



**GROW  
IN  
GRACE**  
NEWSLETTER

**Volume 41, No. 25, June 23 , 2015** / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / The Grow in Grace Newsletter is **a weekly Bible Study**, plus local church news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church. It is sent forth with the desire to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

**The Top 10 Reasons Evangelical Churches are Losing Youth, Edited from Marc:**

**10. The Church is "Relevant":** You didn't misread that, I didn't say irrelevant, I said RELEVANT. **We've taken the Biblical, historic 2,000 year old faith, dressed it in plaid and skinny jeans and tried to sell it as "cool" to our kids. It's not cool. It's not modern. What we're packaging is a cheap knockoff of the world we're called to evangelize.** As the quote says, "When the ship is in the ocean, everything's fine. When the ocean gets into the ship, you're in trouble." I'm not ranting about "worldliness" as some pietistic bogeyman, **I'm talking about the fact that we yawn at the reading of a 5-minute biblical text, have little or no interest in Bible-based, Bible-saturated preaching but almost trip over ourselves fawning over a minor celebrity or athlete who makes any vague reference to being a Christian.** We're like a fawning wanna-be just hoping the world will think we're cool too, you know, just like you guys!

Our kids meet the real world and our *"look, we're cool like you"* posing is mocked. In our effort to be "like them" we've become less of who we are supposed to be! **The middle-aged pastor trying to look like his 20-something audience isn't relevant.** Dress him up in skinny jeans and hand him a latte, it doesn't matter. It's not relevant, it's comical, idiotic, sickening, and tragic.

**9. They never attended church to begin with:** From a Noah's Ark themed nursery, to jumbotron summer-campish kids church, to pizza parties and rock concerts— **many evangelical youth have been coddled in a not-quite-church, but not-quite-world hothouse.** We've dumbed down the message, pumped up the volume; and act surprised when they grow up pagans.

**8. They get smart: It's not that our students "got smarter" when they left home, rather someone actually treated them as intelligent.** Rather than dumbing down their message, the agnostics and atheists and CULTS treat our youth as intelligent and challenge their intellect with "deep thoughts" of question and doubt or some 'hidden' truth. Many of these "doubts" and deceptions have been answered, in great depth, over the centuries of our faith. However....

**7. You sent them out unarmed: Let's just be honest, most of our churches are sending youth into the world embarrassingly strangers to and ignorant of Biblical faith.** How could we not? We've rejected Biblical doctrine, sold them on "deeds not creeds" and encouraged them to start the quest to find "God's plan for their life". Yes, I know your church has a "What we believe" page, but is that actually being taught and reinforced from the pulpit? **I've met evangelical church leaders ("Pastors") who didn't know the difference between justification and sanctification.** I've met megachurch board members who didn't understand the atonement. We chose leaders based upon their ability to draw a crowd and entertain rather than to live holy and accurately teach the faith. And instead of the orthodox, historic faith.....

**6. You gave them hand-me-downs:** You've tried your best to pass along the internal/subjective faith that you "feel". You really, really, really want them to "feel" it too. But we've never been called to evangelize our feelings. You can't hand down this type of subjective faith. With nothing solid to hang their faith upon, with no SOUND, BIBLICAL GOSPEL, with no historic Biblical foundation to tie them to CHRIST and to centuries of genuine Christian history— their faith is in their subjective feelings, and when faced with other ways to "feel" uplifted at college, the church loses out to things with much greater appeal to our human nature. And they find it in...

**5. Community: Have you noticed this word is \*everywhere\* in the church since the seeker-sensitive and church growth movements came onto the scene?** When our kids leave home, they leave the

manufactured community they've lived in for nearly their entire life. With their faith as something they "do" in community, they soon find that they can experience this "life change" and "life improvement" in "community" in many different contexts. Mix this with a subjective, pragmatic faith and the 100<sup>th</sup> pizza party at the local big-box church doesn't compete against the easier, more naturally appealing choices in other "communities". So, they left the church and....

**4. They found better feelings: Rather than an external, objective, historical faith, we've given our youth an internal, subjective faith.** The evangelical church isn't catechizing or teaching our kids the fundamentals of the faith, we're simply encouraging them to "be nice" and "love Jesus". When they leave home, they realize that they can be "spiritually fulfilled" and get the same subjective self-improvement principles (and warm-fuzzies) from the latest life-coach or from spending time with friends or volunteering at a shelter; and they jump at the chance because...

**3. They got tired of pretending:** In the "best life now", "Every day a Friday" world of turn that frown upside down, be "hap-hap-happy all the time"... while at the same time living in the midst of 'Christian churches and homes' all too full of bitterness, immorality, conflict, divorce... Our kids are smart, often much smarter than we give them credit for. So they trumpet the message I hear a lot from these kids. "The church is full of hypocrites". Why? Even though they have never been given the categories of law and gospel...

**2. They know the truth:** They can't do it. They know it. All that "be nice" moralism they've been taught? The Bible has a word for it: Law. And that's what we've fed them, undiluted, since we dropped them off at the Noah's Ark playland: Do/Don't/Do. As they get older it becomes "Good Kids do/don't" and as adults "Do this for a better life". The gospel appears briefly as another "do" to "get saved." But their diet is Law, and Scripture tells us that the law condemns us. So that smiling, upbeat "Love God and Love People" vision statement? Yeah, you've just condemned the youth with it. Nice, huh? They either think that they're "good people" since they don't "do" any of the stuff their denomination teaches against, or they realize that they don't meet Jesus own words of what is required. There's no rest in this law, only a treadmill of works they know they aren't able to meet. So, either way, they walk away from the church because...

**1. They don't need it:** Our kids are smart. They picked up on the message we unwittingly taught. If church is simply a place to learn life-

application principals to achieve a better life in community... **you don't need a crucified Jesus for that.** Why would they get up early on a Sunday and watch a cheap knockoff of the entertainment venue they went to the night before? The middle-aged pastor trying desperately to be "relevant" to them would be comical if the effect weren't so devastating. **As we REJECTED the gospel, our students are never hit with the full impact of the law, their sin before God, and their desperate need for the atoning work of Christ.** Now THAT is relevant, THAT is authentic, and THAT is something the world cannot offer. We've traded the historic, objective, faithful gospel based on God's graciousness toward us for a modern, subjective, pragmatic gospel based upon achieving our goal by following life strategies.

**Rather than being faithful to the foolish simplicity of the gospel of the cross** we've set our goal on being "successful" in growing crowds with this gospel of glory. This new gospel saves no one. Our kids can check all of these boxes with any manner of self-help, life-coach, or simply self-designed spiritualism... and they can do it more pragmatically successfully, and in more relevant community. **Our kids leave because we have failed to deliver to them the faith "delivered once for all" to the church.** THEY LEAVE BECAUSE THEY NEVER SAVINGLY MET JESUS... We're failing. We've failed God and we've failed our kids. Don't let another kid walk out the door without being confronted with the full weight of Holy Spirit conviction of sin, the gracious GOSPEL of Amazing Grace, and the full freedom of being ALIVE IN CHRIST and ON MISSION to live and proclaim the GOSPEL to their world! (Edited from Marc @ Marc5Solas.com)

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**[REAL CHRISTIANITY!] THEY GAVE HIM THEIR LIVES!** By Andy and Berit Kjos

Some years ago, I read a popular book written to draw young people to the mission field. It **promised adventure, good fellowship, and spiritual growth through short-term missions.** *See the world,* it beckoned. *Travel for God!* Clever marketing! Naturally, many answered the exciting call. **But God's call is different. He doesn't lure His servants with promises of fun and pleasure.** Instead He warns us to "COUNT THE COST" and to resist the natural impulse to seek feel-good experiences. He seeks disciples who will LOVE HIM more than the world;

who are willing to SHARE IN HIS SUFFERING, and follow Him anywhere. Few may answer His call, but those who do will share a joy that can't be compared with the world's thrills and entertainment. **Martha Myers, the missionary doctor murdered on December 30, 2002, knew that well.** She didn't fear death when God sent her to a Muslim country hostile to Christianity. Nor did she flee when Yemen was shown to be a haven for Muslim militants, including al-Qa'eda members. Instead, she saw a poverty-stricken people in desperate need of THE GOSPEL, medical care, and living demonstrations of God's love. The intensity and pressure of the work at the clinic didn't keep her from reaching out to the more distant people in her "free" time. Driving a Toyota Land Cruiser on bumpy dirt roads from village to village, she offered help, hope, medicine, and treatment to the poor along the way. "Everywhere she stopped on the road, people flocked around and she'd write prescriptions and hold court," said her father, Dr. Ira Myers.

Dr. Myers knew that her safety was in God's hands. Four years earlier, a group of armed men hijacked her Toyota and hid her under a blanket in the back of the car. **When they threatened to kill her for speaking the gospel truth, she answered, "Well, I'll be in heaven!"** Trusting God, she had nothing to fear. Neither Muslim militants, highway robbers nor other life-threatening dangers could shatter her peace in Christ. Though friends and relatives cautioned her, "she just depended on the Lord to take care of her," said her father.

**Her 24 years of ministry in Yemen ended when Abed Abdel Razzak Kamel, an Islamist militant armed with a semiautomatic pistol burst into into the humble Jibla Baptist Hospital which serves about 40,000 patients a year.** Interrupting an early morning meeting, the gunman shot the much-loved surgeon along with two fellow missionaries, Bill Koehn and Kathy Gariety. **He later told police he had killed them to "cleanse his religion and get closer to Allah."**

The surviving missionaries were quick to forgive the murderer. "My friends [at the hospital] want you to know that they don't hold anything against the assailant," said Dr. Judy Williams. **"They want him to know that they forgive him and they want him to know God's forgiveness."**

**The people they had served were devastated by the deaths. Yemeni hospital workers built caskets for Koehn and Myers, dug their graves and lowered the bodies into the ground themselves.** "This is my father," one of the Yemeni hospital workers said, referring to Bill Koehn, the slain administrator. "I have to do this."

Hundreds of Yemenis gathered at the hospital for the January 1 memorial service, while many others lined the roads to the hospital. **"Something is happening in my heart,"** said one Yemeni national.

That's not surprising. He had been touched by God's self-sacrificing love which has been changing hearts for over 2000 years. "The people here who love us are decimated even more than we are, because they don't see the big picture," said Kaye Rock, another fellow-missionary. "But the Bible says 'Precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his saints.' The church is built on the blood of the martyrs, and any of those three people would have gladly given their lives for that."

"They freely chose to give their lives to serve the people of this country," said Dr. Williams. **"And although their lives on earth have ended, nothing was taken from them that they hadn't already freely given."** The natural reaction to ongoing threats is to flee to a safer place. But that's not an option for those who have trusted God with their lives. **"We can't let someone with a gun make us afraid to do what God wants us to do,"** said Kaye.

"We've been begged not to [leave]," said Lee Hixon, another co-worker. "Many [Yemeni] count these folks as family." Confident that God is in control, he knows that **"the call of Jesus Christ to take the gospel personally to hurting individuals far outweighs the risks of living in a country like Yemen."**

**So he and others will stay until God leads them out. After all, it's in these hard places that God's love becomes all the more visible.** **As we have seen in China, nothing spreads God's good news -- and filters out the alluring counterfeits -- more effectively than persecution.** **For,** "...we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. **We are** hard pressed on every side,

yet not crushed... perplexed, but not in despair persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body." **2 Corinthians 4:7-10**

**"The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church."**

**The Martyrdom of Polycarp** *"For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake."* (Philippians 1:29) Back in the second century, Roman authorities told the Christian bishop Polycarp (Polycarp, disciple of the Apostle John, and Bishop of Smyrna, A.D. 156.) to stop persuading people to turn from paganism and put their trust in Jesus Christ. He refused. "Then we'll take all your possessions," they told him. "Go ahead," he said. "My God has promised to supply all I need according to His riches in glory. He will take care of me." (Philippians 4:17-19)

**"If you don't stop preaching, we'll** take your wife and children and kill them," they threatened. "You can't take them away from me," he answered, "for they belong to God. I will spend all eternity in heaven with them." And he continued teaching about the love of God. They came back with a final warning: "Then we'll kill you." "That would be best of all," answered Polycarp, for I would go immediately into the presence of my Lord. Nothing could be more wonderful."

**NOTE: His faith lives on as a wonderful reminder that when we are joined to Christ through the cross, we have an eternal treasure in heaven.** "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain," said Paul. Living or dying, he enjoyed the privileges of citizenship in heaven. Either way he would serve the God he loved. Death would have been easier, for while he lived, he was stoned, imprisoned, chained, tortured, starved, and beaten for his faith. Yet, he radiated hope:

*"Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which*

*are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Corinthians 4:16-18)*

Grace to one and all! James Bell

## **SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:**

**TUESDAYS:** Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care nursing home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM. Questions call Bradley Pennington at 615-804-3054.

**\*\* WEDNESDAYS: NOTE NEW TIME SCHEDULE!!**

☐ **6:30pm— Children** Ministry/activities, led by Jody Allen

☐ **6:30pm— Youth** Activities and Bible Study— led by Chris and Rachel Beth Estep **(For both of these... enter via double doors by gym)**

☐ **6:30pm— CHURCH PRAYER SERVICE...** Come in side entrance, iron steps... meet in Ladies Sunday School Room

**LADIES BIBLE STUDY— July 2, 11:00am**, The Life of David! - 1 Samuel 28 & 31; 2 Samuel 1; - Cindy Bell, teaching. {Meet in Ladies Sunday School Room: Come in FRONT doors of the church auditorium or the SIDE door at the top of the IRON STEPS!}

\* **EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study!** {Study in 2 Thessalonians}... Come to back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru awning... walk forward... till you smell the coffee!

☐ **SUNDAY SERVICES, June 28: 9:30am**, Sunday School; **10:45am** Morning Worship— **With John Mackay of Creation Research.**

**NOON FELLOWSHIP** 'covered dish' Lunch;

**June 28: JOHN MACKAY—times and themes:**

☐ 10.45 am God made them - male and female! When you get away from God's plan... what happens next?

☐ 6pm Which God? Which Creator? A vital question in today's multi-cultural ethos.

☐ 7pm Noah's Flood... the American evidence is overwhelming... Plus great Q&A in evening sessions and great creation resources.

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SUMMER CAMP ☐ JULY 6-10 // PRAY and PLAN!

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**SOUTHSIDE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL! Call— 616-452-5951**