

# The Crossnore Chronicle

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## A Challenge

By Betty Redman

In today's busy world it is easy to get involved so deeply in what we must do to survive that we can forget some of the things that the Christian faith requires of us. One of these is our responsibility to teach our children, grandchildren, and others we meet what Jesus said about how to live. Outside influences - peer pressure, bullying, lack of a sense of belonging, lack of a sense of right and wrong, failure to recognize mental or emotional instability – have contributed to the aberrant behavior that seems to be affecting young people for the last decade or so. It is urgent that society looks at this problem with an eye to its cause and any possible solutions.



Some parents today are caught up in the same problems our young people have. The situation is compounded by the fact that it has gone on much too long and will continue unless change comes about. Who better to affect change than religious bodies and family units? Christian teachings, if known and observed, could make a

difference in our behaviors and in theirs. What has happened? A newsletter doesn't have enough room to address all the issues in this complex problem, but one issue may form the basis of how we can begin to find a solution.

Our Christian faith tells us that we have a responsibility to teach children, ours and others, what Jesus said about how we are to live, to nurture them in the faith as they grow, to discipline them in love, and to set an example for them as we model those teachings ourselves. In both the old and new testaments, we can find passages where Jesus and others spoke of the need to do this.



“Train a child in the right way, and when old, they will not stray.” *Proverbs 22:6 (NSRV)*

Mary and Joseph took Jesus to the Temple to have him presented to the Lord and continued to bring him to the Temple for festivals like Passover. He was sitting with the Temple leaders listening and asking questions when he was young only 12. He was comfortable being there and was familiar with the teachings and open to God's presence and calling. Another passage, *Luke 2:52, (NSRV)* tells us that he “...increased in wisdom and in years and in divine and human favor.” Jesus apparently continued to be nurtured in the Jewish faith.

In *Deuteronomy 31:12-13 (NSRV)* God tells Moses “...assemble the people--men, women, and children, as well as the aliens residing in your towns--so that they may hear and learn to fear the LORD your God and to observe diligently all the words of this law, and so that their children, who have not known it, may hear and

learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as you live in the land that you are crossing over the Jordan to possess."

Children learn in gatherings from observing the behavior of others. Are they welcomed so that they develop a sense of belonging? Treat them kindly in worship even if they sometimes disturb you. Model Christian behavior and give them an example of love to follow. At luncheons and dinners, gently show them to patiently wait their turn, to know that food is to be shared with everyone, to understand the meaning of eating a meal together.

In *Colossians 3:20-21 (NSRV)* we find that children should obey their parents for this is their duty to the Lord, and that fathers should not provoke children or they may lose heart. How often do we tease children or make fun of what they say or want to do? How often do we belittle their ideas or fail to understand that they are really asking for help or really needing attention? We do it easily and without thinking of how it affects a person's self-esteem, even a child or young person. Discipline is a necessary part of life and of training. Doing it in love, without harshness, is often hard when we observe bad behavior or disrespect in anyone. There are ways to be stern, to make a point, and still maintain respect for the person.

"I have no greater joy than this, to hear that my children are walking in truth." *3 John 1:4 (NSRV)*

It is up to us to teach the truth, to be truthful ourselves, and to explain to others, children and young people included, the importance of truth. In today's world, with the conflicting stories, everyone is exposed to on television and on mobile devices, this is not easy.



These are just a few passages that make it clear that all of us have a responsibility to stress in word and deed how important the teachings of the Christian faith are. The church family bears this responsibility as well as parents and other family members. Often in today's busy world with both parents working it is not easy, but if we all work together to surround children and young people with love and understanding, listening to their words and feeling their joys and sorrows, observing their behavior and trying to provide help to correct wrong ideas and actions, we may succeed in affecting change.

Church members, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, and siblings, take notice. Together we can be the change-agent (community) that can make the world a better place. I have written here mostly about church gatherings, but these same actions should be a part of how we behave in any situation. Any of us may find ourselves in groups of people - gatherings, meetings - where gently exhibiting Christian understanding and response to aberrant behavior can help people think about what they are saying or doing. Otherwise, we are neglecting to stand up for the beliefs we profess to have.

One of the ways we can have our efforts to teach and model Christian behavior reinforced is to encourage young people to attend the gatherings offered by the Presbyterian Church (USA). Camps for young people can be not only fun but creative ways to live and learn in a Christian community. Being away from home and the exposure to adult leaders and to peers who come from other places is an exciting experience for young people. Learning through songs, games, Scripture and new responsibilities leave an imprint on the heart that is different when it comes from the new source - a source beyond the home.



Older young people can take advantage of retreats, camps, and conferences that offer instruction in the faith in a variety of ways. Leadership roles, theology, and Presbyterian governance workshops acquaint them with expanded learning. Fun times with singing and games, crafts, art, and writing, planning meetings, etc. teach them to work together and respect the talents and skills of others. Some young people have an opportunity to represent their church as a Young Adult Delegate (YAD), to the meeting of the General Assembly. This is an eye-opening experience where they get to observe the highest court of the church in action.



The YAV program has grown but continues the tradition of holy partnership and mutual learning. The Presbyterian Church (USA) has a five-person staff devoted to administering the program and supports the program monetarily.

Those of us in the church have an opportunity to support the program as well. This is an ecumenical program, so we can recommend it to our Presbyterian young adults and to other Christian young people we may know who would benefit from the program. Many young adults are searching for meaning in life, for a way to discern what career path they want to follow, for some answers to how they may affect a change in our chaotic society. Our guidance can be a real help to them.

More stories of volunteer young adults are in the spring issue of Mission Crossroads which is on display in the CPC Resource Center. You can also learn more about the Young Adult Volunteer and how you may support it.



1. Mission Crossroads, Spring Issue 2018, page 1, published by the Presbyterian Church (USA), Presbyterian Mission Agency, Louisville, KY
2. Mission Crossroads, Spring Issue 2018, page 5, published by the Presbyterian Church (USA), Presbyterian Mission Agency, Louisville, KY
3. Mission Crossroads, Spring Issue 2018, page 3, published by the Presbyterian Church (USA) Presbyterian Mission Agency, Louisville, KY



(Before I start I have to tell you “the opinions stated in this article may not be the opinions of the church and its administration”. They are simply my own thoughts on a subject that has been on my mind lately.)

When we come into the Sanctuary or the Fellowship Hall on Sunday mornings or for some activity we are interested in, everything looks “bright and beautiful”. I don’t know about you, but I never gave it a moments’ thought until I started working in the office every day. Then I began to notice certain people coming and going pretty frequently. It was always the same people, coming and going at odd times. One woman came in the late afternoons after most everyone was gone. I wondered what she was there for but I was busy and just kept on working away. Another woman came usually in midmorning, stayed a few hours and left. Another couple came around 10:00 am and I heard them talking but just kept on with my work. These folks weren’t custodians, although she came too, and I knew what she was doing. But these other members what were they there for? After a while, I began to see what was going on.

## Jesus Taught us how to Serve Others

The member who came in the late afternoons sometimes watered the plants, occasionally I would see her cleaning the stovetops or changing the little flags at the side entrance or planting things around the church. Sometimes she would be down in the Memory Garden cleaning up and putting flowers around or in the sanctuary tending the plants there. She wasn't an Elder I finally learned, she was just a member doing what needed to be done. When I would mention what she had done she would say she just enjoyed doing something for the church.

The couple who came I noticed would bag up the recycling and take it to the recycle center on their way home. These same folks are still coming in the early morning on Sunday to turn up the heat or the air conditioning or open the windows, so we are comfortable in Sunday School or worship. Lightbulbs got changed (yes, even the ones in the very high ceilings in the Sanctuary), frozen pipes thawed out, mail picked up, garbage overflow taken to the dump and a multitude of other little but very necessary jobs got done without anyone saying a word.

The other woman came and worked mostly in the kitchen at odd times, cleaning out the refrigerator, cleaning out the pantry, sinks, and cabinets. Sometimes she took towels home from the country breakfast to wash or put dishes in the dishwasher to wash before fellowship on Sunday morning.

One man kept the cookie supply stocked and bought the turkeys for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners. He said he enjoyed watching people enjoy the food. He went to Johnson City to doctor's appointments once a month and would always call to find out if we needed anything. Sometimes he would buy coffee or paper towels or toilet paper, and he always brought me my very own box of white chocolate, macadamia nut cookies, I loved that man! He would always say, if questioned, "I'm too old to do any work but I want to help however I can."

One lady spent months and many hours cataloging, sorting books and organizing our library according to Presbyterian Church USA specifications. Have you seen it? It is a wonderful room in the back of the Sunday School Hall. This same woman puts this newsletter together and has done so for years along with her husband. Her husband kept our website and computers working and updated for years.

The list goes on and on and whatever needs done one of these folks does it, usually without pay or recognition and often using their own money. They are not necessarily Elders in the church because even the Elders can't do all that needs to be done and the church budget, while amazingly good for such a small church, can't pay for every lightbulb to be changed by a hired service person. Most churches can't. I call these people warriors because it is a fulltime battle to meet all the many needs of the church. This is not unique to our church, some churches in the area don't have a budget large enough to even supply a telephone, let alone a secretary! What I do notice though is, that a lot of the time it is the same folks that step up when there is a need. I get concerned about these folks getting burned out and giving up because there are so many things needing attention and so few able to do them. Many of our warriors have passed on, moved away or gotten too old to do what they loved. It is a growing concern around the nation that many churches are closing their doors and selling their buildings these days because of the numerous needs of their churches and their failing membership. At my sister's church in a small town in Florida, they are considering renting space to another denomination to help with the church's needs. Imagine coming in on Sunday morning to Crossnore Presbyterian and finding some other church service going on in the Fellowship Hall! Don't get me wrong that's not even a consideration for us right now, but it is for my sister's church. What if it were us? I love our beautiful Sanctuary with its stained-glass windows, and the lofty rafters and antique light fixtures.

So, I have wondered what it would be like if every person who walks through the doors took care of one thing that needed to be done. It would be so much easier for 100 people to handle one need in the church as

opposed to 10 people doing the same number of jobs. Don't feel pressured now! But just think about it. **100 people x 1 job or 10 people x 10 jobs?** Which sounds better to you, and which would you rather do? I don't know for sure but I bet there is a list somewhere and if someone has an extra hour and they walk into the church office and say, "I have a little time right now, what do you need to be done?" I'll bet that person would be busy in two minutes!!

Are you a young man, can you climb a ladder and change a light bulb, instead of a 75-year old who, if he falls, is in serious danger.

A young woman who loves weeding flower beds, instead of an 80-year-old woman with back trouble?

Are you an older person who has time on their hands and is going to the store anyway, instead of a young person with 3 children and aging parents and a fulltime job, to buy coffee and cookies for fellowship hour.

A baby boomer who grew up cleaning house every Saturday as a ritual, who could clean a few windows or dust and straighten shelves?

Don't be shy, step right up and offer your service for an hour or two. You might even feel closer to our beautiful church and congregation than you do now. You might make a new friend or friends. You might feel more needed and loved than you have in a very long time. I know I loved to see and hear from "Cookie man"! And I know from experience that I have gone to some churches every Sunday morning and rushed out the door right after service and never felt attached to that church or its members. There is something that fills a need in every one of us that is satisfied by getting involved and feeling ownership and fellowship in a group of like-minded people. Depressed or feel useless and unnecessary? Don't let yourself miss out on one of the best experiences and feelings in your life, **Give a little time and earn a lot** of love and satisfaction!

