

# THE BELLEVILLE MESSENGER

July 26

2009

## Sense of Shame

In a recent interview an actress who recently did her first nude scene in a movie explained her discomfort the first time she disrobed on the set before the director, cameramen, and other members of the cast. She explained how reluctant she was, how awkward she felt — as though she at first felt a sense of shame. She then noted how much more comfortable she became and how much easier it was with each take and repeat of the scene as the director worked to get it just right.

This illustrates how in time, with continued practice, any person can become shameless and insensitive to shameful actions. It has happened in this country with fornicators, abortionists, homosexuals, lewd dancers, divorces for frivolous reasons, and nudity and filthy speech on TV and in the movies. Our sense of shame as a nation is all but lost and we, as Israel of old, no longer know how to blush (Jeremiah 6:15; 8:12).

But back to nudity. Shame has been associated with nakedness since the sin of Adam and Eve, who hid themselves in embarrassment and tried to cover their bodies with fig-leaf aprons. Jesus, in the book of Revelation, joins shame to nakedness a couple of times (Revelation 3:18; 16:15). And in the case of Adam and Eve, God replaced their inadequate aprons with coats of skin which, according to Wilson's Old Testament Word Studies, were garments that generally had sleeves and came to the knees (p. 81). It is also interesting that God made undergarments for the priests that covered the thighs to hide the nakedness that could be seen under their out garments when they climbed the high steps up to the altar (Exodus 28:40-42)

All of this should be put in the context of marriage — the

honorable and pure relationship in which men and women may view one another's bodies and join themselves in a one-flesh relationship (Hebrews 13:4). Jesus made it clear that viewing the body of one to whom you are not married and lusting after it is impure and adulterous in heart and thought (Matthew 5:27,28). Men and women are, as a result, responsible to clothe themselves in a way that such illicit thinking is not provoked.

This begins with a sense of shame, a sensitivity about exposing breasts, private parts, and thighs to someone other than your mate. This, we believe, is the meaning of nakedness in the Bible. Women need a sense of shame about wearing low-cut and short clothing which expose areas of their bodies that only their spouse has a right to look upon. And so it should be with the men.

✍ L.A. Stauffer



## Tossed To And Fro And Carried About With Every Wind Of Doctrine

The inspired apostle uses, as an illustration, the natural element of immaturity in children to teach us a most valuable lesson about our need for maturity in Ephesians 4: 13-15, *“till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error; but speaking truth in love, we may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ;”*. You and I need to think very soberly about the tremendous danger of our failing to grow into spiritual maturity as every Christian should.

One of the vivid evidences of spiritual immaturity is seen in one being *“tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine.”* The admonition of this scripture is *“that we may be no longer children,”* and that such can only be accomplished if we have been properly nourished with a knowledge of the Truth and have had sufficient experience in that Truth so that we attain in our maturity to the “fullgrown man”! Through His Word, the Lord has provided absolutely everything we need to achieve that mature stage, *“Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work.”* (II Timothy 3:16-17). Therefore, any failure on

our part to achieve maturity cannot be blamed on anyone but ourselves. It is all simply based on what we are determined to “be”, and the Lord says that we should “be no longer children.” Our own decision to “be” uninformed, inexperienced, unstable, indecisive, unprepared, and easily influenced to vacillate in our thinking and practice, can only result in that immature state of being tossed to and fro by those who use the sleight of men, craftiness, and the wiles of error to influence and control our lives. We may well have bought into the “ignorance is bliss” philosophy, but such will definitely be our downfall and, most likely, our eternal destruction at the judgment!

Are we awake? Are we willing to honestly and objectively view our status of spiritual growth? Are we aware that Satan is a deceiver and that his followers are able and well equipped deceivers as well? *“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for even Satan fashioneth himself into an angel of light. It is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works.”* (II Corinthians 11:13-15). We had better give some very sober thought to what might be some serious “over confidence” about our spiritual maturity. *“For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. For every one that partaketh of milk is without experience of the word of righteousness; for he is a babe. But solid food is for fullgrown men, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil.”* (Hebrews 5:12-14). Our goal must be to achieve being fullgrown spiritually, and such can only result from “having our senses exercised to discern good and evil.”

✍️ Dennis L. Reed



## Church Member Hitchhikers

With his thumb, a hitchhiker says, "You furnish the car, gas, attend to the repairs and upkeep, supply the insurance, and I'll ride with you. But you must be going my way, and if you have an accident, I'll sue for the damages." Sounds pretty one-sided, doesn't it?

There are hitchhikers in other places than just along the road ways. Unfortunately, there are sometimes hitchhikers in local churches. These members seem to say, "You go to the Bible classes, attend all of the various assemblies, do the visitation and personal work, shoulder the responsibilities, take care of the meeting house and grounds and all of the

things that need doing, and I'll go along for the ride. But if things aren't done to suit me, I will complain, criticize, and probably get out and hitchhike to another group."

You've seen them too, haven't you? You've seen professing Christians that seem to just be along for the ride. They frustrate the growth and progress of the local church. Because of indifference or lack of total commitment, they add nothing to the furtherance of the Lord's cause. The only thing they add is more work for the faithful. Preachers and elders are usually at a loss to know how to awaken them to a sense of their personal responsibility. Many times they become so accustomed to riding the coat tails of others that they seem to know of no other way to travel.

What do we say to hitchhiking church members? Shall we let them keep on depending on others without learning to pull their own weight? Shall we stand quietly by while they slip closer to eternity, unprepared to meet the Lord's judgment? No, someone needs to remind these 'thumbing' members that they will never be able to hitch a ride to Heaven. And going along just for the ride hinders and holds back the congregation's work. If you know of a church member hitchhiker like these we have described, why not lovingly talk to him or her about their soul and the need for their help and cooperation. Hitchhikers are not permitted on the interstate expressways today.

Let's remember that they are not allowed on the Lord's highway either. Hitchhikers, please read Matthew 25:1-46!

✍️ Bob Dickey

<b>Belleville church of Christ</b>	
5635 S County Rd 200E - Belleville, IN - (317) 539-5258	
<a href="http://www.bellevillechurch.net">www.bellevillechurch.net</a>	
<b>Schedule of Services</b>	<b>Elders</b>
Sun. Bible Study..... 9:30 a.m.	Charles Carpenter.... (317) 839-3873
Sun. Morning Worship... 10:30 a.m.	James Hahn. .... (317) 745-1507
Sun. Evening Worship. . . . . 5:00 p.m.	
Wed. Bible Study..... 7:00 p.m.	<b>Deacons</b>
	Leon Nevins . . . . . (317) 272-2966
<b>Evangelist</b>	Don Perry..... (765) 676-5825
James Hahn. . . . . (317) 745-1507	Alvin Stanley. . . . . (317) 831-3514