

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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The Next Generation

My generation is rapidly passing away. One who is some younger than I dies, and soon I hear of some who are older who have given up the ghost. "Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David: and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead" (2 Kings 16:20). This verse was selected as one of many that might have been quoted from the books of Kings in the Old Testament. Ahaz was not such a good man, and this article was not written to honor him, but he "slept with his fathers, and was buried." He went "the way of all the earth" (Josh. 23:14). The good and the bad die, for "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment (Heb. 9:27). Words cannot adequately describe the difference in the destinies of the two groups of people.

Before men die they have an influence on many, but especially upon their own children. A worldly man cannot be expected to exert a wholesome spiritual influence upon those whose lives he touches. Some would like to deny their influence while they walk in darkness, but their example in word and in deed tends to leave its mark upon their children. This is a wicked world with mature men making merchandise of the souls of the young. Those who profit most financially in the sale of liquor and other harmful drugs are adults, and many of their customers are the young. Many young people are thieves, fornicators, drunkards, and blasphemers, but they are descendants of the generation that made idols of the dollar, worldly pleasures, power, and the praise of men.

The younger generation does not have to follow the older generation or there could be no converts. Paul and his wonderful companions saw many sons and daughters of pagans baptized into Christ. Many people have changed their course in repentance and walked in the way of the Lord after starting down the broad way in the steps of the adults who influenced them early in life (1 Cor. 6:11; Acts 18:8). "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:20). The statement made here has been true in the past, and it is true at this time. Each man should examine himself for each shall give account for his own deeds (2 Cor. 5:10).

It is hard for a family of good people to bring up children in the way they should go if their children are with unbelieving teachers and with ungodly neighbors. If most people in a given community use liquor and lasciviousness for their pleasures, it is hard for a good mother to bring up a wonderful son or daughter who will follow the steps of Jesus. This is especially true if her husband is one of the common herd rather than the kind of man to bring up his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Many things that are difficult are not impossible. Parents should put forth the effort it takes to see their little ones become adults who are Christians. This is the better life for them now, and only those who do the will of the Father in heaven while they are upon the earth shall enter in through the gates into the city.

The young often react in disgust to the "establishment." This may be done by rebellion or by repentance and godliness. We saw the mobs of the sixties, but if we look we can find some of the finest young people who have ever walked upon the face of the earth. Some in our day are writing about the sad lack of young people at worship time. They must have been on some other planet or on a different part of this planet to the places I go. There are a larger percentage of young people among the devout and faithful servants of the Lord in our decade in the churches which I am privileged to observe than in any other decade that I have known. My path

leads me in gospel meetings to small congregations and larger from the Great Lakes to Florida. Where do you men go who are so impressed by the lack of young people in the audiences? There are congregations without young adults, but these congregations are sick. Some of the most able and most unselfish gospel preachers are less than half my age. Let us give thanks to God for their unfeigned faith and love of the brethren. Why should any godly man fail to see them and to realize their existence? The wonderful young people who serve so well now in the Lord's vineyard are the next generation after the one that produced the division and the back-to-denominationalism movement among churches of Christ.

Some of the very able young preachers have been swept into the tolerant grace-faith-unity movement of the "free people." We must not close our eyes to this fact, either. There are more of them than we would like to think. This is another example of older apostates leading the fair young lambs away after them. It is amazing that Carl Ketcherside and others of his type and age group should be able to make such inroads among conservative brethren. Such belong among the "Disciples," and some are leaving our brethren to work among the modernistic denominations. It is sad to see these able young people so deceived, but it is a wonderful relief to the faithful churches when they leave and go among those of their own kind. It would be better by far if the deceived could be awakened to repentance, but only the good soil will receive the word and bring forth fruit with patience. One cannot be taught the truth unless he has a willingness to learn or be corrected. Some of the most effective men who are working to rescue the young "unity" factionists are their peers. There are able young defenders of the truth as well as able promoters of this new apostasy.

It is the special responsibility of parents to train their children, but class teachers, elders, and preachers have their own duties to the young as well as to the older. The churches that did not follow the food-fun-frolic craze are seeing many devout and capable young people who are putting on the whole armor of God that they may be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Twenty-five years ago many were saying that we had better do something for the young or we would lose them. The thing the church

should have done then was to teach them the whole counsel of God and demonstrate in conduct and attitude the right way of the Lord. The same is true today. No age group can be more disgusted with hypocrisy, nor have more respect for those who walk in the steps of Jesus than those who are in their teens who have had a chance to see the beauty of holiness.

Each church should develop a good number of song leaders. The death of one man should not leave the congregation without a capable song leader. If elders die or move, there should be good men who are established in the faith to take their places. Older people in the church have failed miserably if they have ignored the great potential among the children in their presence. The children of today will be the church of tomorrow. Let not those whose hair is white with age think that they are indispensable. Time will soon dispense with them and turn the children into adults. What will the next generations be? That depends upon the spiritual food and exercise they get while they are adding years to their young lives. They need to exercise their senses in developing their abilities. They need to be encouraged and appreciated. A large church that has trouble finding teachers, song leaders, and young preachers in their number should have a prayer meeting accompanied by some genuine repentance. There is something seriously wrong with the older people.

Those who are tender in years are tender of heart and they are, therefore, the easiest to lead to the Lord and into His vineyard. If Christians would save their own children, the church would grow from within. Many fail, but the fact that some do succeed proves that it is possible. There are worldly people who do not lie, steal, blaspheme, become intoxicated, or commit fornication. Their spiritual weakness lies in their dedication to "success," sports, and other things of this life. They talk of money, entertainment, and success and not of Christ before their children. They have not set their affections on things above and, unfortunately, their children will likely look about them rather than up to God.

Those who teach Bible classes and those who preach have a fearful responsibility to teach the word as being the counsel of God. Much can be done to direct the thinking of the children toward spiritual things. Many

classes are not well taught. This is a fact that should distress us. Do the pupils gain knowledge of and respect for the Bible as the word of God? All of us need to be very much interested in the next generations. They will be the product of the influences about them. Elders and parents should look in the mirror if the young in the church are not spiritually minded and willing to work in the Lord's vineyard.

- Irvn Lee, via Truth Magazine, August 3, 1978

Did Christ Die In Vain?

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth" (Isa. 53:7). Isaiah described the events leading up to the death of Christ. In obedience to the Father, Jesus willingly stretched out his hands and died on the cross for our sins. But was his death in vain?

For those who refuse to obey the gospel, they are saying, "Lord, we don't care what you did." "Jesus, so what if you loved me and gave your life for me?" Those who stubbornly reject the gospel of Christ are saying by their actions that the death of Christ was in vain.

If this is true of you, then consider that one day the Lord will return "in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 1:8).

Appreciate what the Lord has done for you. Recognize your need for the blood of Christ. Obey the gospel! Don't let Christ's death be in vain.

- David McPherson

*Elders: Gregg Needham,
Gordon Percell & Gary Smalley*

Evangelist: Gary Smalley

Sunday AM: 9:30 & 10:30

Sunday PM: 5:00

Wednesday PM: 7:00



What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)