



“WHAT’S WRONG WITH OUR SCHOOLS”

By *Shelby Faith*



What’s going on in the public school systems of our nation? It used to be that we were sent to school to get an education, set our goals high and achieve as much as we were able.

Now in some schools it seems that our children are being sent to school to get an education but they no longer are rewarded when they achieve their goals or recognized for their hard work. Even the under-achieving children are passed along to the next grade so that their self-esteem doesn’t suffer during this fragile time in their life.

The letter “A” no longer stands for outstanding accomplishment, but only stands for “Average”, according to an article titled “That’s Outrageous” in the November 2004 Issue of Readers Digest. Since then many other publications have come out with study results stating that the school systems are getting worse, not better.



It used to be that publicly rewarding student achievement was an honor to the achieving student, and also an example to other students that if they worked harder they could attain the same honor, or at least be recognized for their hard work. Somewhere along the line that has all changed.

People begin putting forth the notion that all this honor on certain students gave less achieving students

low self-esteem and that wasn’t good for them. The article in Readers Digest went on to say:

“It all started when several parents (in Nashville, TN) complained about a school publicizing the name of students who had made the honor roll and earned other academic distinctions. It seems those parents felt the list would harm the self-esteem of some non-honors students. They were very concerned that children would feel ashamed or discouraged or left out if they weren’t honored.”



“Who knew a simple honor roll could cause so much trouble? But it did. A school attorney discovered an old state law barring the release of students’ academic information without parental consent. Suddenly, most schools (this happened in Tennessee) stopped announcing their honor roll. One school declined to announce the winner of its spelling bee.”

“The principal of one local school said that he just didn’t believe in ranking students. In fact, he had done

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Personal Note

Hello Everyone,

I hope that the spring holy days will be or have been wonderful for you this year. It seems that spring has come early to our area. It's always such a pleasure to see the beautiful spring flowers. It makes me feel good to know that life is again coming to all the dead-looking flowers, trees and bushes. It's also a time when we reflect on the life, death and resurrection of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

When you see the earth again brimming with life, after a cold, dreary winter, it just makes everything better. It rejuvenates us human beings, just as God knew it would. He knows what gives us pleasure, and it's usually the simple things of life.

In this issue we are featuring lessons for Pentecost, geared for ages 4-12. Our winter issue had lessons for the spring holy days so you might want to refer back to the previous Winter Issue 2006.

Also in this issue is an article about our school systems. I had read an article in Readers Digest and was amazed at how the schools are handling the subject of honors and recognitions. Recently our grandson graduated from school with a 2 year Associate Degree. We were very pleased and surprised at his graduation to learn that he was being honored for graduating with almost a perfect score, and for being among the top in his class. You see, our grandson had to work full-time to help with his expenses, was taking classes 3 nights a week, and had to take out a student loan for his schooling. And still he was at the top of his class, achieving all this by working and studying hard. Needless to say, we are very proud of what he has accomplished, and it's all because of his dedication and hard work. He plans continuing on with at least 2 more years of school and hopes to improve his skills and gather experience by being employed in his field while going to school. We're glad his school is still rewarding outstanding students who achieve their goals with honor and recognition.

Until next time,

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Little Things

It's the little things in life that mean a lot. Do some of these things to help you along the way.

- Watch a sunrise and sunset as often as you can
- Compliment at least one person every day
- Say "Thank you" and "Please" a lot
- Become the most positive and enthusiastic person you know
- Leave everything a little better than you found it
- Think big thoughts but enjoy small pleasures
- Be the first to say "Hello"
- Plant flowers every spring
- Make some new friends but cherish the old ones
- Don't expect life to be fair
- Use the good china and silverware even when you don't have company
- Be there when people need you
- Return all things you borrow
- Always accept an outstretched hand
- Stop blaming others and don't be afraid to say "I made a mistake"
- Keep your promises no matter what
- Compliment even small improvements
- Live your life as an exclamation, not an explanation
- Show a smiling face to everyone you see
- Let your heart sing a merry tune
- Count your blessings and give thanks everyday

**"Never underestimate
the power of love."**

("What's Wrong With Our Schools" - Con't. from Pg. 1)

away with his school's honor roll before the statewide controversy."

"Unfortunately, plenty of schools around the country are joining Nashville in watering down the traditional standards of success. For instance, you might assume that honoring one superstar as the class valedictorian every year is a rock-solid tradition. But school districts in a number of states are rethinking this practice."

"One San Francisco principal told the local paper that naming valedictorians would clash with her school's 'educational philosophy'. Kids are now fighting back with lawsuits brought against schools, claiming they were denied their rightful title as valedictorian. These pressures are causing some schools to respond in really bizarre ways. In Texas, Indiana and Kentucky, several schools are parading 10 or more of their top students as 'valedictorians' on graduation day, making a joke out of a once great honor. According to the dean of admissions at one California college, some high schools are honoring as many as 50 to 100 'valedictorians'."



"It's one thing to blur the differences between students when you're giving out awards. But this...attitude has also seeped into classrooms, with potentially serious consequences. A school board in New Hampshire, concerned about undermining the self-image of kids, voted earlier this year to end the practice of breaking students into different groups and teaching them according to their ability. So now the school is 'leveling' the groups and teaching everyone together. But tracking students makes good academic sense. It allows teachers to challenge the best students and give struggling kids the extra support they need, without wasting the time of either group. And who's to say that low-performing students will feel any better when they're in a classroom full of sharpies and can't keep up? Some elementary schools have also moved away from letter and number grades, choosing instead commentary about students based on their achievements 'in relation to their own effort and ability', as one education website puts it."

"No more honor rolls, valedictorians, letter grades—

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"Growing Up In The Church"

By Fiona Meeker

My Dad is often gone on long trips to foreign countries. He does this to go pastor our church's people over there, or for conferences, since he has been on the council for a number of years.

It's not always easy when he's away. My mother has to be "mom" and "dad", which leaves her permanently tired. My sister and I miss having a father to look up to for help and advice. We pray fervently for him every night, especially when he's in Africa. Our prayer life is very good when he's away.

For some people this may lead to anger against our church, but I understand why he's gone and am very proud of my dad for what he does. Besides, it's not just his church; it's mine. It's not only my parents' religion but mine too.

I've grown up in the church but it all makes sense. My friends might think it's weird, but I know that everything we do and believe in is found in the Bible. God gave us those "weird" instructions for our benefit, so that we can live good lives.

It isn't always easy, especially when that swim meet is on Saturday and you know the relay team you would be on always makes it to the regionals. Or when your best friend is having a real "cool" party and orders pepperoni pizza. But if generations of Christians have made it under much harder conditions, so can I. Besides, God always rewards us for keeping His laws. And one day, I plan to get baptized and become a permanent member of God's Church.

Editors Note: Last year I asked a teen girl to write an article on what it's like to grow up in the church. Fiona Meeker, 14 years old, wrote the above article, putting into her own words what it's like for her to grow up in the church. Fiona is the daughter of Joel and Marjolaine Meeker and attends the United Church of God in Cincinnati, Ohio.

If you know a teen growing up in the church who would be willing to write an article about growing up in the church, please submit it to the editor. The address is on page 2 under the "Personal Note" column.

PENTECOST



Youth Bible Study: Ages 4-8 (Leviticus 23:15-16, Deuteronomy 16:9-10, Acts 2)

1. How many Sabbaths were the people to count to the Day of Pentecost? Circle the number below:

3 8 5 1 7

2. Circle the number of loaves of bread they were to offer.



3. This feast day was called by two names in the Old Testament.

Feast of Firstfruits and Feast of _____ . Choose one of the words below:

Days Weeks Months

4. In Acts 2:1 this day is called Pentecost. Suddenly there came a mighty rushing sound. Circle the picture below that shows what the sound was like.



5. Upon the heads of the disciples there appeared tongues (crowns) of

_____. Fill in the blank from the pictures below.



PENTECOST

Youth Bible Study: Ages 9-12

Fill in the blanks using the following scriptures.

Leviticus 23 - Old Testament

1. The people were to count _____ Sabbaths from the day after the Sabbath. (Verse 15)
2. "Even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall you number _____ days." (Verse 16)
3. How many loaves of leavened bread were the people to offer? _____ (Verse 17)
4. These are called "The _____ to the Lord." (Verse 17)
5. The people were told that when they harvested their land, they were to leave the corners of their field to the _____ and the _____. (Verse 22)
6. This feast day has several names. It's called Feast of First fruits and Feast of _____. (See Deuteronomy 16:9-10)

Acts 2 - New Testament

1. "And when the day of _____ was fully come, they were all with one accord, in one place. (Verse 1)
2. "And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a mighty _____ wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." (Verse 2)
3. There appeared tongues of _____, and it sat upon each one of them. (V.3)
4. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other _____. (V. 4) (This word in Greek is "glossa", which means languages.)
5. Men of every nation heard them speak in their own _____. (V.6)
6. Peter told the multitude of people what they need to do. "Repent and be baptized in the name of _____, _____, for the remission of your _____, and you shall receive the _____ of the Holy Spirit." (Verse 38)
7. How many people received his word and were baptized that day? _____ (Verse 41).
8. According to the above scriptures from the Old and New Testament there are three names for this feast day.

In the spaces below write the three names:

Feast of _____

Feast of _____

Feast of _____

("What's Wrong With Our Schools" — Con't. from Page 3)

how long before schools start to ban simple games like tag? Your lesson for today, kids: School is no place for winners."

That concluded the article in Readers Digest under the title, "That's Outrageous". How far will this kind of thinking go if it prevails? Those kids who work real hard will not be rewarded anymore than those kids who are lazy and don't do their work. I'm not talking about kids that have problems that keeps them from excelling, but about those kids who want to go through school with the least amount of effort, basically just barely getting a passing grade. We should help kids that are struggling in school, but we also need to help bright students who get bored while the class is being "dumbed down" for the slower-learning kids.



Some schools are passing every child, even those who can't or won't do the work, but they're not doing the kids any favors. Somewhere along the line, those children will find the struggle to keep up too difficult, drop out of school and wind up in a menial job, or become a deadbeat. We need to encourage every child to work according to their ability, not just let them slide along. Our brightest students need to be challenged according to their abilities, so that they can move along and not become bored with their classes.

So whose to blame for the mess the schools are in? Parents are challenging the teachers on every point, running to school officials for every problem their child incurs in school. I know one person who "bragged" that the school her son attends wouldn't dare mess with her. She admits that she is always on them, no matter if the child is causing a problem or not. Kids are smart enough to know that they don't have to worry if they slack off because their parents will take care of the situation. Teachers and officials are also to blame. They cave in to parents usually when they're challenged.

The schools need to set reasonable guidelines and stick to them, no matter how they're pressured. Kids need to know they're not going to get away with being lazy or causing problems. Parents need to back up the teachers and realize that their kids are not going to achieve much in their life if they're not doing the work. Schools need to have special classes to help all the students, the bright ones and slow-learners. The majority of kids will be happy to be in an average classroom, with other kids who are like them, not slow-learners to hold them back; or the really bright students that they can't keep up with.

Students should be rewarded according to their abilities. Those who work hard should not be penalized because it might cause other students to have feelings of low-self esteem. It may cause those students to realize that if they work hard and excel they can also be rewarded with honor and recognition.



God intends for us to live and work according to our abilities. Read the Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-29. He doesn't want us to be lazy and just squeeze by. "Go to the ant, you sluggard. Consider her ways and be wise." (Proverbs 6:6) He wants us to be wise in all our ways. "How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver." (Proverbs 16:16) We need to teach our children how and why God wants us to excel in life. God wants us to be achievers, to set our goals high and work toward attaining our goals. "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." (I Corinthians 9:24) (All scriptures are quoted from the NKJV)



If we set the proper example for our children and teach them to do the work according to their abilities, we are preparing them to be successful in life. We need to help them set goals in their lives and teach them to work toward attaining those goals. Then no matter what the situation is, our children can be successful in school and later in life.

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*Shelby Faith Fiona Meeker
and YOU!*

"Children's children are the crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers" Proverbs 17:6