

A Message From Our President

Animal Rights Group will tell you that if you throw a crab in a pot of hot water it is cruelty to crabs. But if you place the crab in warm water and slowly turn up the heat it might be more acceptable. There might be no differences in the flavor of the crab.

Looking forward to the mission trip season, as our youth participate in missions around the world we are faced with two fundamental challenges how do we attract their interest and how do we keep their interest. If their initial experience is similar to crabs being thrown in hot water it could be their last mission trip. After all it might be far more interesting spending the summer on the couch playing video games and watching their favorite TV shows. The competition is fierce with respect to the alternatives. This in no way suggests that mission

trips should be all fun and games. What is being suggested is that some consideration be given to missional needs of the young people relative to the trips objective. Share with them the objective of the trip and how their specific task fits into the overall plan. Treat them as equals in the group by soliciting their input, and responding to their suggestions. Keep them engaged in the whole process.

Sometimes it might be necessary to divide the group in several small groups and plan trips based on the interest of the youth. It also might be effective to pair youth with an adult for guidance and inspiration.

Keep in mind that there is a large, growing youth population in the United States. Graduation requirements have increased the youth awareness about community service. Scholarship and university entrance requirements encourage students to

ex-

that are reli-

ted volunteers when they find an organization that offers them meaningful activities and respectful support. It is our responsibility to keep the youth interested in missions and sometimes small steps might keep them out of hot water while maintaining interest.



gain volunteer perience. Studies show young people competent,

able, commit-

Evon Crooks, President, Mission Society, Southern Province and a member of New Philadelphia Moravian Church.

Under Thy Direction, O Father. . . All generations

I marveled as I read and re-read his handbook, *The School of Infancy*, written originally for mothers. Bishop John Amos Comenius had reached out across more than 375 years and tapped me on the shoulder. He opened his handbook with this letter:

To Godly Christian Parents, teachers, guardians and all who are charged with the care of children . . .

GREETINGS!

Beloved,

Since it is my purpose to speak to you all about your duty, it is necessary to show three things:

I. The preciousness of the treasures that God bestows on those to whom He entrusts children.

II. That He has an end and purpose to which He confers them, and a goal to which their education ought to be directed.

III. That youth demand good education so greatly that if they fail to get it they are of necessity lost.

Having established these three principles, I shall proceed to my purpose and explain in order the areas of your cares in this early age of your charges . . .

Under Thy direction, O Father! By whom every generation in heaven and on earth is ordained.

Perhaps you hear the urgency in his letter too? It reminded me of another letter, which my husband Chris and I wrote to our yet-to-be-born Anna Claire. For what did we pray? For what did we dream? Our most fervent desire for her was not necessarily that she be smart or successful, but that she would grow up into the likeness of our Good Shepherd . . . compassionate and kind.

When I join other parents and grandparents in our provinces I hear them speak in much the same language. When I ask them to name their one highest hope for their children, their first answer is not, "I want my child to grow up to play professional soccer!" but "I want my children to be a blessing," or "I want her to learn to give and receive love." Jan Johnson in her book, *Growing Compassionate Children*, writes:

"Part of the dreaming picture I have for my children is that God's love will shape them into compassionate people in a culture that is self-absorbed. I long for them to be individuals who like to offer cups of cold water to the thirsty, who dare to whisper words of life to the unreached, who want to love all peoples the way God does."



It takes much discernment to be a parent these days. It isn't easy to keep the vision of God's reign always within our sight. This may mean that we carefully ask, "Whose dream is this?" "Is it the dream of a marketer who loses no sleep over enlisting children as 'guerilla peer-to-peer marketers'?" Or, "is it the vision of Nickelodeon which boasts, 'we own kids aged 2-12'?" I

must scrupulously look inward at my own way of life and diligently ask if I am modeling compassion, generosity and simplicity. We all know that children learn more from what we do, (or don't do) than what we say. If I am to be

"leaven" in God's beloved world, in order that all creation may flourish, my concern is not only for my own dear ones, but also for the parched Sudanese child who longs for a cup of cold, clean water.

Often the excruciating lessons of parenting come when we want to protect our child from hurt. Perhaps we are overprotective of those places and people who might help our child grow up in Christ. We don't want to expose them to the painful side of life. And, of course there is the opposite danger, where we run the risk of not being

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