

Love helps build resilience

I've been thinking about *resilience*. What is it that produces resilient people? How did Terry Anderson keep his sanity throughout a long imprisonment? What is it that enables some children who come from dysfunctional families to nevertheless be resilient human beings?

Newsweek Magazine devoted a special issue during this year to the subject of children, and one of the most fascinating articles in that issue described studies at University of California Medical Center in San Francisco on the phenomena of Resilient Children.

That and other studies have found that the one key factor in helping a child become resilient is a caring, non-exploitive adult whom a child can borrow as his or her mentor, friend, supporter. It may be a mother or father or grandfather, grandmother or uncle, aunt or a good adult friend who just takes a genuine interest without any hidden agenda or design.

If you're a child, this adult who endorses your life and makes you feel special helps you to become resilient and creative and confident.

When I read these studies, I realized that we in the Christian Church have just this kind of gift to offer boys and girls as they grow up, and to men and women, too.

By the good news of Jesus Christ we Christians have been granted a healthy instinct for people; we care about people, how they are growing and what is happening in their lives. The motive for this instinct is the love of Jesus Christ which loves each of us before we make any response of faith to receive and experience that love.

As Christians we know of this grace and it gives us an instinctive interest in people of all ages around us. My daughter, a doctor, told me that when she recognized this wonderful love of God as the prior fact that surrounds tiny patients in a neonatal intensive care unit, the result for her has

been a whole new way of looking at each young patient. It gave her a healthy instinct for people.

There are different kinds of things that cause people to become resilient but this one — friendship that we can

offer to other human beings around us — is one of the best and most ancient. It can happen in every Sunday School class in our church, in our high school and junior high youth groups, at the INN with college students, at Keenagers, too.

It is the gift we have to offer and one thing I know for sure — our generation needs this gift right now very much, because resilience is what we need.



† **From Your Minister**

by Earl F. Palmer