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On a monthly basis, I will be addressing you with a concern that I feel has merit. At the bottom of this page is my contact information. If you feel aggrieved or amused, or want to express agreement or disagreement, let me know your thoughts.

Out of the Mouth of a Child

How do we come to believe what we believe? Why do I follow the religion I do? Why am I a Republican or a Democrat? Why do I believe in hard work and a full day's work for a full day's pay?

When I ponder these things, I realize that what we believe is simply a result of a multitude of influencers in our lives. Our nurturing comes from our families, our schools, our religion, our friends, the media, and many other sources. We're a product of all these things, and we have been influenced by these forces in society.

Some time ago, I heard a dialogue between a gentle man and a young child. I say a "gentle man" because he had a soft and gentle voice. The dialogue went something like this.

Gentle man: You know a whole lot of words. You talk real well for a little girl.

Child: Yes, I like to talk to people and I read lots of books.

Gentle man: Will you talk with me? I have some questions I'd like to ask you.

Child: You can ask me anything.

Gentle man: Have you ever heard of the word "hatred?" Do you know what hate is?

Child: No... I don't think so.

Gentle man: Do you know the word "bigotry?" Do you know anybody who is a bigot?

Child: No. But I'm getting bigger everyday.

Gentle man: Have you heard the word "prejudice"?

Child: Yes.

Gentle man: Do you know what prejudice is?

Child: Yes, I drink prejudice out of a box. It is red. I use a straw that I put in the top of the box.

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Gentle man: Do you know how to discriminate?

Child: What is that? Dis-Crim-nate?

Gentle man: It is a hard word, I know. Have you heard about the different races of people?

Child: What do you mean races?

Gentle man: People have different colored skin and they come from different parts of the world.

Child: I know about different colors of people skin. In Sunday school, I sing a song about that. Would you like to hear it?

Gentle man: I'd like that very much.

Child: "Jesus loves the little children – all the children of the world. Red, and yellow, black, and white, they are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the worlds.

Is that races?

Gentle man: Yes that is races. Jesus loves all the children.

Child: Do you have more words?

Gentle man: Maybe we can talk more again some time.

Child: I'd like that – maybe someday I can learn all those word and things.

Gentle man: I hope that you learn them, but without the pain that sometimes come with them.

Child: I hope so too! Bye.

The dialogue went on and I only wish I had a tape of it. When I heard it, I couldn't stop thinking about it – like a song one can't get out of one's mind.

Today I think about how innocent little children fall victim to child abuse – 85% committed by relatives or acquaintances. I think about how young people start taking drugs – almost 100% offered by friends, and unfortunately, even relatives. I think about how children learn anger management skills and how to deal with failure and disappointment in socially acceptable manners. And lastly, I think about how people who batter significant others learn this in the cycle of violence.

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Sometimes I wonder how our children learn. And most of all, I wonder about how they are robbed of their innocence.

[Email comment to the Executive Director](#)