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CHRISTIAN ARRAY

RESTORING THE RESTORATION
IN OUR GENERATION

AN INDEPENDENT PUBLICATION IN SUPPORT OF STRICT CONSTRUCTIONIST BIBLICAL TEACHINGS

NUMBER 17

JULY, 1991

SICK OF BOOMER TALK!

The June 1991 issue of the Christian Chronicle featured a story by Rod Weirick titled "Church Must Build Bridge to Baby-Boom Generation".

The article related among other things that:

1. There are 76.4 million "baby boomers",
2. They were born between 1946 and 1964,
3. The previous generation was not as individually-minded as the baby boomers are today,
4. Some churches are incapable of adopting a new outlook, out of a fear of change,
5. An example: the elders of a congregation hung a brightly color paper on the wall stating that only the King James and American Standard Versions would be used in their church building. Indicated a narrow minded leadership,
6. Baby boomers are interested in a church where they can attain an identity, have a sense of belonging, become involved, participate and find self-fulfillment,
7. Variety in Bible classes and worship is essential, and
8. Attracting and reaching baby boomers will require churches that are willing to move out of traditional comfort zones. We should not expect old cultural forms to attract and hold this new generation.

It is sometimes advantageous to look at a situation such as this from the other side. We are talking about the characteristics of the baby boom generation which set it apart from the other generations, right? If they were the same, they would not distinguish the boomer from others.

Lets look at each of the statements above with respect to the generation before the baby boomers and with respect to the generation after the baby boomers.

1. There are fewer of them, so we don't really have to worry about them?
2. They were not born between 1946 and 1964.
3. The previous generation will do what ever the group wants to do?
4. Other generations are happy in the same old rut?
5. Other generations don't mind being told what Bible versions to read on brightly colored paper? Other generations are stimulated by narrow minded leaders?

6. Other generations are not are interested in a church where they can attain an identity, have a sense of belonging, become involved, participate and find self-fulfillment?
7. Other generations like the same old dull Bible classes and worship services?
8. Other generations want to enforce past cultural forms with equal weight as the scriptures?

The teaching seems to be that for the church to reach people born between 1946 and 1964 we need to have a church in which a person can attain an identity, have a sense of belonging, become involved, participate, find self-fulfillment, find variety, and find cultural adaptability.

I would like to suggest to you that to reach people born before 1946 or after 1964, the church needs to be a place where a person can attain an identity, have a sense of belonging, become involved, participate, find self-fulfillment, find variety, and find cultural adaptability.

It may have been that in 1945, people were more willing to follow church leadership around like blind sheep. The people born in 1945 also live in the culture of 1991 in which there are the resources and diversions that the baby boomers see.

There is precious little truth to the idea that you can develop people born in 1945 into strong Christians without involvement and fulfillment. The problem has little to do with baby boomers. It is a problem of people living in the world of 1991, no matter when they were born. We do not need to adapt our cultural aspects to accommodate people born between 1946 and 1964. We need to adapt our cultural aspects to people living in 1991, no matter when they were born.

HOLD OUT UNTIL THEY ARE GONE!

One of the interesting aspects of the baby boomer talk is the tendency to feel that if we can just survive those strange people, the next generation will be reasonable again. We would be really kidding ourselves to think that. The resources and diversions that the next generations will have to deal with will most likely be more extreme that those the baby boom generation deals with. If cultural change is needed now, greater cultural change will be needed for the next generation.

WHAT PRECIPITATED THE CHANGES?

What has caused discussions about needing change in the church. It was not caused by something in the water. Factors might be:

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ATHEISM

1. It is probably largely a result of the fact that the newer generations have been faced with more options in their life. They have had more resources, more choices, and more diversions.
2. In past years, churches typically represented the central core of the social life of most of our brethren. Today, our brethren's attentions are diverted in many directions.
3. To a large extent, the church has "moved across the tracks". We have a broader appeal among white collar people that we had 50 years ago. A dogmatic stance from an eldership will be more palatable to a blue collar worker than a white collar worker. The blue collar worker is given arbitrary directives all week long. A white collar worker, i.e. a Doctor, is accustomed to making decisions all week long.

A leadership cannot expect discretionary decisions from a blue collar laborer that they would expect from a Doctor. A leadership cannot expect a Doctor to follow directives that a blue collar laborer would, without the Doctor knowing why. A 1950 leadership style which could be described as "blue collar" cannot be reasonably expected to work in the cultural situation of a "white collar" church. That doesn't make one style right or wrong. "Leadership" is adapting to cultural situations from a scriptural basis.

CONCLUSION:

A large church in Houston has actually abandoned all open business meetings and elders/deacons meetings. All business is conducted in closed (secret) meetings in the elder's conference room. That situation is probably exemplary of the mindset which can choke the church out of existence.

Whereas the church must remain with the scriptures to be the church, the leadership of the church must adapt and modify cultural aspects of the church to meaningfully involve as many members as practical.

If we continue to close our meetings, disenfranchise our members, and let our services drone on; the church will decline or stagnate at best.

ETCETERA

In addition to facing generations which are not as inherently allegiant to the church as previous generations, we are also raising generations which are not well educated on scriptural matters or scriptural principles. We will face generations without a strong Biblical foundation and with a strong inclination to do what seems expedient. This will be one of the products of the past generation's desire to remove all controversy from the church. This has precipitated milk from the pulpit and mush in Bible Classes. The next generation will pay the price for that short sighted philosophy.

It is my belief as stated before that the best way to find out if you are wrong is to tell someone else that they are wrong, and they will straighten you out right away. I extend this general idea to studying alternative belief systems to see if there is any truth in them. In this light, I subscribe to the American Atheist. I keep all copies if anyone wants a resource on what these people think.

The American Atheist published a story titled "Christian Suppression of Opinion". The following will relate parts of this story so that you can see their general wavelength. Starting with the first two paragraphs:

"One of the challenges to Atheism which I receive over and over again as I go to colleges and universities is this: If Christianity is not good, explain why it has survived for 1900 years and how it has captured the hearts and minds of all of civilized Europe, South America, and North America in that time. If Atheism is right, why has it not triumphed?"

Following this are three pages of description of persecution by religious establishments including burnings, beheadings, brandings, floggings, forfeiture of goods, hangings, imprisonment, excommunications, fining, etc. The persecutions are certainly true.

Then the two final paragraphs:

"Now what was it that the questioners asked? How did Christianity stay in power if it did not win the hearts and minds of the people? It stayed in power by raw, brute force. It stayed in power by killing anyone of a different opinion. It stayed in power by completely subjugating all opinion other than that to which it officially subscribed."

"No Atheist would ever attempt such abuse of freedom of thought or expression. And it is for this reason that religion can have the past, and we will take the future." (Underlining for emphasis is mine.)

It boggles the mind that an atheist would say that no atheist would ever attempt such abuse of freedom of thought or expression. Has the author never heard of Russia, a historically dedicated atheistic society. Has the author never heard of Lenin, Stalin, Cuba, or Caesar. Can the author name a single atheistic society in which cruelty had not dominated? Are not the atheist presently doing their best to keep the creationist beliefs of how the world was created out of the text books, in favor of their blind faith in atheistic evolution? The statement is hypocritical beyond belief. However, if you are an atheist there is no ultimate right and wrong so it is probably reasonable to lie if it suits your goals.

Incidentally the author was Madelyn O'Hair. The story was first presented on the Radio in Austin, Texas on September 30, 1975 while the atheistic government in Russia was looking strong, and was rerun in the magazine as still reasonable in Volume 33, No. 3 in July 1991 after the atheistic system had failed.

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QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

Titus 1:6 says with respect to the qualifications of elders "any man...having children who believe". (NASV)

I Timothy 3:4 says with respect to the qualification of elders "keeping his children under control with all dignity". (NASV)

There are two points of particular interest here: "believing" and "children". This month we will discuss "children". Next month we will discuss "believing".

The Bible says an elder (singular) shall have children (plural). It means that an elder (singular) shall have children (plural). That is what the Bible says, not an interpretation of what the Bible says. If you want to be an elder with one or no children, you are not following what the scriptures say. If you want to teach that it is O.K. for an elder to have one or no children, you are not teaching what the Bible says.

HOW SURE IS THIS TEACHING?

There are probably as many ways to explain why an elder (singular) does not need children (plural) as there are individuals without children who want to be an elder. A recent argument made is that the requirements of I Timothy and Titus were the requirements to fit that particular congregation in that particular area at that particular time. The particular strengths needed by elders in another area would be dictated by the situation in that area. We will use that argument for analysis.

First, the collected works which we call the New Testament gives specific requirements for elders. The author of the argument above would have himself (or each of us or some group) to decide what requirements were applicable in our area, if any. Let us apply his philosophy of Biblical interpretation to another situation to see how it works. Try Acts 2:38. The Bible tells us to be repent and be baptized for the remission of our sins. Those requirements fit the situation of those in Jerusalem in the first century (and maybe just the day of Pentecost). Today we can decide if our situation does or does not require repentance (infant baptism is then O.K.) or if it does or does not require baptism (sprinkling or pouring is then O.K.). Most of the denominational world operates on just this basis.

Isn't the church operating on the basis of "speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where the Bible is silent"? The question is whether we are going to submit to all the New Testament, or pick and choose which parts we want to follow. Doesn't Rev. 22:18-19 and James 2:10 tell us that if we choose to not follow a part of the New Testament, we might as well not follow any of it?

The Bible says an elder (singular) shall have children (plural). Logic that allows you to teach something else can in similar manner be applied to all the New Testament and create any denomination you want to.

Secondly, compare the Biblical requirements for an elder (singular) to have children (plural) with instrumental music in worship. We have a specific command for children. We have no specific command against instrumental music in worship services. We must infer that instrumental music in worship service is not pleasing to God because:

1. Something else was instructed, and
 2. History tells us that instrumental music was not a part of early worship services.
- A direct command is surely more positive than an inferred command. Clearly, the requirement for an elder to have children is more sure than the requirement to not have instrumental music in worship services.

CONCLUSION

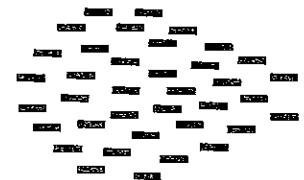
The conclusion presented here is that the Bible mandates that it is an requirement for an elder (singular) to have children (plural) to be scripturally qualified.

WHAT DO YOU TEACH?

The Methodists teach that their church councils can update the Bible to meet today's situations. Galatians 1:8 teaches "even though we or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed". Contemporary church councils are surely of lower stature than apostles or angels in heaven.

What do you teach?

THE FLOCK



IT DOESN'T WORK THIS WAY EITHER

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IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION!

The Possum or Opossum has been observed to lie still and appear dead for periods of up to 6 hours as a means of saving its own life. They even have the ability to not move a muscle when bitten by a predator and thereby take advantage of the fact that most predators will not eat something that is already dead.

That leads you to the following astounding facts:

1. Possums know to lie still as if dead, without going to Possum School.
2. Other animals have some special programming to know that it is prudent for them to not eat something which is already dead.
3. Possums effectively know that other animals will not eat them if the other animal thinks that they are already dead.

Can you imagine the fantastic programming that has to be in the makeup of possums to pass this knowledge on from generation to generation.

Imagine alternately in a evolutionary survival of the fittest scenario, the first possum is bitten by the predator, he panics and tries to run, one dead possum. The second possum sees a predator stalking and decides to fake being dead. The predator sees the possum, but hasn't learned the lesson on not eating a dead possum, and eats the possum. A second dead possum.

Maybe this doesn't work well by trial and error. Maybe someone Who knows what He is doing had better start the possums with the full set of knowhow on how to work this trick!

Information on the possums was taken from the Discovery Magazine, 230 Landmark Drive, Montgomery, AL 36117, Brad Bromling, Editor. This is a monthly paper of Bible and science for kids, and is an excellent resource for interesting information about God's creation. The subscription rate is \$10.00 per year individually or \$6.70 per year bulk.

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 Phone (713) 497-6042
 FAX (713) 497-7312

Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E.

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We are sending Brad a copy of our mailing stickers and each recipient of this newsletter will receive a complimentary copy of Discovery for review. There are probably few better investments in this life than for a congregation to distribute this paper monthly to all of their children in Bible school each month. If it is not practical to buy it in bulk for your children, we suggest that you post it on an appropriate bulletin board with a recommendation for subscription.

AREA WIDE EVENTS:

SECOND ANNUAL CHRISTIAN COLLEGE DAY
 Presentations of Christian education by
 Christian colleges
 11-24-91 @ 2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.
 Memorial, 900 Echo Lane, 464-0271

IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION - \$100

This publication continues to make a standing offer of \$100.00 to the first person who can give any reason (1 or more) as to why atheistic evolution is a better explanation for the universe and/or life than creation by God; the Father of Adam, Abraham, and Jesus; as revealed in the Bible.

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