

## **WHY ARE WE LOSING OUR YOUNG PEOPLE?**

It cannot be denied that one of the greatest tragedies that the Lord's church faces today is the fact that many of our young people are becoming disenchanted with the Lord's church, and are searching for "greener pastures" elsewhere. Why are we experiencing this now seemingly more than ever before? What is the cause of this problem? Is there a remedy? I am convinced that the reason we are losing our young people at an ever-increasing rate is because we are despising our youth (1 Tim.4:12).

First, we despise our youth when we persuade them to believe that they cannot understand the Bible. The consensus among many in our brotherhood who work with our young people is that we must entertain them or we will lose them. If we don't reenact the Bible in some dramatic production, or if we don't use speakers who can tell a lot of good jokes while sneaking in some Biblical points here and there, then, we are told, our young people will have no interest in the Bible or in things religious. Quit insulting their intelligence! This kind of nonsense is a no-win situation. When we try to entertain rather than just preach it plain, the message we send to our young people is that the Bible in and of itself is not appealing enough without clowns and fireworks, or that our young people have not reached the point where they can fully appreciate the appeal of Scripture. The Lord's church has stressed for so long that the Bible is so simple that even a child can understand it (2 Tim.3:15), yet we do an about face in many instances when dealing with our youth. We will continue to lose them if we merely entertain them.

Another way in which we despise our youth is in the way we allow them to make their own decisions. Please hear me out here. In an attempt to be judicious, many Christian parents allow their children to make their own decisions regarding their involvement in the work and activity of the church, yet at the same time, these same parents have made many of life's decisions for their children. If your child were to wake up one morning and state that he/she were not going to school or work that day, you would probably answer something like, "As long as you live under my roof, you will live by my rules. You will be going to school/work today." Yet, when it comes to matters involving the Lord's church, we suddenly allow our young people freedom of choice. If it comes down to playing in a ballgame or attending the services of the church, many parents will say, "I think he/she is old enough to make his/her own decision." Why is it that this thinking does not work when it comes to school, or work, or anything else except spiritual matters? Parents, we need to let our young people know that involvement in the church of Christ is more important than school, or work, or sports, or anything else in which they may be engaged! It is no wonder that our young people forsake the Lord's church when parents are telling them that they have to go to school, they have to go to work, they have to go to practice and games, but it is their choice whether or not they attend the services and other activities of the church. Do you see the

inconsistency? So do our young people! Do not sin against your children  
(Gen.42:22)! *Patrick Morrison*