

Are We Losing Our Children?

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Christian leaders are seeing increased evidences that we are not passing on our faith to our children. One of those leaders is the noted Christian apologist, scholar, and writer, Dr. Robert A. Morey. He recently stated that the average Bible-believing local church has a variety of dynamic programs for children and youth but loses between 75 and 90 percent of the young people that have been coming through the church's doors. Surprised? To put these statistics into perspective we should note that Dr. Morey gives this background information:

Humanism does not believe in logic because logic refutes relativism. Humanism is the irrational way to live. Conversely, Biblical Christianity is the logical, rational way to live and believe. There are no intellectual or philosophical arguments against Christianity that hold water. When a young person gives up his faith, it is not because he has heard some brilliant presentation of atheism or agnosticism or something of that nature. The unbelievers don't have anything. I have yet to find a single young person in all the apostates who can give any intellectual reason for leaving the gospel. I'm sorry. It doesn't wash. They come up with intellectual reasons later as a rationalization, and we know that rationalization is unrelated to truth.

The main reason we lose so many students is to be found in the families, the churches, and the schools they attend (even ones with "Christian" in their name). All the thousands of students who lose their faith in the college years every year are the unpaid bills of the Christian church. We are not doing our job.

Dr. Morey has identified the ten significant causes as to why we are losing so many of our well-churched youth. He calls them Satan's Ten Campus Curses. (Study the Bible references.)

I. Ignorance (Hosea 4:6)

Christian young people have never been more ignorant of the Bible, theology, apologetics, and philosophy than today. They do not know what they believe or why they believe it. They can't defend it. As I study, I am convinced the following seven things have contributed to our youth's current state of ignorance.

- 1) Anti-Intellectual Spirit: Too many Christian leaders are afraid that our students will lose their faith if they study. Frankly, the more I am educated, the more I am confident with Christianity.
- 2) Anti-Creeds/ Confessions/ Catechisms: Fundamentalists of past generations instilled the faith in their children with these tools, but we have largely gone away from them in our churches. Few use these important methods, whether to identify what we believe or to teach converts and youth.
- 3) Anti-Social/Political Concerns: We had better get involved in defending our views or our children will be taken -- subtly or forcefully.
- 4) The Search For Personal Peace/Inner Contentment: Whatever happened to sticking up for truth, even when friends or family oppose you, rather than seeking the easy street?
- 5) Entertainment-Centered Church Services: We have forgotten that the Reformers moved the pulpit to the front-center of the auditorium because the preaching of the Bible was paramount.

6) Baby-Sitting Youth Services: Since when is it the church's job to entertain the children so dad and mom can go out for an evening? And while we are busy with these activities, who is doing the things that the Scriptures declare are legitimate duties of a local church?

7) Silly Sunday Schools: We have been entertaining youth instead of demonstrating the importance of serious Bible study in the curriculum and in our expectations.

II. Gullibility (I CHRON. 12:32)

Because we are sincere in our religious beliefs and tell the truth about what we believe, we assume that all other religious people have the same attitude. Jesus warned us about religious deception (Matt. 7:15; 24:4, 5, 11, 24), and we are exhorted to be critical thinkers like the Bereans (Acts 17:11). Today, we are failing to show our youth that the cults and isms are false religions and that their followers are deceived. Unfortunately, some of the most influential programs on "Christian radio" are further confusing this issue by refusing to take a stand lest they lose financial donations from followers of false religions. Joining together around issues of "saving America" and "promoting the family" should never be more important than the whole counsel of God.

III. Wimpism (Eph. 6:10-18)

We have raised a generation of wimps who will not stand up for the faith when it is attacked. They give way to ridicule and peer pressure. They often feel inferior and helpless in the face of evil. They whine and complain and then flee to self-centered piety. We need a massive number of backbone transplants. We need young men and women with backbone who will be strong for the Lord. Instead, we have wimps; we don't have leaders bent on leading out for God.

IV. Pacificism (I Tim. 6:12)

Instead of viewing the high school and college years as a wonderful opportunity to be a champion for God, our youth are defensive. Why shouldn't godly youth be pushing their Christian peers for Biblical standards? Why shouldn't they be winning souls? Why shouldn't they take over their homes, workplace, or school for Christ? Why should godly youth sit by while the compromising youth who have ambition take the lead? Instead of being a leader for righteousness by taking over the school-elected offices, clubs, newspapers, and activities and then using them to teach the Christian view of things, they retreat into isolationism. Today's youth are not moving forward for the cause of Christ.

V. Mediocrity (I Cor. 10:31)

Too many students ask, "What is the least I have to do and still get by?" They should instead be striving to be and do the best they can for the glory of God. We need to give opportunity for the student to go for the gold in his academics, to go beyond requirements, to excel. We are reading too many of those "balanced" books. We don't need any more "balanced" people. What we really need are more fanatics for Jesus.

VI. Popularity (Luke 6:26)

Too many of our young people want everyone to "like" them. Then they do not stand up for Christ when push comes to shove. But Jesus warned us that if everyone likes us, this is not a blessing, but a curse!

VII. Spiritual Apathy (Rev. 3:15-16)

We face an apathetic group of young people today, unparalleled in this century. They are not interested in doing or learning anything concerning the things of God. They are neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm. They need to be on fire for God; but modern culture, TV, etc. is deadening the spiritual interest of youth, dumbing it down, deadening it.

VIII. Happiness (II Tim. 3:1-5)

One of the greatest curses today is that too many students are seeking after happiness instead of holiness. Can anyone show me one passage that shows that God cares if you are happy? No! If our youth seek holiness, they will get happiness as a by-product; but if they seek happiness, they will end up with neither. When we seek happiness, we are focusing our attention on ourself. That is egotistical. We need our eyes on Christ, not self.

IX. Wealth (I Tim. 6:9-10)

Everyone wants to enjoy the life-style of the rich and the famous. It is the entanglement of money. There is a big push for our youth to get jobs. For what? Most of their paychecks get spent on cars, clothes, food, and entertainment. Personal peace and affluence are their gods. There is no concept of sacrificial giving to the cause of Christ. Too many of our children never have to struggle and work. They receive everything on a silver platter. We don't want them to struggle like we did. We seek to shelter them from it, only to give them worse struggles and greater pain for not having gone through it.

X. False Assurance (I John 2:19)

I John 2:4 tells us that if someone says he is saved, but he is living a disobedient life, he is a liar. Instead of confronting young people with the truth that they are probably on their way to Hell, we make far too many excuses for them. Too often we act like the Romanists whose system has a priest "declare" that one's "work" has saved them. (Going through a form or a procedure such as going forward at church and saying a prayer has no more saving power for us than going through their form does for them.) Salvation involves the Holy Spirit and faith. It is not a mechanical act. Too many parents tell their kids they are saved, and continue to tell them throughout their life, even though there is often no evidence (fruit) for such an assertion.

To one like Dr. Morey, there is a parallel between the way we should view the spiritual condition of our children and the way most of us view life-threatening diseases. We guard and protect them from every known attack. Since the Bible clearly teaches that Satan attacks Christians, it is logical to take every precaution to protect against his attacks. Remember what Dr. Morey said at the start of this article? **"We are not doing our job."** The problem that we have today is that most of our children are not being sufficiently protected. **"We are losing our children,"** he says.

Reactions to Dr. Morey's perspective can be loosely divided into four major groupings. As birds of a feather flock together, you can see these people as they react to this clear direction. Some are like the following birds:

VULTURES -- They will agree with Dr. Morey about losing the youth. They may know many sordid stories of the youth going bad, and they almost enjoy it as they pick them apart with their critical spirit. But one does not see the fruit of the Spirit in their own lives. They are seldom winning the lost. Few see them having a spiritual life that our young people would want to emulate.

CANARIES -- These are always singing positive tunes but can't see the dangers lurking to destroy the young. They claim "Christian liberty" and would chide Dr. Morey for "judging." As long as the youth have a "religious" side of life, they believe the young are fine, no matter how badly the Campus Curses may have influenced their lives. From this group could come statements like: *"Dr. Morey's Ten Campus Curses sound too condemning of our all-American kids."* *"Dr. Morey should stick to fighting infidels, not our good kids. He is an alarmist."* *"Our church kids are all saved; and they're not so bad."* Yes, these youth do not openly challenge Bible doctrine and they conform to socially acceptable "church" behavior. But sadly, one remembers that outward religious form is no antidote for poison within.

PARROTS -- They seem to parrot the world's philosophy while all the while claiming to want what is spiritually best for their children. They believe that a "little bit" of these Campus Curses is not necessarily bad. In fact, maybe a "little bit" will keep the youth from wanting a whole lot more. They might say things like, "*Dr. Morey, give the kids some slack. Give them some time to grow up.*" "*Don't expect too much; you might drive them away.*" *There comes a time when we as parents need to let the youth make some decisions for themselves. How else will they learn?*" they ask. Like the Vultures' and Canaries' kids, the Parrots' youth are also in grave spiritual danger.

EAGLES -- They are alert, challenged, humbled, and convicted. These realize that defeating Satan's attacks is an ongoing process of Herculean involvement in the developing life of the young. It starts with consistent care and includes dedicated attention to detail throughout pre-school, elementary school, and secondary school years. It involves the laying of a complete foundation for a systematic view of who God is and what life is all about -- a thoroughly Christian view of this world. Yes, it takes prayer, Bible study, patience, hard work, and persistence. For the Eagles, Dr. Morey's list is affirmation that there is no room for half-hearted parenting, a compromising local church, or an education that is not thoroughly Biblical.

American Christians can say what they want, but Dr. Morey responds by stating the obvious. "We are losing our children." American Christians can claim that their youth look good compared to contemporary American social standards, but how do they look compared to God's Word?

We are losing our children. However, it does not have to be that way. Dr. Morey calls on pastors to challenge and instruct parents in how to prepare their children for living in an ungodly world. The youth, as well as the adults, need to hear clear, forceful preaching against the wiles of the Devil. He calls on Sunday School teachers, youth workers, and youth pastors to go beyond the Bible stories and teach doctrine. He suggests that every church dust off its favorite Catechism or Doctrinal Statement and creatively build serious study. These timeless documents are filled with answers to contemporary situations. He wants to see our youth engaged in mock debates and consistently studying Christian apologetics, the errors of the occult, atheism, and the cults and isms. He calls on parents to develop a creative, quality time of family devotions. This more formal time should be coupled with informal discussions of Biblical principles as they relate to the life situations that arise on a daily basis. Parents should prepare their children, from the time they sit on their laps, to live totally for God. He calls on all Christian adults to be an example of how Satan's Curses should have no place in a Christian's life. He says:

We need to train our young people to be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, to stand alone and stand up for Jesus when all around oppose them.

We need to send them out into the world as victors -- not victims; as overcomers -- not underachievers.

But when the youth have grown in their independence and are out on their own, away from the preacher, the parents, the teacher, the friends, truth will come out as to what has really been inside of the child all along. When that day arrives, it will be too late to change how we guided them during their youth.

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