

From the Superintendent's Desk

by Raz Autry

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My experiences with children never cease to amaze me. Perhaps this is why I feel so comfortable with them.

In my many years of school work, I have always placed the welfare of children at the top of my list. Even my severest critics could not in all fairness accuse me of not living up to my commitment to children. I enjoy being around them. That is why I am going to enjoy being a grandfather so much.

I already have two adopted grand-daughters. Practicing being a grandfather has been a ball. Their mothers were excellent, former students of mine: Maxine Colston and Ruth Ann Warren. They have fine daughters but I really can't brag on their husbands too much because I have been convinced for a long time that most men marry above their standing.

Carol Colston and Meredith Warren are delightful children. Carol invented the word "hyperactive". I am fully convinced that if you were driving down the road at 50 miles per hour and Carol was in the car, if the window wasn't closed she would get out and race the car. Meredith is a born comedian. She also has the knack of bringing one down to earth very quickly.

Carol is my godchild. I became involved with Meredith while telling the children's story at church. Meredith would always come down and answer the questions with a more than willing mind, much to the embarrassment of her mother but to the delight of her father. Meredith gave me a good lesson on humbleness recently.

I was out at West Hoke School where she is a student. While I was talking to Mr. Williams, the principal, Meredith came by. I was complaining about something one of our folks had failed to do. Meredith overheard the conversation and before I knew it, I felt a tug on my coat. Meredith said to me "You are a lot nicer in church than you are out here". If you do not believe that is an humbling experience try it sometime.

On occasion I have taken Carol and Meredith to the movies. I took them to see "Cinderella" and during the Easter season I took them to see "Robin Hood" in Fayetteville. The experience I had with them at Bordeaux was a real adventure.

I arrived at the theater at one o'clock holding each one by the hand to try to keep them from doing the 100 yard dash in front of a car. As we approached the ticket window I saw a sign that said "Sold Out for Robin Hood". The young woman in the ticket booth said "I am sorry sir, but we are completely sold out." The girls were distressed and I gave the young woman my most distressful look. She said there was no way she was going to let a grandfather and his granddaughters not see the movie. She sold me the tickets and apologized for the fact that we would have to sit on the floor. I knew this would suit the girls but I suspected that it would be tough on "gramps". After getting the girls situated at the front of the theater, (They always sit at the front. The last time I took them they parked me on the front row. It took me three full days to get my eyes back in place.) I had to go to the concession because it was to popcorn, coke and candy them up.

As I was standing in line between two young mothers at the concession stand, the one in front of me remarked that she had seen me coming into the theater with my grandchildren. I told her that she had and that I was afraid that we were going to have to sit on the floor. The mother behind me said "Do you mean to tell me that the theater is going to make a grandfather sit on the floor?" Both of them said "No way is that going to happen". Needless to say I was enjoying the attention.

As luck would have it, a young man came out of the back of the theater. One of the young women called for him to come over. She asked to see the manager. He replied "Mam, I am the manager". She told him to go down and find this grandfather a seat that there is no way he is going to sit on the floor and that the very idea that the theater would even entertain the notion that a grandfather would sit on the floor was beyond her imagination.

The young man was somewhat baffled and greatly apprehensive about tangling with these young women and said "Come on sir, and let's find you a seat". I asked him to wait until I could get the popcorn and Coke, which he did. As I followed him down the aisle with my arms full of popcorn, Coke, and candy, I could see his flashlight pointing frantically, but I continued because I knew it was necessary for me to get the girls situated.

He followed me down the aisle and said to me "I have you a seat in the middle". I said "I can't leave my granddaughters". He asked where they would like to sit. They immediately said the front row. All I could say was "Oh, no". He made arrangements for us to have two seats on the front row. So, I prepared for my eyes to go through another traumatic experience.

If you can imagine a scene that has one two - hundred - and - ten - pound man sitting on the front row of a theater among two hundred and fifty screaming children, then you have fully captured my situation. Believe it or not, I was having a ball. I knew I was fully accepted when the little boy sitting next to me reached his hand in my popcorn box and helped himself.

About an hour and a half later as we were driving home, Carol was still turning flips in the front of my truck and Meredith announced that she was hot. I rolled down the window but she said "My face is not hot. My bottom is hot." Without breaking their stride or a sentence they both wanted to know which movie is next. I said "How about Bambi?" They said Bambi it will be.



TO UNITED WAY -- Ashwell Harward, community relations director for Burlington in Raeford, is shown presenting a significant corporate contribution for the United Way Campaign. Ken Witherspoon, campaign chairman for 1982, received the contribution on behalf of the United Way.

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Sunday School Lesson

Background Scripture:

Revelation 1: 13.

Devotional Reading:

Lamentations 3: 21-27, 31-33.

Dear Visitor:

The place which you have just entered is sacred. This small cave some two thousand years ago gave shelter to the beloved disciple of Jesus Christ, St. John the Evangelist, who around the year 95 A.D. was exiled to Patmos by the Roman Emperor Domitian on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Thus reads a small brochure given me in May, 1980 in the Holy Cave of the Apocalypse on the island of Patmos in the Aegean Sea. Tradition tells us that a small recess in the rock of the cave was the place where St. John laid his head when resting. Another recess to the right and a little higher is the place where he supported his head when he knelt to pray. A level rock is believed to be the desk upon which his companion, Prochoros, wrote as the Apostle dictated. And that which St. John dictated and Prochoros wrote was the Revelation of John.

According to the Apostle John, in Revelation 1:1, this book came to him as a revelation from God. This was a message which God had for the churches and, as John puts it, "he made it known by sending his angel to his servant John." So the message is from God, but what of the strange manner in which this message is presented?

The style is called "apocalyptic," a type of Jewish and Christian literature in those days which was used to reveal a message from God through the means of images and

visions of a highly symbolic nature. The style is something that is hard for most of us to understand in these days, except to note that the images and symbols are reminiscent, to some degree, of those we encounter in dreams or psychedelic experiences. They are images that seem to come from the deep recesses of the unconscious mind.

Yet, although the images may give us considerable difficulty — as sometimes our own dreams do — still the message that God imparted through the Evangelist is pretty clear. Writing in a time of persecution against Christians by the empire, the Evangelist is relaying God's assurance that, no matter how great the earthly powers that persecute the faithful, God is in control and through his Son, Jesus Christ, he will prevail.

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty." Since Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the alphabet, he is saying "I am the first and last of all things." In between there may be principalities, powers and empires, but "Fear not. . . . I have the keys of Death and Hades."

Dear visitor, your coming to this holy place is not a chance event in your life. God... has guided you here to listen deep within yourself, to the secret echo of the words spoken to St. John...and for you to see with your mind's eye the heavenly vision revealed to the Apostle.

And the meaning of that "heavenly vision," now as then, is the assurance from God through Christ that the whole world, from Alpha to Omega, is in his hands.

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