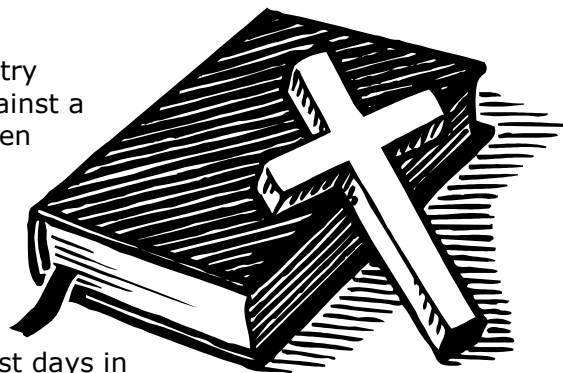


Why Minister to the Youth?

I thought I would try to answer the question of the purpose behind ministry channeled specifically to young people. It's funny that anyone would be against a ministry that gives special attention to children or teenagers, especially when the need of it is so paramount and easily recognized. Unfortunately, there are those that are against it. I can think of only a couple of reasons why a person would think youth ministry to be unimportant. It could be that they have put God in a box so much that they won't allow Him to work in any other vein except the one they grew up with or believe now. Let's remember that we can't limit God in any way. None of us with our small minds would have ever thought that God would bring the ministry of the last days in the simple way that He did. The Seals unveiled, the mysteries unfolded and yet God bypassed all religions by doing it a way they didn't expect. It was through a simple prophet with a seventh grade education.



The second reason for being against Youth ministry is maybe a little fear. A fear that doing special things directed to help the youth resembles the program of denominations too much. The root to this thought is truth. Let me make this clear. Programs will never ever save a young soul. Fellowships, picnics, games, sports, and field trips are not ministry to the soul. I repeat, they are not ministry to the soul. I believe they are enjoyable and we should not fear them if they are wholesome. *It is important that young people fellowship with other young people. Some parents need to realize that kids need to be with other kids. They need to see examples of Christian young people. It brings encouragement, strength, and Godly friendships. There is only one thing that has "power unto salvation" and that's the Gospel. Shame on the church that provides youth functions only related to entertainment. That is not ministry. That is clearly denominational. Much more could be said on this, but I think my point is made.

Looking further into the purpose for youth ministry, here's a question to ask. Is it possible for God to make the Gospel relate to any age group? The answer is yes. We have examples in scripture to show that Christ spoke to different ages. While busy in His ministry, He made time one day to bless the little children. Could that have been part of His great ministry? By the way, His disciples didn't think it was important to spend time with the children, but He did. One day He spoke with a young man just getting started in life, the rich young ruler. He spoke to young and the old. **In Brother Branham's ministry we see the same characteristics. He was able to relate to the youth. In the Message "Teaching on Moses" we find him bringing the Gospel in story form to children. In "Come Follow Me" in 1963 we find him speaking to a graduation class and being very used of God to relate 'to them on their level'. In 1957, during the Hebrews series, Brother. Branham tells us what he did as a young pastor: "A long time ago, when I was Pastor here, we used to have just young man's classes. And I'd speak to Sunday afternoon, about sex and things. And then the next Sunday afternoon, speak to the young man, and try to get those things curbed out."** It thrills me to know that the prophet of our day cared so much about what teenagers were going through.

What about the Apostle Paul? Look at the ministry of Christ in Him. **I Corinthians 9:19-22 "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, I am made all things to all men; that I might by all means save some."** "All things to all men" is what gets my attention the most. I believe we all should live this way. Without compromising, we should do all we can to bring this Gospel to any age by whatever means.

There are some other things to consider qualifying Youth Ministry I want to mention three main things.

#1--Ministry to young people is important because of the Age we live in. Much could be said of the carefully designed enticements from Satan directed toward youth the last 50 years. Young people are so blinded by the spirit behind things of this age. Without the Holy Ghost and down to earth wisdom from God, they'll never be able to see through this mess. The young people have always needed direction, but they really need it in the end time.

#2-- Ministry to young people is important because of natural anxieties of their young years. Making the change from a kid to an adult is extremely difficult. Everyone has to go through it. Besides of the inward pressure of growing up and wanting to be liked and excepted, there is a pressure on the outside to make choices. Contrary to what you may think, a youth cries out for clear cut direction administered with real authentic love. The more personal understanding they can be given and the more wisdom they receive from Godly sources, the better. Bro. Branham recommended a special book for his teenage children to read. It was called *Young Only Once* by Clyde Narrimore. It's an excellent book on issues they're going through as a young person.

#3--Ministry to young people is important because they are the next generation. What we teach the young automatically effects the future. It has always been that way. There is a saying I've always liked. It says, . **"It's better to build children than to repair men."** Our attention to young people is vital. They are in their years of molding. I believe the Bride of Christ will soon be translated to glory, but until then it is so important to make spiritual investments in our youth. If God tarries they are the church to carry the message on to the end.

To sum up, I want to remind the church of her responsibilities to the youth among them.

First, Create an atmosphere of faith so young people can be born again.

Second, Make sure that the older are teaching the younger in everything, by example and by instruction.

Third, Seek God and understand the needs of the youth, whether it be the Holy Ghost or a wholesome gathering with other young people.

Get them to a good youth camp meeting where they preach the pure Message. Don't be against youth camps if they are the right kind. My personal experience started at a youth camp. The right atmosphere was there for a birth. More than anything else, Let's be on our knees for our young people. That does more good than anything. I pray that this article has helped bring a little more insight to the ministry directed toward young people.

Brother Paul LaFontaine