

GOD’S PLAN FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

by Donald Townsley

Every so often some in the church think they have discovered something new. They think if the church is to survive it must cater to young people. No one denies that the church needs young people, but must the church cater to them in some special way to keep them? Those who want to cater to the young want to bring in carnal means to appeal to them such as skating parties, hamburger suppers, “retreats”, all kinds of fun and games, and “youth rallies”. The question we all need to examine is, “Did God authorize the church to cater to special interest groups in the church?” Let us examine this question in light of the gospel.

1) GOD HAS BUT ONE CHURCH FOR ALL RACES AND ALL AGES. Jesus promised to build but one church (Mt. 16:18). He bought but one church with His blood (Acts 20:28). All men, both Jew and Gentile, young and old, are reconciled unto God in this one church (Eph. 2:16; Jn. 10:16). God does not have two churches — one for the young people and one for the older people!

2) THE PLAN OF SALVATION IS THE SAME FOR ALL, YOUNG AND OLD. Jesus said in the great commission that the gospel is for

all men: *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature”* (Mk. 16:15). Paul said the gospel is for all, and that social and racial distinctions make no difference: *“I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise”* (Rom. 1:14).

The word of God teaches that both young and old people must hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17), believe the gospel — that Jesus is the Son of God (Mk. 16:16; Acts 8:36), repent of their sins (Acts 2:38), confess Christ (Rom. 10:10), and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). God does not have two plans of salvation — one for those who are young and one for those who are old! All are commanded to obey the same plan.

3) THE FIVE ITEMS OF WORSHIP ARE FOR ALL, YOUNG AND OLD. There is no special worship authorized for the young. Many today are putting special emphasis on what they call “youth worship”. A congregation will bring in and support a young preacher and call him their “Youth Minister”. His duties will be to cater to the young and conduct all kinds of special meetings just for those who are young.

In New Testament times, local congregations, made up of the young and the old, came together and worshipped together. There is no evidence to the contrary to be found in the gospel. Examples: The church at Troas (Acts 20:7); the church at Jerusalem (Acts 2:42), and the churches of Galatia and Corinth (1 Cor. 16:1-2).

Christians, both young and old, must worship God in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24). They must worship in song (Eph. 5:19), in prayer (Acts 2:42), in giving (1 Cor. 16:1-2), in eating the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7), and in teaching the word of God (Acts 2:42). God did not authorize two kinds of worship in the New Testament — one to suit the young people and one to suit those who are older!

4) IN ITS WORK IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES THE CHURCH GAVE NO SPECIAL EMPHASIS TO YOUTH. We do not read of “youth directors”, “youth ministers”, or “youth rallies” in the New Testament. God’s plan is for the young and those who are older to work side by side in carrying out the mission of the church.

The mission of the church is threefold: (1) preaching the gospel to the lost (1 Tim. 3:15);

(2) helping its own who are in need (1 Cor. 16:1-2; 1 Tim. 5:16); and (3) edification (Mt. 28:20; Eph. 4:11-16). Young people are to help carry out this mission alongside the older people, and the young are to be respected for this work (1 Tim. 4:12).

5) CHRIST DID NOT HAVE THE APOSTLES AND INSPIRED MEN TO WRITE ANY SPECIAL LETTERS TO THE YOUNG IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. The instructions given to the young people are right alongside the instructions given to those of other ages. For examples of this read these passages: Titus 2:1-12; Ephesians 6:1-9.

6) IN CLASS WORK, ALL CLASSES SHOULD HAVE THE SAME KIND OF EMPHASIS. Most brethren realize the expediency of classes designed for different age levels; and classes sometimes solely for women or men, boys or girls, but in this work there should be as much emphasis put on the needs of one group as on another so that no group becomes a "special class" in the local church.

7) THERE IS NO

SCRIPTURAL BASIS FOR SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS IN THE CHURCH. Jesus said we are all brethren (Mt. 23:8). All don't have the same ability and the same work (Rom. 12:4-8; Eph. 4:11; Phil. 1:1; 2 Tim. 4:5), but no individual or group is to be exalted above another. Putting a continual emphasis on one special group in the church will bring about schism in the body (1 Cor. 12:14-27).

Brethren, I believe if you are honest you will have to conclude that God made no provision for special interest groups in the church. God's plan for the young people is the same as His plan for the older people. The spiritual needs of the young are the same as the spiritual needs of the older people. Let the young and the old work together in carrying out the Lord's work on this earth. When we all do this we will be pleasing in the sight of our God.

*The Hebron Herald
Hebron Lane church of Christ
Shepherdsville, KY
Volume X, January 1991,
Number 1*

**FROM HARDEMAN'S
TABERNACLE SERMONS:**

"It is the duty of the overseers to feed and to develop the members of any church. To do so does not require the organization of something unknown to the Bible. Many brethren have looked upon our young people's meetings with some degree of suspicion. If we are not careful, we may have an organization not at all different from others which we now condemn. Really, brethren, I have failed to find anywhere in the Bible where there is a difference made in teaching or church work between a young fellow and an old fellow. Just where is that passage which intimates that the church should be divided according to years? Brethren Srygley and Tant thought that such distinctions evidenced our drifting away. To say the least of such, there is danger. I submit to you preachers that we should be exceeding careful lest, in our enthusiasm to make a big show, we turn apart from the straight and narrow path and have within our midst something that the Lord does not want."

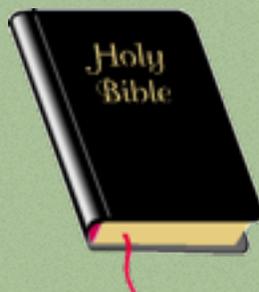
Volume V., p. 53

The Terre Haute **SPEAKER** is published weekly by the church of Christ at Terre Haute, Indiana.

Assembling At:
4017 E Margaret DR
Terre Haute, IN 47803
[Exit 11 (I-70) W on HWY 46,
W on Margaret DR approx. 1 mile]

Assembling Times:
Sunday @ 10:00 a.m. & 3:00 p.m.
Wednesday @ 7:00 p.m.

Come be with us!



**We Speak Where the
Bible Speaks.**

**We Are Silent Where the
Bible Is Silent.**

**We Do Bible Things in
Bible Ways.**

www.churchofchristatterrehaute.com