

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 44, No. 22, May 30 , 2017 / 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; and 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.”***

Evangelical Churches are LOSING Youth and Adults!— 10 Reasons why! (Edited from Marc @ Marc5Solas.com)

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 100th 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 DO NOT 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.

[ALSO NOTE: BEFORE THEY ‘OUT GROW’ THE ‘COOL, ENTERTAINING, FUN, EXCITING CHURCHES where all their friends are— they are TURNED OFF and never experience New Testament and historic church life such as this:

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!

[Additional tragic reality... many of the present day ADULTS in churches HAVE LEFT and/or ARE LEAVING... DUE TO 10 VERY SIMILAR REASONS AS ABOVE!]

Grace to one and all! James Bell

SOUTHSIDE NEWS NOTES:

MONDAYS: Jail Ministry— First and Second Monday of each month at 7:30pm. Questions? Contact Mike Munday at 615-681-7533

TUESDAYS: Come and sing every Tuesday night at Gallatin Health Care Nursing Home. Meet at the front door at 5:30PM.

WEDNESDAYS: ⇒ 6:30pm— Children Ministry/activities; ⇒ 6:30pm— Youth Activities and Bible Study— (For both of these... enter via double doors by gym)

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

***** LADIES BIBLE STUDY—** Studies in the Gospel of Luke! ... **NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY, June 6, 2017 @ 11:00am;** Cindy Bell teaching. [Front door open at 10:45 till 11:05am; or come in Iron Steps side entrance!]

MEN: EVERY SATURDAY MORNING @ 8am: Men's Fellowship/Bible Study! {*STUDYING the Epistle of First John*} AT THE back of Church building... Come in under the drive-thru awning, walk forward, coffee & biscuits WAITING!

**** Sunday Services, JUNE 4:** 9:30am – Sunday School // 10:45am – Worship Service // **NOON MEAL**

**** Sunday Services, JUNE 11:** 9:30am – Sunday School // 10:45am – Worship Service // **NOON MEAL**

**** Sunday Services, JUNE 18:** 9:30am – Sunday School // 10:45am – Worship Service; LORD'S SUPER // **NO MEAL** // Evening Home Groups

**** Sunday Services, JUNE 25:** 9:30am – Sunday School // 10:45am – Worship Service; LORD’S
SUPER // **NOON MEAL** // 5:30pm – 7:30pm FAITHFUL MEN’S MONTHLY
FELLOWSHIP/STUDY/EQUIPPING