

“Starter for Ten” –

Anyone recognise the male in the photos?

Robert Louis Stevenson 1850–1894.

Scottish novelist, poet, essayist and travel writer.

**Treasure Island, Strange Case of Dr Jekyll & Mr Hyde,
Kidnapped and 1913: A Child's Garden of Verses.**

**A child should always say what's true
And speak when he (*she*) is spoken to,
And behave mannerly at table
At least as far as he (*she*) is able!**

15th cent quoted by Augustinian clergyman called John Mirk –

Children should be seen and not heard!

Would Jesus agree with writers? **Matthew 18:1–14.**

Confidence the Disciples had in Jesus v1

Question suggests believed His claim to deity **16:16f?**

Jesus asked them, “Who do you say I am?”

Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

Jesus replied, “You are blessed, Simon, because My Father has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being.

Jesus knew how to praise and encourage people!

In relation to “being like Jesus” **Praising & Encouraging** often missing!

A pat on the back, though only a few vertebrae removed from a kick

in the pants, is miles ahead in results!

Should be a priority in the life of Christ’s Church!

Concern in the Disciples minds **Matt 18:1**

“Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?”

Jockeying for position in God’s heaven!

What motivated their behaviour?

- **Jealous of Jesus praising/encouraging Peter 16:17?**
- **Thought Kingdom established soon 16:21–17:13?**
 - **Diverted attention from their failures 17:14–23?**
 - **Idea of freedom from paying Tax 17:24–27?**

Whatever the motivation they wanted to move on and gain a prominence had never anticipated!

Reasons people want prominence may differ – *still wrong!*
Jesus wants His Leaders to be humble – *not haughty!*

Challenge of Jesus' response vs2-4

Didn't show annoyance at their insensitivity.

Used a Visual Aid to get message across – *a child!*

Taking a big risk – *unpredictability of children!*

4½ yr old at Induction weekend! 4 hrs on Sat! 1½ hrs Sun! Enough!

As a Deacon's wife patted his head he lifted foot & kicked her leg!

Children are unpredictable – as Margaret & I were reminded!

Jesus undeterred as He knew human nature Jn 2:24!



Groucho Marx: Animal Crackers; Monkey Business, Night at the Opera etc.

My mother loved children and would have given anything if I had been one.

Jesus looked at every child & saw potential – *not problem!* Do we?

**Need commitment to Jesus, cultural awareness and
courage to draw the potential out!**

“Through the Year with William Barclay”

– 26th November reading!

Infection

**Do we take as much pains to guard our children
from moral and spiritual infection as we do
from physical infection?**

**Do we try to be as sure that they are kept safe
from so much that threatens their minds and souls
as we do in relation to danger to their bodies?**

For there has never been an age when children are so exposed to spiritual infection.

We have for example, what seems to be a cult of violence in the entertainment world.

That cult has invaded even the games children play and the language they use.

One of the strangest features of our age and society is the amount of advertising directed to creating the worst possible habits!

**Modern advertising does not only aim to satisfy an
existing need –
it aims to create a need to be satisfied.**

**And sometimes the needs so created are anything
but desirable.**

**One of the worst features of life today is the flood
of pornography pouring from our printing presses.**

**This is a quite deliberate stimulation of that
which is worst.**

Life is full of infection.

It is impossible for young people to escape contact with this infection and – *impossible or undesirable to isolate them from life.*

Parents have a great responsibility in these difficult days on this matter of spiritual infection.

Churches must pray daily for all parents – especially Christians – to

- know what God's Word teaches
- grasp the pressure on children today
- be faithful to their personal Christian beliefs
- be willing and able to say “**No**” to their children
- maintain good relationships by explaining actions

Parents need this help as the devil is busy **1 Pet 5:8!**

Child sensed he could trust Jesus

This child – *with Parents' support* – went to Jesus!

Matt 18:2, Mk 9:36, Lk 9:48 He called a little child, had him stand among them and took him in His arms!

Recall avoiding some Adults as child to avoid hugs & slobbery kisses!

Not suspicious; just personal dislike – *ended when a teenager!*

Jesus reached out to child in love – he responded!

Trust between Adults & Children crucial today – *including in churches!*

“Disclosure Forms” necessary part of life – *sadly!*

Suggest Parents, Educationalists, Politicians, all Groups

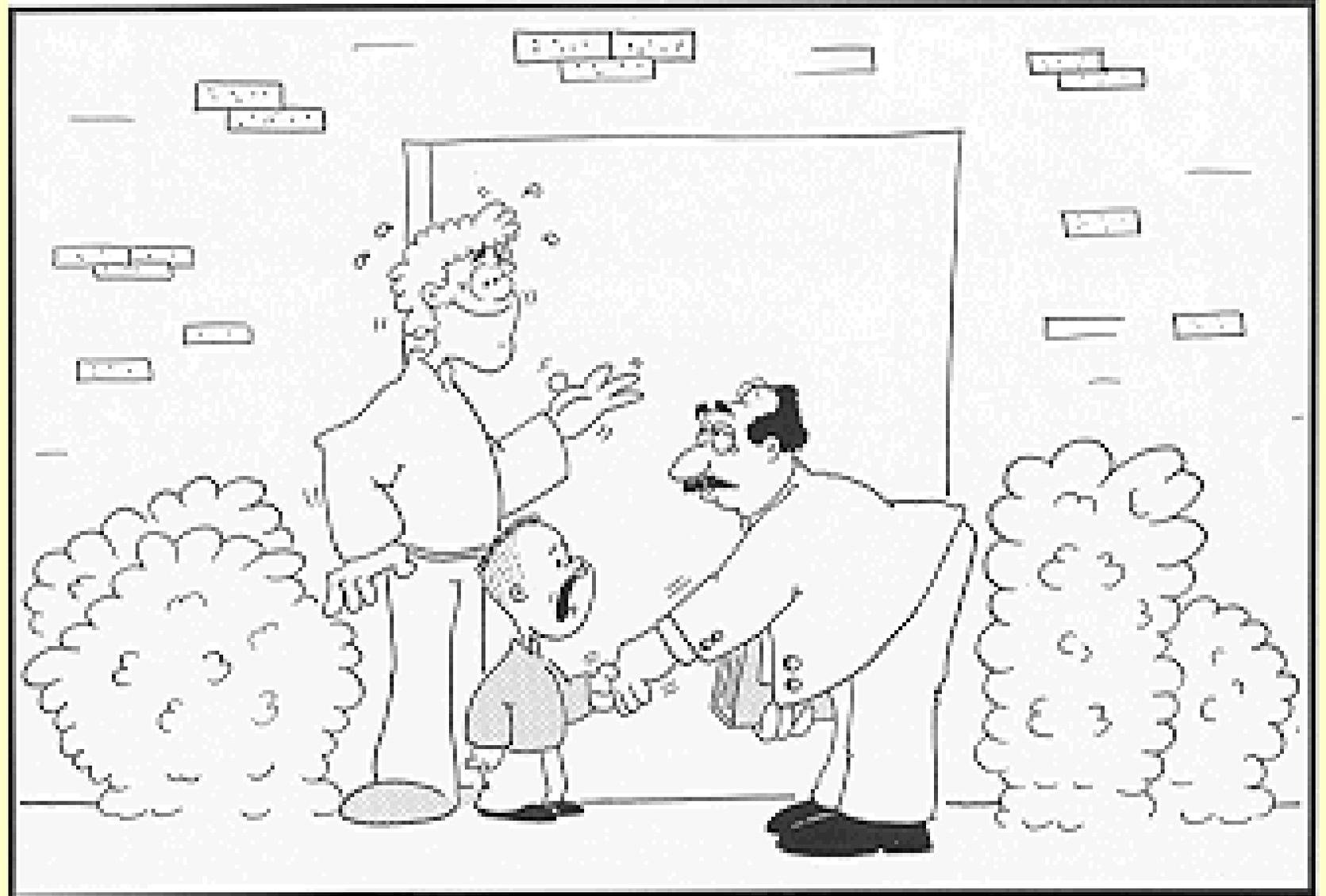
**involved in youth activities should examine Curricula –
*to ensure children's safety & young children's innocence!***

Change in thinking Jesus called for **Matt 18:6**

... little ones who believe in Me. 5 attitudes that could lead to faith!

- **Trust people as dependent – *Food & what follows!!***
- **Frank & honest in early life – *Can cause problems!***

**Experience
every Minister
and
every Father
dreads!**



**Dad says if it wasn't for your
sermons he'd never get any sleep!!!**

Change in thinking Jesus called for **Matt 18:6 ...**

... little ones who believe in Me. 5 attitudes that could lead to faith!

- Trust people as dependent – *Food, Changing etc.!!!*
- Frank & honest in early life – *Can cause problems!*
- Enjoy stories about bravery – *Jesus life and death!*
- Willing to learn new things – *Part of discipleship!*
- *Can be very determined – pre-requisite for faith!*

See why children can – and often do – believe in Jesus!

Build on this latent potential & feed minds with Jesus!

**No apologies for this attitude –
non Christians don't apologise for their actions!**

ALL Christians should feed families spiritually!

Condemnation to be avoided vs5–6

If anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung round their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.

Really severe punishment.

Millstone needed mule to turn it - *around a neck drown quickly!*

Interfere with child's spiritual development = punishment!

Should actively encourage education about Jesus!

Margaret & my visit with Midlothian MP David Hamilton 2001–2015.

Do all we can to create opportunities to promote belief in Jesus!

Leave the outcome of our work with God & individual!

God's concern for every individual child vs10–14

Don't despise one of these little ones, for I tell you their angels in heaven see the face of my Father!

An emissary of God watches over all children!

If a man owns 100 sheep & 1 wanders away, will he not leave the 99 to look for the 1 that strayed?

Leaving 99 safe sheep for 1 lost one = each child precious to God!

In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.

Do we value the spiritual lives of our children as much as God does?

Are we willing to examine personal & church life & adjust our activities so today's children can come to love Jesus?



**Good Shepherd
found the Sheep
that was lost!
Remembering
our Father in
heaven is not
willing that any
little ones
should be lost,
will we reach out
to rescue those
who are lost?**