Library*) one of the reasons Christians lived better was that they saw themselves as their brothers' keepers. At the end of the second century, people from the pagan temples spent their time "on feasts and drinking bouts," while Christians devoted theirs, according to second-century Tertullian, "to support and bury old people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined to the house." In fact, the pagan emperor Julian says that the Christians were supporting not only their own poor "but ours as well."

Two of the biggest killers of people in those days were infanticide and abortion. "If you are delivered of a child," wrote a man to his pregnant wife, "if it is a boy, keep it; if it is a girl, discard it." But Christianity practiced neither abortion nor infanticide, so not only grew by births in its families but also by attracting pagan women who saw it as an escape from personal tragedies. Christianity also exalted faithfulness within marriage, very different from common marital abuses in that divorce-ridden society.

Of course, being a Christian cost: Christians were expected to aid the less fortunate, nurse the sick, love the unlovable. They were to be merciful and had to learn to be their brothers' keepers.

Which is to say, in 21 centuries nothing has changed. G. Crowe

Sit Before Standing

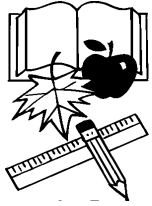
Standing. It seems like an easy thing to do, but I have recently discovered that things are not always what they seem. Sometimes it is really difficult to stand! Life is difficult: Pressures from work, school, family, and friends can seem to come from all sides and cave in on us.

Many times I have found myself trying to stand up to the temptations and struggles of this world. And many times I have fallen, only to get up and try to stand again against the enemy. The result has been the same almost every time. I fell.

I fell because I refused to acknowledge where it is that I was sitting. We all sit in a very special place, a place that gives power. How can we ever stand until we hear the words of Paul as he wrote to the Ephesians: ". . . God raised us up with Christ and **seated** us *with him* in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus." We are seated with Him. We sit in a position of power, a position that enables us to live holy lives, a position that enables us to engage with the good news of the Son.

I encourage you this week to stand. Stand for Christ! But before you attempt to do that, spend time coming to terms with where it is that you sit. You sit in a position of power. You sit at the foot of the cross....and because of where you sit, now you can stand! Have a great week....

~Dan



Can You Provide "Tools for Schools"?



Underprivileged children in our community are hit with the same school costs that all other children are, but it's tough for them to get what they need. Could you open your heart (and your wallet) to provide some of these items? There's a collection box in the Farris Foyer for you to put your supplies in, then in 2 weeks we'll transfer all items to the Salvation Army for distribution. Supplies needed include:

Lafayette 2nd & 3rd grade tablets	Plain pocket folder, no prongs
Letter sheet & penmanship tablets	Quart size freezer bags with zip top
Lafayette primary paper tablets	Gallon size freezer bags with zip top
Pedegree pink erasers	Highlighter-markers (yellow)
Prang oval paints-8 pan	Colored pencils, 12 count/24 count
Washable markers	Thin calculators
#2 pencils	Fiskars scissors, 5-inch pointed
Dry erasable markers, fine point	Ball point pens, erasable
Ball point pens, not retractable	Glue sticks
Two pocket folders with prongs	1" 3-ring binders

New and gently used clothing for students aged 4 to 18 is also needed. Many thanks for your generosity.



Lori Anne Perkins
and
Terry Dee Miller

invite you to attend our marriage on Saturday, July 29, 2006,
at 4:00 in the afternoon
at the Elmwood Church of Christ

Cake & punch immediately following the ceremony
in the fellowship room.

Celebration continues with a hog roast at
Prophetstown State Park at 6:30 p.m.

RSVP either by e-mail to loriperkins@hotmail.com
or by phone at 474-7761.

Sunday Morning Men's Class

The new Men's Class taught by Chuck Brown will resume meeting on Sunday morning, August 6, at 9:30, in room 200. The format for the class will be a combination of videotaped presentations and small group discussion. Topics for each session will come from the book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, written by Rick Warren, and related scriptures. Together we will work toward more clearly determining God's will and purpose for our lives. Space is limited to the first 50 men indicating an interest in the class.



Attention Elmwood Women

Remember the carry-in dinner and presentation on the women's ministry **this Saturday, July 22, at 5:30 PM.** -Sue Wilder



The phone calls, cards, and visits meant so much during my hospital stay. I realized just how much the Elmwood congregation is truly FAMILY! Thanks to everyone for their care and concern. -Ken Nicholson



The food pantry is in need of **personal items such as: toothpaste & tooth brushes, shampoo, soap, deodorant, and disposable razors.** All your donations are greatly appreciated. -John Stafford

July 9, 2006
Contribution: \$7,260

July 16, 2006
Class: 160 Worship: 229
Contribution: \$7,068
Budget: \$8,100

ELMWOOD CHURCH OF CHRIST newsletter (USPS 758-630) is published weekly, except the week of Christmas, by the Elmwood Church of Christ, 2501 Elmwood Ave., Lafayette 47904. Periodical postage paid at Lafayette, IN. POSTMASTER: send address changes to ELMWOOD CHURCH OF CHRIST, 2501 Elmwood Ave., Lafayette, IN 47904.



Camp CUMO

This past week, as most of you know, the youth group went down to Cincinnati Ohio, to work for a week at a camp for inner-city children. The camp is, for the most part, run by teenagers from two different youth groups (with organizational help from Lee Porter and Mike Gulley, the youth minister for the other group).

Now usually when one thinks of camp, they think of a relaxing time sitting next to the water, maybe with a fishing pole in hand. This week was not like that. There was some fishing, to be sure, but peacefulness was not exactly in great supply this week. Here are just some of the activities we had during the week:

- Fishing
- Zip Line
- Volleyball
- Kickball
- Bean Bag Toss
- Tetherball
- Classes
- Meals (and snacks and canteen)
- Cincinnati Zoo
- Musical guests
- World-class Juggler
- And more!

I would like to take this time to thank all the teens who volunteered to work on this mission. Not only did they have to do all of these activities, but they also had to chase down unruly kids, run through torrential downpour to retrieve clothing from broken tents, deal with kids who refused to go to sleep, convince 11 year olds that they really DID need to take a shower WITH soap, and put up with a general noise level of about 100 decibels.

No, this past week wasn't exactly a walk in the park, and if you ask the teens who went, they won't be shy about telling you that. But they will also tell you that what they did was a great thing, something that brightened the lives of 30 inner-city kids, and they even found some fun while they were doing it.

~Phil Travis

Dorothy & Oscar Miller celebrate 25 years of marriage



Dorothy & Oscar Miller will soon celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary. A come-n-go reception in their honor will be held on Saturday, August 5, from 2:00 until 5:00 in the Elmwood fellowship room (A-2). Cards (only) appreciated.

Prayer Concerns....

Remember daily our **Let's Start Talking Team**—**Josh, Gina, & Kinley Boyd, Steve & Lanita Boyd, Ryan & Stephanie Middleton, and Alison Ruhl**, in Suva, Fiji. This is their last week. Check out the web page at: <http://www.ryansmiddleton.com/lst>.

Elizabeth Tinkle is in room 4342, at St. Elizabeth Hospital, after surgery on her leg Monday....**Rose Hunt's** surgery went well and she is recovering at home, doing as well as expected....Continue praying for **Nathan Weir** (Riley Children's Hospital), **Stephen Marcum, Mary Burns, Dick Waterstraat, Kenny Sizemore, Lynn Robinson** (treatment for colon cancer), **Audrey Merri-man, Linda Smith** (Methodist Hospital), **Henrietta Frampton** (St. Mary's, room 301), **Helen Clements** (Heritage Healthcare), **Kaden Koebecke, Noah Powlen, Phyllis Gray, Mark Eddy, Marie DeWoody, Delpha Allen, Anna Dale, Carrie High** (Regency Place), **Irene Fox** (George Davis Manor Nursing Home), and in Rosewalk Village: **Ruth Marks, Minnie Scott, and Burnell Gulden**.

Serving in Iraq: **Jon Kiefner, Loren Sniffen, and Brad King**. Serving in South Korea: **Amanda Martin**.



July 16-22....Spring Mill Bible Camp Senior week
July 19, 7 PM....Bible classes for all
July 22, 5:30 PM....Women's Carry-in dinner in A-2
July 23-28....Spring Mill Bible Camp Intermediate week
July 30, 6 PM....Six-Way Happening

Read:

II Chronicles 1-18; Psalms 92-98; I Corinthians 15-16

2006 Spiritual Adventure

Week 31: July 30-August 5

We Are Not Born With Wisdom

When things go wrong, have you ever wished you could just know what to do or what NOT to do? The Lord permits many things to go wrong in our lives so that we have opportunities to turn to Him for wisdom. The past six months have provided ample opportunity for my family. Here's a sampling:

"Scott!! There are bubbles coming out of the toilet and the shower is backed up!!"

"Scott! The little leak under the hot water heater is turning orange!"

"There is smoke coming out from under the hood of the car and the AC isn't working!"

"What are we doing for VBS this year?" (...said the youth minister to the education deacon)

Wisdom is learned, taught, experienced, and observed. Solomon, the second child of David and Bathsheba, asked God for wisdom, yet Solomon's sons failed where their father had so greatly succeeded. Eli, the priest at Shiloh, taught Samuel well but Eli's sons were just awful. Timothy's family taught him the wisdom of the Lord, and Timothy was well prepared when the apostle Paul came into his life.

The wisdom of the Lord is sown, grown and harvested over a lifetime of experiences. Look to your family and your spiritual family for advice even if it is a little embarrassing. Especially in the small things of life such as repairing, buying or leasing a car, which plumber to call, if 6 months with no interest is a good deal, and in planning church activities. Pray, live, do, and God will bless you. Everyone goofs. But the Lord is faithful. Always.

-Scott White

Scott and Jennifer were a part of the Elmwood family while Scott completed his Ph.D. in chemistry education. Jennifer, Scott, and Alyson now live in Magnolia, Arkansas, where Scott is on the faculty of Southern Arkansas University.

Why I Garden

C. Philip Slate

Every year of my marriage I have planted at least a small vegetable garden. My first motives for doing so were partially for the emotional release that comes from a change of pace, and partially for the fascination of putting seeds or sets in the ground and watching them develop into full-grown, producing plants. But quite early in my gardening experience a budding theological twist to the activity developed as we gratefully ate delicious and beautiful red tomatoes, tender yellow squash and other vegetables.

Some people grew “victory gardens” during WWII to get free food. But why do we need a war or poverty to grow a garden? Why not do it also for emotional and theological benefit? Making a garden, however, does not carry its own theological meaning. Indeed, the writer of Ecclesiastes planted extensive gardens (Eccl. 2:5), but without other considerations he found the endeavor to be “vanity and a striving after wind” (v. 1 NASB). Ancient pagans worshiped the creation, or created order, rather than the Creator and got themselves condemned (Rom. 1:25ff). Today some neo-pagan New Age people hug trees and call the created order “Mother Earth,” a very unchristian viewpoint. But the biblical perspective is that creation should point to the Creator (Psalm 8:3-5).

Now after nearly 50 years of small scale, non-obsessive gardening my thinking and motives are more theological, more Christian, than at the beginning. My motives were never anti-Christian; they just were not deliberately and explicitly Christian. Converted atheist, Harry Blamires, has stressed the importance of “thinking Christianly” about everything. I take that to involve family, wealth, power, recreation, and even gardening. Over time the desire to acknowledge God in all my ways (Proverbs 3:5-6) became more pronounced in my thinking. This little gardening odyssey can be portrayed best under several headings.

1. **Praise for the Creator.** Through gardening I am reminded that I am both a part of God’s creation and dependent upon other parts of that creation for life. As one can be moved to praise God for seeing His larger creation of the heavens (Psalms 8:1-8; 19:1-6), so one should be moved to praise God and stand in awe of Him when observing His

micro-creation—the interaction of elements in the soils, the soil-plant interaction, earthworm activities, pollination by insects, and plant-plant interactions. Like King Uzziah, I “love the soil” (2 Chronicles 3:5-6) as a reminder of God’s creation. I am moved to praise God for the soil-plant interaction about which I know little and profit much. Creation sets the stage for praising and worshiping the Creator (Rev. 4:11).

2. **Holy Wonder.** Like most humans, I like to understand. But the inability to understand many of God’s actions is inherent in His being God and my being only one of his creatures. I accept the Genesis affirmation that God gave “every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food” (1:29), animals as well as humans (vs. 30). God fed the Jews in the wilderness on manna and quail, a steady but narrow diet. But today I am baffled by the wide variety and intricacies of plants in the parts of the world I have visited, and I am confident that I have seen a small fraction of what is to be seen. Without benefit of a course on “soil science” I stand in awe of the One who produced the fascinating soil itself. God fed the wandering Jews on manna and quail. But in most places there is a staggering array of edible plants. Why would God make it so?

As a teenager, Jonathan Edwards pondered why God would make a little spider that could weave such a complex web, whether humans observed it or not. Edwards concluded it was due to the “exuberant goodness of the Creator” that he provided for the “pleasure and recreation of all sorts of creatures, even the insects.” Who knows? But the same wonder comes to me when I contemplate the soil and the little universe in some of the tiny plants. I enjoy both soil and plants without understanding all their intricacies, the same relationship I have with personal computers, hen eggs, oranges and my wife. What a holy wonder I find in a garden!

3. **Gratitude for Sustenance.** Paul and

Barnabas told the pagans in Iconium that the God they did not understand had not left Himself without “witness” since He “did good by giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14:17). That affirmation, along with Jesus’ utterance about God’s sending sun and rain on the just and unjust alike (Matthew 5:45), means that God acts continually. Deists hold that God created everything, set in motion “natural law” and essentially withdrew Himself from the scene. But the writers in both Old (Deuteronomy 11:14; Psalms 65:9-11; 147:8, 18) and New Testaments held no such view, even though they did not see every day as being full of miracles. All of this means that the *regular* acts of God are still decisively *acts of God*, even in a loaf of bread.

Back of the loaf is the snowy flour,
And back of the flour the mill,
And back of the mill, the wheat, the shower,
The sun and the Father’s will.

(Maltbie Davenport Babcock, 1858-1901)

Gardening can provoke thanksgiving. Just as Israel offered up the first fruits of her harvest in thanksgiving for God’s provision of food (Leviticus 23:9-14), so I am moved to thanksgiving when my wife and I eat some of that wonderful, fresh, nourishing produce from the hand of God. I can build a dog house or a tree house, but I cannot make even a small carrot or spear of asparagus, much less a pod of beans, a sunflower, or a cabbage that could be eaten for nourishment. Gardening prods me to thank God for the fruit of the earth.

4. **Severing the Technological Hold.** Jacques Ellul (*The Technological Bluff*) has made a needed distinction between *technology* (using a telephone or word processor) and *technologie* (a philosophy that technology will solve all major human problems). Similarly, Neil Postman (*Technopoly*) registered a protest against “the surrender of culture to technology.”

In that same spirit gardening enables me periodically to bypass the supermarket for some of my food, and goads me into the realization that ultimately basic foods come from land and sea as sustained by God.

The immediacy of small scale harvest is a reality moment that pulls back the camouflage created between harvest (and often processing) and marketing. Lest I get caught up too much in trinkets and place my trust in the wrong things, the little garden keeps me in touch with one area of reality. As surely as there are “trees of the Lord” (Psalm 104:16) there must be “tomatoes of the Lord” who gives “food in due season” (Psalm 145:16). A person works the soil, but that does not lessen God’s activity. In a creation Psalm (104) we are reminded that it is God who “makes grass grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate—bringing forth food from the earth” (v. 12; cf. Psalm 65:9-13).

5. **A Prod to Keep the Earth.** Growing a small garden prods me to think through what it means to “keep” the earth. Israel was punished partially because she did not let the agricultural land rest, have a sabbath (Leviticus 25:1-7; 26:34-35). In one of Jesus’ parables he indicated that fertilizing the tree—quite literally, “casting manure on it”—was useful to it (Luke 13:8). The soil must be “fed” good food. Growing a small garden calls my attention to the need to keep the earth. When earthworms cannot live in soils, I wonder what has been done to it. What does that kind of soil do to vegetables grown for human consumption? It makes me more sensitive to what we humans may be doing to our environment in general and to farmland in particular. I am moved to ask, What can I do to help on a larger scale? Is this soil not to be preserved?

In addition to gardening, there are other ways, of course, to take a break and be refreshed from the tedium of life. It is a way of honoring God for one to “think Christianly” about all of them. But gardening has great promise. Can I tempt you to try it?

—C. Philip Slate. Murfreesboro, TN
cpsmissions@juno.com