

Saints and sinners: The fourth commandment

"Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live on the earth" (Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16).

This commandment was not directed so much toward children and minors as it was toward adults burdened with the care of an aging parent. In some ancient societies, helpless dependents were abandoned when they could no longer look out for themselves. Even up to relatively recent times, an Eskimo tribe would take an elderly person along on a fishing excursion, leave him or her on an ice floe while the tribe went off to fish, and then "forget" to come back. But this commandment did more than just remind the ancient Israelites of their obligations

to their parents. It appealed to self-interest. It is the only commandment that has, as St. Paul noted, a "promise" attached to it—"that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

The promise is both psychologically and medically sound. Good feelings toward parents can result in better physical health—and, by extension, a longer life. A study at Johns Hopkins University found that of students who later developed cancer, most confessed feelings of estrangement from their parents.

But this commandment creates its problems, too. What about children whose parents are not worthy of their respect? Not that they are cruel or heartless in the ordinary sense. Few parents



george plagenz

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would abandon their small children for several days as a Midwest couple did recently. But we often abandon them in other ways that are harmful and insensitive.

We leave youngsters alone at home after school, or, in the case of 2- or 3-year-olds, in day-care centers, despite volumes of research that indicate the natural arrangement is paren-

tal care. We tell ourselves that youngsters must be exposed early to adult experiences in order to survive later in a harsh world.

We're old-fashioned parents better? In his book, "What You Owe Your Child," Willard L. Sperry, the late dean of the Harvard Divinity School, wrote: "We now know that our parents' theology was founded on mistaken geology, biology, astronomy and history."

"We are quite clear that their morality too was largely a matter of taboos, repressions, inhibitions and the like."

"We know that in many matters they were wrong where we are right. But there was a right in the wrongness that bothers us. We look into their faces as their pictures hang on our walls,

and we have the disquieting suspicion that, in spite of our gains in scientific accuracy, they were better men and women than we are."

This commandment therefore carries an obligation not only for children but for parents as well. Children will find it easier to honor parents who exhibit honorable qualities.

Ask yourself, "What have I done: first, in my lifetime and, second, lately, which would give my children reason to be proud of me?"

Epitaphs on tombstones are not common anymore, but if they were, what epitaph do you think your children would write about you?

Write epitaphs for your own parents—living or dead. This will get you to concentrate on the qualities about them in which you can take pride.

With an attentive ear, truck-stop minister tends to constantly changing flock

By Martha Raffaele

Associated Press Writer

CARLISLE, Pa. — Truckers and other weary travelers who pull into the Carlisle Travel Plaza in search of food, fuel or a rest room can find much more than creature comforts if the Rev. Donald Mason is around.

Since 1990, Mason has overseen the "pastoral care" of truck-stop patrons as chaplain of the Carlisle/West Shore Area Trucker and Traveler Ministry. His territory encompasses the Carlisle Travel Plaza and two other truck stops along a commercial strip of Route 11 in central Pennsylvania, where the rigs that rumble along nearby Interstate 81 and the Pennsylvania Turnpike can find a respite from the road.

One of Mason's objectives is to encourage truckers to unload the mental freight they're hauling, whether it's anxiety over meeting tight shipping deadlines, or the pain of being separated from their families for days and

even weeks at a time.

The pastor's job can be anything from picking up the tab for lunch on a driver's birthday to heavy-duty counseling for wrenching matters like the death of a loved one.

"I think what's missing for them is a lot of the personal relationships and the family kind of relationships that people need in their lives," Mason said as he nursed a cup of coffee in a back corner of the plaza's restaurant. "As much as one person can, that's one of the things I try to provide, an opportunity to be related to somebody that's in the same family, even though we're strangers."

Mason, an ordained United Church of Christ pastor, is one of three ministers based in truck stops around the state under a program affiliated with the Pennsylvania Council of Churches.

Nationwide, more than 100 truck stops provide some form of ministry, whether it is the one-on-one outreach which Mason performs or formalized

worship services that take place in drivers' lounges or mobile chapels, according to NATSO, a truck stop and travel plaza industry trade group.

"The number is increasing all the time," said Lisa Mullings, NATSO's spokeswoman. "It's sometimes hard for truckers to get to church regularly. They're lonely, and they're away from their families, and I think this offers them a chance to relieve some of that loneliness."

An Ohio native, Mason, 46, settled in the Carlisle area after graduating from Lancaster Theological Seminary in 1982. While he served as a church pastor, he joined a committee that established the trucking ministry in 1985, then took it over after the first chaplain moved on.

"It took me a while to get used to the pace," he said. "When you're in the ministry, you have a set schedule, and everything is structured. The first day I came in to the truck stop, I sat down at

the coffee counter, and nobody was there. I thought, 'OK, now what? How long do I wait before I move on to something else?' It's like being in a constant state of readiness, but not necessarily high alert."

As Good Samaritan-in-residence, Mason also tends to practical matters, such as aiding an elderly Florida couple whose travels were interrupted recently when the husband fell ill and had to go to the hospital by ambulance.

The couple had to leave their 35-foot mobile home behind at the Flying J Truck Stop. The wife, assuming that Mason was a veteran trucker, asked if he would drive the mobile home—with a van in tow—to the hospital parking lot. He had never driven a truck in his life, but rose to the occasion.

"We scoped out the parking lot and found a big area that I could park in at the hospital, so I didn't have to worry about backing it up. I just drove straight ahead and found a parking spot, and that

was that," he said. "It took up eight parking spots."

One of Mason's rare "regulars" is Tom Duffy, a 60-year-old UPS driver from Williamstown, N.J., who meets with him occasionally for a meal and casual conversation while he's on his daily runs to central Pennsylvania.

"I appreciate his company," Duffy said during a recent visit with Mason. "We're always happy to see each other."

Later, Mason made a new connection with Smith Transport driver Ronald Hamrick, who was fueling his truck outside.

After Hamrick shared some worries that his father-in-law might have colon cancer, Mason asked if he could say a brief prayer, and the two men joined hands.

Even though Hamrick wasn't actively seeking Mason's counsel, he said he appreciates the presence of a truck stop chaplain.

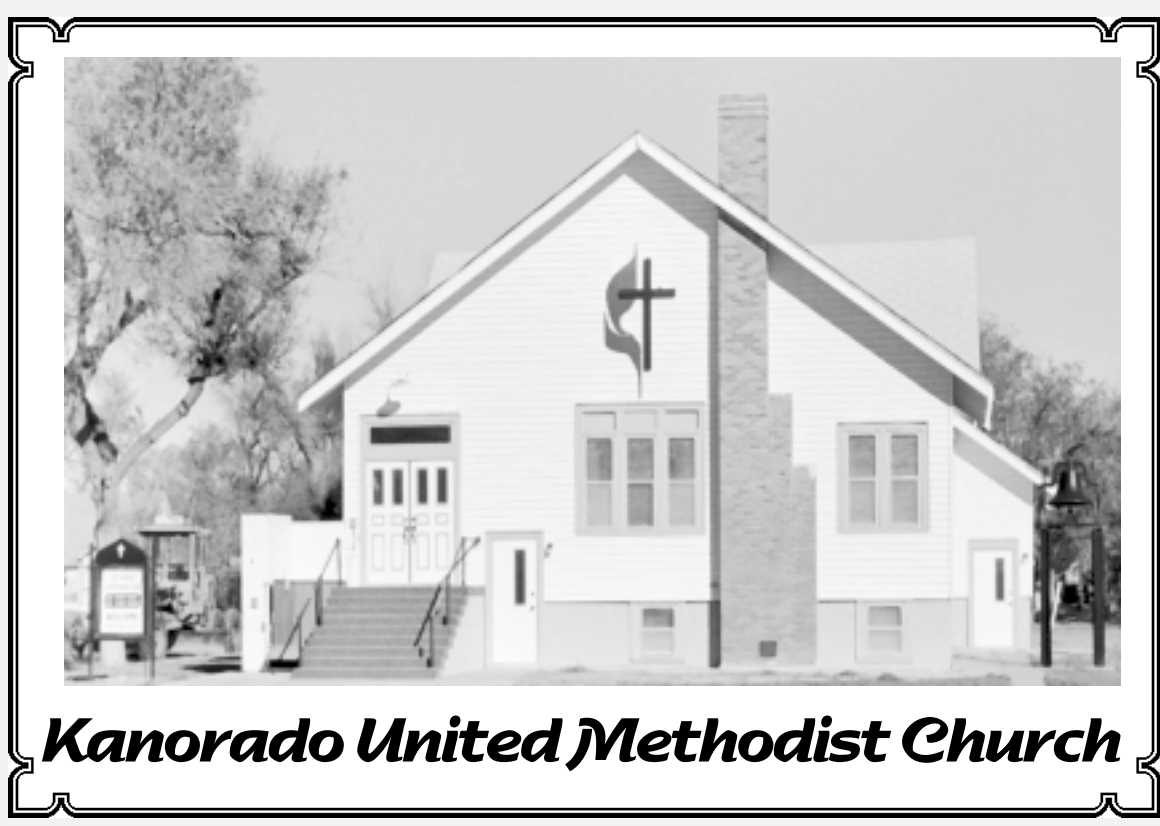
"It relieves some of the tension, because when you're out on the road, you're always running into trouble on the highway. You've got to deal with people making stupid moves on the road. It helps to have someone to talk to about it," said Hamrick, 47, who lives near Cleveland.

Besides ministering to his itinerant flock, Mason must also raise enough money to meet his annual \$60,000 budget.

He spends two Sundays a month speaking about the ministry at local churches, and is currently selling one-pound bags of mixed nuts for \$4 each.

"The funding for the ministry has always been kind of a roller-coaster," he said.

But despite the financial challenges, Mason always finds a spiritual payoff when he knows that he's connected with someone. "The biggest reward to me is a handshake after a good conversation," he said.



Kanorado United Methodist Church

Bible Baptist Church
Pastor: Don Crutcher
 Fifth & Broadway
 899-7368
Sunday: Sunday School: 9 am
 Worship Service: 10 am
 Evening Service: 6:30 pm
Wednesday: Evening Bible Study: 7 pm

Calvary Gospel Church
Pastor: Rev. Steve Rains
 Fourth & College • 899-3605
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
 Morning Service: 10:30 am
 Evening Service: 6:00 pm
Wednesday: Adult Prayer and Worship: 7:00 p.m.
 Youth @ the Rock House: 7:00 p.m.
 Helping you focus upward in worship, inward in commitment and outward in evangelism

Church of Christ
 401 Caldwell
 899-6185
Sunday: Bible Study: 9:45 am
 Worship Service: 10:45 am
Wednesday: Bible Study: 7 pm

Church of the Nazarene
Pastor: Matthew Delp
 Third & Caldwell
 899-2080 or 899-3797
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 am
 Worship Service: 10:50 am
 Evening Service: 6 pm
Wednesday: Evening Service: 7 pm

First Baptist Church
Pastor: Bud Chester
 Fifth & Center • 899-3450
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
 Morning Worship: 10:30 am
 Evening Worship: 6:30 pm
Tuesday: Mens' Prayer Group: 6:00 am
Thursday: Night Bible Study: 7:00 pm

Seventh Day Adventist Church
 1160 Cattletrail
Pastor: Arlin Cochran • 785-332-2888
Saturday: Sabbath School: 9:30 am
 Worship Service: 11 am

First Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
Pastor: Loren Strait
 Eighth & Arcade • 899-5233
Sunday: Worship Service: 10:30 am
Sunday School: 9:15 a.m.
Activities: Junior High & High School Youth Groups, Adult Bible Study, Choir, Men's and Women's Groups, Devotions Study, Monthly Fellowship
Special Notice: Handicap Accessible, Hearing Assistance Equipment and Infant and Toddler Nurseries Available

First United Methodist Church
 1116 Sherman
 899-3631
Pastor: Rev. Janet Hernandez
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:15 am
 Worship Service: 10:30 am

Sonrise Christian Church
 Ninth & Caldwell • 899-5398
Minister: Tony Kafka
Youth Minister: Doug Bean
Sunday: Worship Service: 9:30 am
 Sunday School: 10:45 am
Wednesday: Junior/Senior High Meeting: 7 pm
 Adult & Children's Classes: 7 pm

Emmanuel Lutheran Church
 13th & Sherman • 899-6161
Pastor: Scott Grimshaw
Sunday: Sunday School: 8:45 am
 Worship Service: 10 am
Wednesday: Confirmation: 6 pm

Kanorado United Methodist Church
Pastor: Leonard Cox
 399-2468
Sunday: Sunday School: 9 am
 Worship Service: 10:15 am

Goodland Bible Church
 109 Willow Road • 899-6400
Pastor:
Sunday: Sunday School: 9:45 am
 Morning Worship: 11 am
 Evening Worship: 6 pm
Wednesday: Call for location

Grace Fellowship Church
 104 E. Hwy 24 • 899-6423
Pastor: Bob Snyder • Residence: 899-0134
Sunday: Sunday School: 10 am
 Worship Service: 11 am
 Youth Group at Gattshall's at 5:30 pm
 Adult Bible Study 6 pm

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
 13th & Center
 899-2115 or Rectory 899-2114
Priest: Father Charles Schneider
Deacon: Gretchen Talitha
Adult Forum: Sunday: 8:30 am
 Morning Prayer: 9:30 am 1st & 5th Sundays
Holy Eucharist: 2nd, 3rd, & 4th Sundays: 9:30
 Sr. Warden for emergencies during the week 899-2067

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
 1200 15th Street • Burlington, CO • (719) 346-7984
Sacrament Meeting: 9:30 am
Sunday School: 10:45 am
Priesthood/Relief Society: 11:30 am

Word of Life Foursquare Church
 223 E. 10th
 899-5250
Pastor: John Coumerilh
Weekend services
Saturday evening: Worship Celebration & Kids' Church: 6:30 am

United Methodist Church Brewster:
Pastor:
 Worship Service: 10:45 am CST
 Sunday School: 9:45 am CST
Winona:
Minister: Rev. Bob Winters
 Worship Service: 9 am CST
 Sunday School: 10:15 am CST

Iglesia Del Dios Vivo
 La Luz Del Mundo
 Spanish Speaking Church
Minister: Esteban Ortiz B.
 1601 Texas • 899-5275
Daily Prayer: Sunday thru Saturday: 5 am & 6 pm
Sunday: Sunday School: 10 am

Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Pastor: Father Norbert Dlabal
 307 W. 13th • 899-7205
Sacrament of Reconciliation: 4:30-5 pm Saturday or by appointment
Mass Schedule:
 Saturday: 6 pm
 Sunday: 10:30 am
Spanish Mass: 1st & 3rd Sunday: 2 pm

Pleasant Home Church
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 Rt. 1, Box 180 • 694-2807 • 3190 Road 70
Pastor: Charlie Busch
 694-2242
Sunday: Worship Service: 9 am
 Sunday School: 10 am
 Evening Service: 6 pm

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