



The Sharon Star

Music

For some time now, I've been wanting to address the young people, having a burden on my heart for them concerning music. Young people, the Devil has spread a net for you to deceive and to destroy. One thing that adds tremendous strength to that net is contemporary music. My experience was such that I was entirely bound to the world by music. I listened to rock as well as other forms of music, all very much tied to the world in some way or another. I listened to contemporary folk music, blues, rhythm & blues, jazz, traditional folk music with electrical back-up, traditional African music, traditional Andean music and many other forms. It was all very interesting to me, very compelling, and very captivating. The subject matter of the music had to do with: loneliness, seduction, giving in to temptation, rebellion to authority, lust, life on the street, drinking, drugs, suicide, etc. You can tell from that list that if it was sinful, someone would write about it. In the 28th chapter of Ezekiel, in verse 13, there is a description of how the Devil was created, "...the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou was created." This would indicate that one of the most integral parts of the Devil's workings would be music.

In this day, it is very difficult to be a young person and a Christian, but when it comes right down to it, I can't think of a time when it's been entirely easy to be a young person and a Christian. Each person who is a Christian has a call upon their lives to mature into the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, young or old, regardless. It is time we

took some responsibility for attaining that to which we've been called.

I was in high school in the late 1960's while the hippie movement was in full swing, and I listened to the radio each morning on getting up out of bed and while eating breakfast. I listened to a contemporary radio station and heard all the current tunes on the hit parade. At just the time of day that I needed to be built up and ministered to from the things pertaining to life, I was wearing my resistance down with the wrong kind of input. Oh please, don't go this way, you precious young souls. You are worth so much more when you've taken care of yourselves properly. "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul." (Matthew 16:26)

You may say, "Well, you're being too dramatic with this whole thing, it's not like it's life and death, it's just a little music." This retort, if it fits yours, is a display of an apathy spawned by the Devil himself. I'm telling you as one snatched from the jaws of hell and death, that, yes, this is a life and death situation, and is crucial enough to you, if you are having problems with listening to worldly music, to demand your attention. If you find yourself just sitting taking this music in, then you know that the Devil has lulled the spiritual part of you to sleep, and is enslaving you to his will. You would be well advised to contact your Elder and lay the whole mess out before him and allow him to counsel you and pray with you, not just once, because it's likely you'll need more than one session, but you should be seeking help until it's not troubling you anymore. This would be the best course of action if it were drugs or drinking, and it looks as

though contemporary music is every bit as addictive, if not more.

As long as worldly singers keep trying to live for Christ and be a star at the same time, they will never be able to successfully exalt Him. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

We've got to seek the Lord for new desires. In 1979, I lived in a prairie city, and not having the spiritual maturity to realize I shouldn't be running around from one church to another, I was checking a certain church out. I attended one Sunday morning and found a lot of aged people there, and they were singing a lot of the old hymns, to which I joined right in. After service, I asked where all the young people were, because I'd heard they had a lot of young people. The reply I got kind of surprised me. They said the young people came to the evening service. So, I went to the evening service, which I entered right into. Afterward I asked one young lady why she didn't attend Sunday morning. She told me in a very scornful manner, and this is a direct quote, "I don't consider singing hymns fun!" I never went there again. Young people, do you see how the enemy is trying to destroy the church? I remember something dear Brother Holt said concerning this. He said, "The devil will try to destroy the Church, and he'll use you young people, but you won't destroy the Church, you'll destroy your own lives, instead!" Now, I know you could be thinking, "Boy, he's really got it in for the young people", but that's not right. The whole Body loves the young people, and we only desire to look after you. "My son, despise not thou the

chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked by Him: For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth" (Hebrews 12:5&6).

The world is geared for your being led astray, and men of power have invested a good deal of wealth to accomplish it. They've started at the earliest stages, and parents have helped them. Today, it's nothing uncommon for day-cares to have the radio on to entertain their charges. Children today lipsync Madonna. It starts out innocently. We've gotten used to thinking of some programs as the perfect child's entertainment. Many, many children have learned to count and to say their alphabet through these programs, and who can deny that this is something good? I was in my sister's home recently, and my 3 year old was watching a program. It wasn't long before I heard them playing rock & roll with a childish theme. Well, I steeled myself and got ready to be unpopular, then I went and switched channels. Of course, he was heartbroken, but what could I do? Let that indoctrination begin without lifting a finger? I explained to him they were playing rock music, and we don't listen to that in our family. Now I should explain, they weren't using instruments normally associated with the typical rock band, but the phraseology of that type of music was obvious. We own a television. It's under our boy's crib. I am not in any way saying that we shouldn't watch television. It's just that we've always found ourselves too busy to go to the trouble of watching television. This is why I never noticed the problem with some of these programs. After a few minutes I turned it back to the program. On it was a little girl performing lovely little ballet steps to the accompaniment of some gentle classical music. One of the characters admired it and wanted to do it too, but was disappointed when he found he was to ungainly for ballet, so he sat down. The little girl said, "Don't worry. You can dance like this. Everybody can dance like this." Immediately the rock music came on, and she and one of the characters started to dance the modern dances to it. I turned the channel again. Again my boy started to cry, and in a few minutes I turned it back to that program, and this time they were doing

a street rock video, so it went off permanently. What I'm saying is, this is the thin edge of the wedge. Many of the young people of the Church grew up with some of these programs, and definitely, it isn't the only bad influence, but it has been a major one, as far as establishing children's habits of amusement.

Why is it so easy for young people to forget their teachings from the Lord and give themselves over to the world? Is it not because while they were being taught and influenced by the Church and their parents, they were also being taught and influenced by programs such as these? In no way am I saying that children can be shielded from everything, but we parents are responsible for what they listen to in our homes; and young people, you are responsible for what you listen to when you are not in that home. There are times when you don't have control of what you are hearing, but you know the times when you do.

I came out of a world of parties, drugs, drinking and sorceries, and I've seen first hand the influence of music on myself and on my friends of the world. One of my best friends from back in the world, someone who listened to rock and roll day and night, was jailed for sexually abusing his 5 year-old daughter. There is a connection between rock music and all these perverse things.

You may say, "Well, I don't listen to worldly rock, I listen to Christian rock", or maybe you call it contemporary Christian music. One dear sister said to me, "Just what is contemporary?" And she and I both agreed that the word meant it was part of this present evil age. No matter what lyrics they put to this music, the power chords, the driving, aggressive, tribal beat, and the way it inspires seductive, primitive dance, marks it as music that cannot be from the Lord.

If you love this music, and cannot do without it, at least don't drag someone else down to that level by inviting them to come and take it in with you. Sad to say, this has happened sometimes.

Music has a tremendous influence. When the Spirit of the Lord is moving over the congregation, the brethren will sometimes sing,

"Pass me not, oh gentle Savior,
Hear my humble cry.

While on others Thou art calling,
Do not pass me by."

Men and women feel the longing in their hearts for He who is able to answer all their needs, and they feel the wooing of the Holy One, and they respond to receive salvation and to be cleansed.

When I first came to the Lord, the old hymns were wearisome to me, if I weren't in the heights of glory, because my ear was so accustomed to the catchy tunes of popular music. Sometimes I'd be thinking, "Oh, couldn't they make it a more interesting tune?" Perhaps there are young people who feel that way. I think there must be a lot of young people who feel that way, because it's very difficult to find a tape done by young people in the Church which has some of the old hymns on it. Young people (here it comes), we, the Church cannot survive on choruses. Within the old hymns is contained meat that will sustain us as nothing else can. It is just wonderful to tell the Lord you love Him, and it is wonderful to know he loves us, and to rejoice in His salvation, but there is a depth and a height of anointing that we are not reaching if we don't understand the ministry of the old hymns.

When a tape is made for the Church, the only element that is absolutely essential is the anointing. It doesn't matter if instruments are played perfectly. It's nice if they are. It doesn't matter if there is the odd flaw in the recording. It's nice if there aren't any, but if it's a perfect recording and there's not that anointing, it has no value. It's a total and absolute failure. These tapes' sole purpose is, by the anointing, to minister life to the Church. Life will never come by flawless diction and professional handling of your instrument. One tape I own is by one of our own dear brethren who has a musical ministry. On one piece his voice catches, but he goes right on singing in spite of it, and the anointing is not disturbed. He could have stopped and recorded it again, but if the anointing was still intact, why should he? One dear sister I've heard cannot carry a tune, but she enters right in, and I've heard her sing in the Spirit - still tuneless, but with the anointing of God richly on her. I've heard others blessed with natural talent who couldn't go off key if they tried, but I've felt they could use more of the anointing.

If we are not able to enter into that anointing shoulder to shoulder with the men and women who've been on the front lines for some time now, then we can never be that one body. God is not calling anyone to downgrade for us, but He is calling us to come up a little higher, and we'll find more victory as our unity is perfected.

Yes, I had a problem, at first, appreciating the old hymns, and I had that problem for some time; but God is faithful, and we must realize His work is sometimes slower than we would like, but it is sure. God takes a long time to make an agate. He begins with nothing, just a cavity in the ground, and then He begins a slow seeping in of ground water, and then a slow deposition of minerals around the inside of the cavity, and, slowly, he adds and adds and creates something hard and beautiful. Oh, the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of the Almighty! Oh, the Glory of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which He has invested in His Son Jesus Christ!

By the grace of God, I persevered, and God slowly deposited that solid and beautiful love for those majestic old hymns in my heart, and that love keeps growing. There was one Elder who really helped me in that by just a little something he said, which he doesn't remember, but that is typical of the word of wisdom. He said, "Sing it with some conviction!" So I do. Though I'm not one normally called on to do a solo, I go ahead and sing with conviction, anyway.

Just listen to some of the lines from these wonderful old songs:

THE CLEANSING WAVE

Oh, now I see the Cleansing Wave,
A fountain deep and wide,
Jesus my Lord, mightily to save,
Points to His wounded side.
The cleansing stream I see, I see,
I plunge, and oh, it cleanses me.
Oh, praise the Lord, it cleanses me,
It cleanses me, yes, cleanses me!

If there was a day we needed cleansing, it's today. This song tells how the blood of Christ does just that.

THE STRANGER OF GALILEE

His look of compassion, His words of love,
They shall never forgotten be,
When sin-sick and helpless He saw me there,
This Stranger of Galilee;
He showed me His hands and His riven side,
And he whispered, "It was for thee!"

My burden fell off at the pierced feet
Of the Stranger of Galilee;
He showed me His hands and His riven side,
And He whispered, "It was for thee!"
My burden fell off at the pierced feet
Of the Stranger of Galilee.
And I felt I could love Him forever,
So gracious and tender was He!
I claimed Him that day as my Saviour,
This Stranger of Galilee.

LOVE LIFTED ME

All my heart to Him I give, ever to Him I'll cling,
In His blessed presence live, ever His praises sing.
Love so mighty and so true, merits my soul's best songs;
Faithful, loving service, too, to Him belongs.
Love lifted me! Love lifted me!
When nothing else could help, Love lifted me!

THE NINETY AND NINE

But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep were the waters crossed;
Nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through,
Ere He found His sheep that was lost.

IT IS WELL WITH MY SOUL

And, Lord haste the day when the faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll,
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend
Even so - it is well with my soul.

O FOR A THOUSAND TONGUES

O for a thousand tongues to sing, my great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King, the triumphs of His grace.
My Gracious Master and my God, as-

sist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad,
the honors of Thy name.
Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
that bids our sorrows cease,
Tis music in the sinner's ears, tis life and health, and peace.
He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
he sets the prisoner free,
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.
Hear Him ye deaf, His praise you dumb,
your loosened tongues employ,
Ye blind, behold your Saviour come, and leap, ye lame, for joy.

These aren't just songs or tunes you can whistle, but they are experiences, and so we shouldn't just sing them, but we should experience them while we sing them, and while we walk our daily walk. I'll guarantee that these and rock music or contemporary Christian music will not be able to share the same dwelling.

Please, just in parting, let me say that in no way am I ruling out true Christian music that's been written recently as being worthless. I'm merely cautioning that we must test the spirits. The music that we should have in our hearts, as the body of Christ, is that which carries the Spirit of the Kingdom, whether penned in the 1500's or in the 1900's, anything less is a sell out. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God (I John 4:1)."

I hope no one thinks I'm picking on them. I'm just very concerned that not one of our dear young people gets snared the way I did. Please don't think because I made it through to where I am now, that it's alright. I barely survived, and I still bear the marks. God is gracious, but let us be wise.

An Elder in the Body

**INDIANA YOUNG PEOPLE'S MEETING
December 2003**

Sat. evening, Dec. 27 thru Wed., noon, Dec. 31, 2003. Mt. St. Francis Retreat Center, St. Francis, Indiana, 47146, phone (812) 923-8817. Location just 10 miles from downtown Louisville, KY. All under one roof, gym, recreation rooms, hundreds of acres of woods and hills to hike and sled on. 53 private rooms w/bath and air conditioning. **How to Get There.** From West (St. Louis, etc.) I 64 to U.S. I 50 West, go 2 miles on US I 50 to 2nd set of flashing lights, the center is on the left. From North: I 65 South to I 265 West 10 miles to U.S. I 50 exit, go 2 miles on I 50 to 2nd set of flashing lights, center on left. From South and East: I 64 West thru Louisville across Ohio River then 4 miles to U.S. I 50 East highway. Go 2 miles on I 50 to 2nd set of flashing lights. Center is on left. **Come one and all, bring your friends and let's have a great time learning and sharing together.**

Bring: Bibles, notebooks, pens and pencils, personals, extra towels and washcloths if desired, snacks for after service.

Contact Bob Wood

7N933 Pharlap Dr., St. Charles, IL 60175
Phone 630-513-6642, Email: sandrakwood@aol.com
Costs: Adults \$55.00, Ages 4-17: \$30.00

A Letter to the Mothers of Young Children/Babies in the Church

We all want to do the best job we can raising our children. My own experience was that, as long as I was pregnant, there were many intelligent, capable people around to help me have the baby—but as soon as that baby was born, my husband and I were on our own. The really important time, raising the child, had come—who could help?

First, we turned to our parents. They were willing to do anything we needed—but what did we need? My life was in a blur of feeding, changing, napping, doctor's appointments, washing, folding, cleaning, feeding, changing, napping, doctor's appointments, washing, folding, cleaning, feeding... I have to get to the point because you who are in this cycle don't have much time to finish reading this.

1. Pray for God's Wisdom

You already know how to do this, and you probably have done it.

2. Trust your own Instincts

God has given you hormones to help. You will have natural tendencies to want to stay at home (safe), and to protect your baby, and be physically close to your baby. If you are nervous or agitated when you are away from your children, then don't go out—stay at home. You can have time with your husband while the baby sleeps. (This will save time, money, and the anxiety of leaving your baby with someone else.)

3. Be Careful whom you Trust

God gave this child to you—not someone else. He must know that you can raise it, with the help of the church, better than any one else. Seek out the mothers of young adults who are walking with the Lord for advice. The Fruit doesn't fall far from the tree; check the Fruit to see if it is good before you go to the tree. You want to imitate the best, not the worst.

4. Learn to say "No"

One of the first things God said to Adam and Eve was "don't touch..." (Genesis 1:16-17). Even though God's children Adam and Eve were adults from the beginning, a 6-month old child can learn the meaning of "No". There is a safety aspect here. Very soon, your baby will be moving around on his own. He needs to know what "No" means before

he is in a situation where he could be hurt or killed by not knowing the meaning of "No". Don't wait until he is two years old to teach him the meaning of "No" or "Stop". There is a teachable moment, and it is *before* the child needs the information; that way, he has it *when he needs it*, not after he needs it.

5. Let the Child Experience the Consequences of his Actions

(NOTE: this is *very* difficult to do.) The better we are as a mother, the more we want to protect our children from harm. But this is the world's wisdom. When you tell your child "No" or "Stop", and he continues his behaviour, unless he will be killed or critically hurt from his actions, allow him the consequences. We were in the park one day, observing a mother and her baby/toddler. The baby was just learning to stand up, and was pulling herself up. A child can learn to stand up without assistance, or with a helping hand to steady them. This child, however, was using a lightweight stroller to pull herself up. The mother, knowing the child was heavier than the stroller, knew that the child would pull the stroller over on herself, so *she put her foot on the stroller* so that it would not turn over on the child. The child successfully pulled herself up. But the next time, the mother could not get to the stroller in time to steady it, so the child pulled it over on herself. The child screamed, and the mother blamed herself for not staying closer... But the mother had removed the consequences of the child's actions the first time. The child trusted that what had worked the first time, would work the second time. But because the mother had interfered with a law of physics (also God's Law), the child was confused and bewildered instead of learning from the experience.

6. Don't Make a Game of God's Laws

If you don't want your child to get burned, yet he seems drawn to the stove and continues to ignore your "No's or "Hot", then let him experience "Warm". His own body will teach him that "Hot" is not something he wants to experience again. If you teach him at age two that he can play with "Hot" and not get burned, then later on in life he may think he can play with drugs and not get harmed. Allow your children to

learn "cause and effect".

7. Allow the Child to Grow at his Own Rate

This seems so obvious. We can't make our children grow any faster or slower than they are going to grow. So why do we try to make them stand up sooner than they are able? or walk sooner than they are able? or sit up sooner than they are able? Allow their little bones to grow and become strong before you have them putting weight on them. Don't compare their development with other babies, or with your own (you don't remember, anyway). Crawling is a vital developmental stage. Allow that baby to crawl as long as it wants to. Don't fret if your child doesn't talk as soon as other babies; and don't talk for it.

8. Establish a Schedule

This will be easier with some babies than with others. Try to feed the baby at the same times every day, and put her down for her nap at the same times every day. If morning naptime can be coordinated with Church, then the baby will sleep during Church, and you have time to renew your strength in the Lord. (*A child that doesn't have a morning nap all week will not sleep through Church on Sunday.*) Remember that, as the baby grows, this schedule will change. But a child will need an afternoon rest until he starts kindergarten.

If you have to work and leave your baby with a caregiver, don't let them let the baby sleep all day; the baby will get its day and night reversed (it will have a schedule—just not one you can live with), and you will come home to a wide-awake baby. You'll be up all night, and the caregiver will get to sleep with the baby all day.

9. Relax

Remember the words of this song: "Trust and obey; For there's no other way To be happy in Jesus, But to Trust and Obey." Try to be happy, not perfect. Enjoy your child at the age he is, because tomorrow, he will be a day older, and before you know it, he will not be a child anymore.

PS. If all else fails, ask another woman in the Church to keep your child for part of a day. That way, you will have someone else who will know how to pray for you.

Enjoy your Children; they are a Gift from God!

Signed,

One Who Has Been There

Dear Fathers

To all who are fathers, whether your flock is your home, or the care of a local Church, your responsibilities are enormous. Whatever the size of our flock, we will some day stand before the Lord Jesus and give an account of our shepherding, with either joy or grief. It is sobering to realize this. It is important that we pay close attention to our calling as fathers, since the welfare of our flock is so important to us and to God, our Father.

Walking with Christ is NOT a matter of taking great spiritual strides. It is a matter of small decisions. These decisions are based on submission to what we are taught. The simplicity of walking in God's way is borne out in Isaiah 28:9,10: "Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts. For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little". One small step of obedience prepares us for the next step, and so on. One step is built on the other. We must be willing, and obedient. Make a step.

Take a moment, first, to examine the truth of these few lines from a hymn:

When we walk with the Lord,
In the Light of His Word
What a glory He sheds on our way...

(If these words are familiar to you, it will be beneficial to read them several times over to rediscover their depths.)

Also, meditate for a few moments on this scripture: "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation" (Psalm 68:19).

Small steps, made in obedience to the Lord, based on the Word, open the doors of heaven for God to bless. All parents want the blessing of God on their home. HOWEVER, we must do our small part in order to liberate the blessings. We will pay a small price to reap a great reward. The price we pay will be to deny self, take up our cross, and follow. This is normal for a Christian. Small seeds of obedience to Jesus reap a great harvest of blessing, both here on earth, and in the ages to come. These words of our King are everlasting: "Then said Jesus unto his

disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:24-27).

I will use a metaphor to make a point. Our Christian home is like a boat crossing the sea of life. The father is at the helm, with his wife as his helper. If the boat remains free of water, the wind can readily fill the sails, and cause the craft to take the direction set by the Christ-centred helmsman. However, if water begins to leak into the craft, every occupant is threatened, and the progress is sluggish. The crew spends the majority of their time bailing water out of the boat. Certainly, a half-filled craft cannot weather the storms of life. Eventually, the boat may capsize.

In this metaphor, water represents worldliness. Our home is in the world, but the world must not be allowed in our home. Is there prevention, or even a cure, for this potential calamity? YES! I am sure that God has provided a simple, workable answer, both prevention and cure. It is simply this: **MAINTAINING FAMILY WORSHIP.**

Daily family worship (known also as "the family altar" or "devotions"), works like "pitch" or "tar" on the boat, repelling the gradual invasion of worldliness into your home. Your home "repels" worldly influence through the power of fellowship, prayer, the word of God, and the moving of the Holy Spirit. It brings oneness. It compels the busy family to set aside time, and to meet together, to share, to bear one another's burdens, to pray for neighbours, to hear what is happening in the lives of the children, and the parents. Parents learn what is happening at school and at work in the lives of their children. The family learns how to pray publicly. They learn how to worship aloud in praise and song.

Parents give opportunity for prayer in the heavenly language. The Christian life of the parent is on display for the children, who learn by this example what is really at the centre of their parent's priorities.

Family worship is not a burden. Rather, it is an honour to have the Lord worshipped in your home. The Lord loads us with benefits. He sheds glory on our way. We, along with our children, are fed at the feet of Jesus. Gifts and ministries are exercised as various ones participate in this time devoted to our Saviour.

It is never too late to begin family worship. If you have not been entering into this wonderful truth, begin now. Set aside fears. Fathers, it rests upon you to take the first step. Discuss this with your wife, and pray together for the Lord to help you both. **Set a time today for today.** If there are no children involved, husband and wife should pray together daily and read the word. This applies to couples who have not started to have children, and to couples whose children have left home. Family worship is a revelation for EVERY home to walk in.

Obedience carries endless blessing. Rebellion brings endless heartache. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (I Samuel 15:23).

If there are small children, gather them together, read a selection from the bible, sing together (where possible), and end in prayer. Tailor the family worship for the age of the children. It should last long enough for true worship, yet be short enough to keep the interest of the child. Let the children add variety, valuing their input. Keep in mind that the parent's goal is to point their children to a saving knowledge of Christ, so that they will be ready to receive Him at an early age. Also, keep in mind this promise: "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6).

If you have older children at home, and you want to begin the family altar, use much wisdom. After agreeing about family worship as husband and wife,

you may wish to meet as a family, asking each (older) child what time would work best for them. **Begin with whomever is able to attend**, and look to the Lord for each one to come willingly. Encourage the older children to contribute. Be sensitive to the time constraints, all the while looking for the moving of the Holy Spirit. Establish Jesus Christ as the foundation of your faith, the Bible as the centre of your faith, and prayer as the expression of your faith.

Both husband and wife should be involved. Where one spouse is unsaved, the saved spouse should have the endorsement of the other before proceeding. (There is no value in having family worship bring division between a husband and wife. If the unsaved spouse objects, the saved spouse will rely on prayer and Christian example for the salvation of the entire home.) “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy” (I Corinthians 7:14).

Should the father take the key role in family worship? Not necessarily. Now, do not misunderstand. The father still takes the headship by ensuring that family worship occurs. However, if the husband is away often, or has another good reason why he cannot lead, he should encourage his wife to take a substantial role. The main thing is that you worship the Lord in your home. Older children can also be given

responsibility to help lead family worship. It is part of the development of their ministry.

Use family worship as an avenue for memorizing scripture. If, by way of example, there are three children, each child can memorize a scripture. Don't worry if it takes even two or three weeks for the memory verse to be well learned. By the end of that period, the whole family will have unconsciously learned all three scriptures.

Be sensitive to issues that your children are dealing with. Make the family worship flexible to allow discussions that arise from issues. Let everyone agree that arguments are not allowed, since it disgraces the presence of the Lord. “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (James 3:17,18). The truth is established in the Word, and needs no defence.

Do not expect your children to stray from the Christian walk. Never plant that idea in their mind, for you may be reinforcing what the devil is whispering to them. Nevertheless, if some may stray, let your faith be grounded in the Word of God, and He will answer the cry of your heart on the behalf of the prodigal son or daughter.

For the single parent, it is equally important for you to maintain family worship. Though the load will at times seem heavy, look to the Lord to make

up for the lack you are feeling. “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). His supply is rich, and it is found in Christ Jesus.

How often should the family meet to worship? The revelation came in this wise: the general assembly should meet annually (Church camp), the local Church should meet on the first day of the week (Sunday worship), and the family should meet daily, Monday to Saturday.

Aim to meet daily. Restore the family altar where it has fallen down. Revive it by earnest prayer where it lacks the moving of the Holy Spirit. Examine what is eating up your time in the home, for other altars may have arisen to take the place of worshipping God. The spiritual health of a Christian's home is dependant upon the fathers and mothers being diligent, willing, and obedient.

We are only able to walk in the whole counsel of God if we are endlessly dependent on the endless help of the Holy Spirit. There are no professional parents. Family worship will evolve to reflect the individuality of your home and its occupants, and the presence of Christ in every heart. God will add many blessings, beyond what you can imagine. He will take your small contribution, your five loaves and two fishes, and multiply His blessings until what remains is beyond what you can even ask or think.

— **Brother Brian Hannigan**

Water Baptism

By Andy Snoke

(All Scriptures are taken from the New King James Version).

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Mat 28: 19).

Where did it begin?

God first instituted water baptism in preparation for the ministry of the Son of God. The synagogue in the time of Jesus was full of faithful worshipers who met each Sabbath, and spoke of the coming Messiah. However, their compliance to the numerous religious laws could never

bring them into a true fellowship with the King of Kings.

One day outside their doors, disrobed of the comfortable garments of religion, stood a man named John proclaiming a new message of repentance. He made it clear that he was not the coming Messiah, but that he was preparing the way for the visitation of the true Lamb of God.

“*And he went into all the region around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, saying: ‘The voice of*

and crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, Make His paths straight’” (Luke 3:3-4).

John baptized multitudes of hungry souls that had grown weary of their own self-righteousness. He commanded them to repent, to change their minds, and to bear fruits worthy of repentance. Into the Jordan they would go, then John would totally immerse them in water, and out of the watery grave they would arise a new creation.

Soon, the Lamb of God arrived on the scene, just as John had said. And to the

amazement of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ himself asked to be baptized. John knew that the sinless Lamb of God had come to take away the sin of the world, and had no need to be baptized.

But Jesus was making a statement that day of the great importance God had placed on water baptism.

“Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness,” said Jesus (Matt 3:15).

Water Baptism continued through the ministry of Jesus and the Apostles, and continues on today as an important step in an individual’s maturity and growth in Christ.

What are the elements of water baptism?

1. Repentance.

First, as it was with John the Baptist, water baptism speaks of true repentance towards God. Repentance is simply acknowledging ones sins, and turning from them to God. It is making a choice to turn away from sin and sinful living, and walking in the direction of God.

John made it clear that those being baptized should “bring forth fruit worthy of repentance”. It should be evident that there is a difference in the baptized soul. When asked, “what should we do?” John replied with good practical advice that pertained to their time, as well as our age today: *“He who has two tunics, let him give to him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise”* (Luke 3:11). *To the tax collectors he said, “Collect no more than what is appointed for you”* (Luke 3:13). *To the soldiers he said, “Do not intimidate anyone or accuse falsely, and be content with your wages”* (Luke 3:14).

2. Death.

Water Baptism, according to the Apostle Paul, really speaks of a death of the old sinful nature. When I was quite young, I thought that water baptism was the washing away of our sins, that it was a cleansing of the sinful nature. This is partially true. However, the true meaning is not a washing of the old nature, but a putting to death of the old nature. Water baptism speaks of burying the old nature, and rising up in newness of life.

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together

in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection” (Romans 6: 3-5.)

3. Immersion.

Going under the water completely immersed is as totally burying the dead. In every recorded case of water baptism in the New Testament, you will find that the saints were totally immersed in water, and were never sprinkled. Sprinkling of water for baptism can not be found anywhere in scripture.

Can you imagine attending the funeral of a loved one, when after all the good had been said, the service was concluded by sprinkling a little dirt on top of the casket in place of a full burial? This is in essence a comparison of sprinkling with water, and total immersion in water.

4. Walking in newness of life.

The baptized soul is commanded to “walk in newness of life”. “Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts” (Romans 6: 11-12).

Does it matter what words are said over you at water baptism?

The simple answer to that is NO! As one of the brethren said, “it is not the formulae that is important, it is the experience”.

In Matthew 28:19 it is recorded: *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”*. In Mark 6:16 it simply says: *“He who believes and is baptized will be saved.”* Peter proclaimed on the day of Pentecost: *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:38).

With these scriptures, as well as many others, it is evident that there is no set pattern of words that must be spoken over the person being baptized. What really matters is the sincerity of the heart, a true repentant spirit, and the desire to be buried with Christ and to walk in newness of life.

The road to perfection.

Baptism, in water as well as in the Holy Spirit, is a very important step along the road of growth and maturity in Christ. It is one of the progressive steps into perfection listed in the 6th chapter of Hebrews verse 1&2: “Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the

foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith towards God, of the doctrine of baptisms (water and Holy Spirit infilling), of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgement.”

How old should you be to be baptized?

There is no scripture that declares the appropriate age for water baptism. What is important is that the person being baptized is old enough to truly understand their need to repent and accept Christ, and then to repent. A person should be old enough to willingly give himself or herself to the Lord.

Many times children desire to be baptized, but sometimes with more of a longing to belong, or to please their parents, than a true repentance. As a general guideline, but certainly not a rule, it may be best to wait until children are at least 12 years old.

How soon after giving your heart to Christ, should you be baptized?

From the example of the scriptures, it would be appropriate to answer this question: “as soon as is appropriate”.

The Philippian Jailer was baptized by Paul within hours of giving his heart to the Lord. “And he (the Philippian jailer) took them (Paul & Silas) the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized” (Acts 16:33).

Immediately after Philip had expounded the scriptures to the Ethiopian eunuch while traveling thru the desert, the Ethiopian said “See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?” Then Philip said, ‘If you believe with all your heart, you may.’ And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. ‘So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him” (Acts 8:36-38).

A person should be baptized as soon as they can within reason. It is always preferred that a new soul be baptized in their local church with their local elders. If this is not possible, than often times there will be an opportunity at one of the annual camps.

“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection” (Romans 6: 3-5).

DATES OF IMPORTANCE

Pinelaw Family Camp November 8 - 11, 2003
 Indiana Young Peoples December 27 - 31, 2003
 North Battleford New Year's Youth Retreat Dec. 29, 2003 - Jan. 3, 2004
 Big Spring Texas January 30 - February 1, 2004
 North Carolina Winter Camp February 27 - 29, 2004
 Feast North Battleford April 8 - 11, 2004
 Illinois Gathering (King's House) April 30 - May 2, 2004
 Camp North Battleford July 4 - 11, 2004
 North Carolina Summer Camp July 25 - August 1, 2004
 Caribbean Camp, Trinidad August 1 - 7, 2004

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Charlotte, NC

Russell Hawkinson
Elder
Aug. 24, 2003
Clarkfield, MN

Emborzine Hamilton
Aug. 24, 2003
Lucea, Jamaica

NORTH BATTLEFORD NEW YEAR'S YOUTH RETREAT

Dec. 29, 2003 - Jan. 3, 2004

As part of Sharon Schools Educational Program, the North Battleford Young Peoples' Gathering will begin with the supper meal Monday, Dec. 29, 2003 and will run through until after breakfast Jan. 3, 2004. Bring your usual things: bedding, towel, toilet articles, warm clothing, musical instrument, Bible, notebooks, skates and broomball brooms and hockey gear, gym clothes and footwear. We thank the Mothers for their past contributions of baking and suggest that similar offerings would be gratefully received again this year. (If the Elders feel to send any financial help from the churches, it will be greatly appreciated). This invitation is extended to teenagers and older singles and young married couples. We would like to encourage older singles to attend with a focus on their ministry and issues. We also would like to encourage young married couples to come for fellowship and to assist with the ministry. Please have one of your young people write at an early date stating approximately the number of boys and girls hoping to attend. Send to Sharon Schools, Box 878, North Battleford, Sask. S9A 2Z3. Registration Fee: \$25.00 on arrival.

North Carolina Winter Camp 2004

to be held at Cornerstone Conference Center,
 WNC Pentecostal Holiness Church
 Hwy 29 North, Brown Summit, NC

The site of the camp is about 12 miles north of Greensboro of US Highway 29, on the left, 1 block north of NC Hwy 150 interchange with Hwy 29.

Traveling south on Hwy 29 from Virginia, the camp is located on the right just after passing the Benaja Road overpass.

The camp will begin with the 7:30 pm meeting on Friday, February 27, and conclude with the noon meal on Sunday, February 29, 2004.

Other meetings will be at 9:30 am and 7:30 pm on Saturday.

Camp Registration:
Dave Heath ph. (336) 841-0607
email: ddpack@juno.com or
Jim Marion ph. (336) 883-1845
email: marion3196@aol.com

Sharon Children's Homes and Schools
 Box 878, North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada, S9A 2Z3

The Sharon Star is a monthly paper, published and mailed out on the free-will offering plan, as a medium of information for all who are interested in the unfolding revelation of the Word of God.

Published by Sharon Children's Homes and Schools, Box 878, North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada, S9A 2Z3.

Sharon Star on line www.thesharonstar.org

Office (306) 445-2733.

Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement No. 461059.

See Page 3 for Indiana Young People's Meeting