

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **The Church in The Next Generation**

It is a well-known fact that a generation of people often inherit the good deeds and mistakes of a previous generation. This being true, each generation needs to be keenly aware of its responsibility. This is also true in the church. What the church tomorrow will be and accomplish depends, to a great degree, upon what we do and teach in this generation. Brethren, we all need to realize that just because we are sound in the faith is no guarantee that our children will be! If we fail to teach properly in our generation, our children may forsake the Lord!

My generation in the church inherited all the failures to properly teach concerning the mission of the church and the church working through human organizations. As a result of this failure to teach, a great percentage of the church has gone into digression. For over twenty-five years now, many of us have fought the tide of digression on the one hand, and on the other hand we have had to work hard to convert people to Christ that the church might continue to grow and reach the world with the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord has been with us and our number has increased. For the last ten years, however, materialism, division, worldliness, the false doctrine of Calvinism, ignorance and indifference has brought us to zero-growth in many places.

What does the future hold for churches of Christ that are striving to preach the gospel without addition or subtraction - churches that are striving to follow the New Testament pattern in all things? That future depends upon the kind of teaching we are now giving our children. If we take too much for granted and fail to teach and warn, the churches we have worked so hard to build may be lost to digression in the next generation! We must solve our problems and reverse the trends that we have allowed to come in our ranks in many places if we are to leave sound, growing congregations for the next generation.

Israel, in the days of Joshua, is a good example of this kind of failure. Judges 2:10 says, "And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel." After Joshua died and those who outlived him died (Judges 2:7), "There arose

another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel." We wonder how this could be. The answer is that the succeeding generation had failed to teach. The next question on our minds is, "Who was responsible for teaching them?" The Bible reveals that the priests bore part of the responsibility. They were to read the law to the people every seven years (Deuteronomy 31:9-13). This would mean that a boy of seven would hear the law again at 14, 21, 28, 35, 42, 49, etc. It is hard to conceive of these people being ignorant of God's law if this had been done. The elders of the people should have demanded that the law be read and observed as God commanded (Numbers 11:16-17). The parents were to teach their children at home (Deuteronomy 4:9,10; 6:7-12). A failure on the part of parents would produce ignorance. The people themselves should have desired that the Law of God be read. All these had failed in their responsibilities. As a result, Israel was ignorant of God's ways (Judges 2:10). They copied the gods of those round about them (Judges 2:16-17), and did that which was right in their own eyes (Judges 17:6; 21:25). They forsook the God who had saved them (Judges 2:13), being unappreciative of His mercy. They did that which was evil in God's sight and caused His wrath to be upon them (Judges 2:11,14).

Who has the responsibility, under the authority of Christ, to teach in our generation? Preachers and teachers of the Word have responsibility. They are to be loyal to God and are not to be men-pleasers (Acts 20:26-27; Galatians 1:10). They have a responsibility to warn about departures from the faith (1 Timothy 4:1-6). They are to preach the word "in season" and "out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2). Elders of the church are watchmen - they are to teach and to warn (Acts 20:28-31). Woe to the shepherds in Israel who fail in their duty to teach and to warn! Parents must teach their children the word of God and warn them about departures from the faith (Ephesians 6:14). Christians as a whole should demand that the truth be taught. They should shun evil and all that might bring apostasy.

Brethren, if we fail to properly teach and warn, the next generation will have to drink from the same bitter cup of sorrow that we have had to drink from in our generation! My hope and prayer is that the little boys and girls who are all around me when the saints assemble to worship will never have to know the sorrow and see the bitterness I have seen and known in Israel in my generation! I have seen churches divide, families divide, friendships broken, and sinners confused because of an untaught generation!

What'll the church be in the next generation? Much of what it will be is in our hands today! If preachers, teachers, elders, and parents will fulfill their responsibility today, the church will be sound tomorrow!

- Donald D. Townsley (1931-2013), via Guardian of Truth, 11/15/1984

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## What About My Father and Mother?

"A man said to me, 'Brother, I can't take the doctrine you preach that one must be baptized to be saved, because it damns my father and mother who were not baptized.'

"Well, let us see. Do you think one must believe in Jesus Christ to be saved? 'Oh, yes,' he answers. Very well, I will just change my subject from baptism to faith. A Jew comes around and says, 'Mr. Preacher, I can't accept the doctrine you preach, that faith in Jesus is necessary to salvation, because my father and mother died without believing in Christ.'

"The Jew thinks as much of his father as you do of yours. By the same argument with which you eliminate baptism, because perchance it damns some of your ancestors, he also eliminates faith in Christ. Then I preach that the knowledge of God is necessary to salvation and a Chinese comes around, and says, 'I can't take the doctrine you preach, because it damns my poor father and mother, who died without the knowledge of God' — and there you see the whole plan of salvation is nullified by contingencies.

"Friends, I suggest that we leave the matter of clemency to the judge (a judge only has the power of clemency) and let us observe the law. I have no authority to preach clemency — I must preach what God commands men to do to be saved — and I know what the law says."

- Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

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### *Clippings . . .*

A Christian lady, who was engaged in work for the poor and degraded, was once spoken to by one who was well acquainted with both the worker and those whom she sought to reach, and remonstrated with for going among such a class of people. "It does seem wonderful to me that you can do such work," her friend said. "You sit beside these people, and talk with them in a way that I do not think you would do if you knew all about them, just what they are, and from what places they come." Her answer was, "Well, I suppose they are dreadful people; but if the Lord Jesus were now on earth, are they not the very sort of people that He would strive to teach? And am I better than my Master? Would He feel Himself too good to go among them?" A poor, illiterate person, who stood listening to this conversation, said with great earnestness and simplicity, "Why, I always thought that was what Christians were for." The objector was silenced, and what wonder? Is not that what Christians are for? If not, then what in the name of all that is good are they for?

- Christian Herald

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## The Lord God Never Gives Up!

As I continue my Bible studies, I am so very deeply impressed with the fact that the Lord God never gives up on calling wayward people to be reconciled to Him! Contemplate His open arms all through the Scriptures. He never surrenders in His call for men to give up their own devices for a walk in harmony with His word.

Around the time of the fall of Jerusalem (586 B.C.), God sent the prophet Jeremiah to call His people out of spiritual darkness that was so rotten, this mouthpiece of the Lord became known as the "weeping" prophet as he felt the broken-hearted sadness of unfaithfulness. Even under these conditions, Jeremiah declared, "The LORD's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail." (Lamentations 3:22).

The goodness of God called them to repentance. They were a disobedient lot, fully deserving of divine punishment, but it was a discipline in demonstration of Fatherly love (Hebrews 12:6). Returning to Him through the open avenue of His wonderful mercy could have restored them because "His compassions never fail."

For those of us who have answered His reconciliation call (2 Corinthians 5:18-19), we no longer live for ourselves, but for the One who died for us. We are new creatures in Christ. We live according to "the word of reconciliation." Even at times when we sin against Him, and He patiently awaits our return as the father waited for the prodigal son to come home (Luke 15), His apostle John wrote, "And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" (1 John 2:1).

Having everything we need for life and godliness in Christ, we are thankful for these spiritual blessings (2 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 1:3). And this is our praise and adoration: "The LORD's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail."

Friend, the Lord has not given up on you! Have you given up on Him? Will you not repent and be restored to His favor through forgiveness? It is freely offered to you today in the gospel of Jesus Christ. How may we encourage you in righteous living?

- Gary Smalley

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\* "The shut mind is the end of discipleship!"

\* "Reputation is what others think about you. Character is what God knows about you!"

\* "Conscience is like a sundial: when the truth of God shines on it, it points in the right direction!"

\* "An egotist is a person who is ME-DEEP in thought and conversation!"

\* "Treasures in heaven are laid up only as treasures on earth are laid down!"

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# ***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)