Reaching, Equipping, And Praying For The Revival Generation

By Kim Butts

Over 50% of the world's population is now under the age of 15. Studies have shown that if a person has not accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord by age 15, the chances of this decision happening decreases significantly over time! Yet, studies also show that the Church gives, on average, a much higher percentage of its attention, focus, funding and planning to adults.

We could spend a lot of effort examining this trend, and trying to figure out why it is so; however, in order to bring the most glory to the Father, I think it is more urgent for us to realize the reality of this current situation and do something about it. If we are truly Christians who desire to complete the Great Commission, then we must, as individuals, families and the Church, shine the light of Christ into the upcoming generations with more fervency and intentionality!

The census bureau statistics in 2001 showed that the 15 and under population of the United States was much lower (at 21%) than the global statistic of 52%. This is due to factors such as expanded health care that increases the longevity of the elderly, and abortion, which has ended the lives of millions of the unborn. Therefore, in our culture, children are a smaller segment of our society than elsewhere in the world. Perhaps because of this, the nation in one of the greatest positions to reach out to children all over the globe is, for the most part, unaware that the largest identified group of unreached people in the world is children.

God is very clear about what children mean to Him. He places great importance upon their spiritual development, and gives them high value and attention throughout the pages of His Word. He desires to work in and through them. He hears and answers their prayers. He reveals His truth and the mysteries of His Word to them. And, I believe, He is getting ready to pour out revival through them – *but* He is waiting for the Church to wake up to the seriousness of this hour, and to recognize how we have neglected their spiritual condition.

What must we do to equip, empower and release into ministry these young ones whom God so desires to use to advance His kingdom on this earth? And then, what must we do to reach the lost children and youth of the upcoming generations? Jesus clearly told us to *"…go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you"* (Matthew 28:19-20a). Carefully consider the definition of the word "*them"* and recognize that it includes the 52% of the world's population that is under 15 years of age. They must be reached! They must be trained and mentored so that they can reach the spiritual potential that God has set before them. We must reach children and youth so that they can reach other children and youth! This is the revival generation, whose growth has been stunted by the Church.

As the Church, we must repent of this sad condition and move forward with fervency. We

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must teach and encourage parents and grandparents, and all adults (because the nurture of young ones is the responsibility of every Christian). We must see young ones with the same eyes that the Father sees them with! He does not see practicing prayers. He sees prayer warriors. He does not see the Church of tomorrow – He sees the Church of right now…and it is intergenerational! Consider carefully the following passages of Scripture:

God Gives Instructions to Parents and Grandparents

1. To teach children to trust and keep His commandments.

Psalm 78:1-7 *"O my people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter hidden things, things from of old—what we have heard and known, what our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children; we will tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD, His power, and the wonders He has done. He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which He commanded our forefathers to teach their children, so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget His deeds but would keep His commands."*

Deuteronomy 4:9-10 *"Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when He said to me, 'Assemble the people before Me to hear My words so that they may learn to revere Me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children.' "*

2. To love Him deeply and to take every opportunity to teach and to be an example to their children.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 *"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."*

Deuteronomy 11:19-21 *"Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be many in the land that the LORD swore to give your forefathers, as many as the days that the heavens are above the earth."*

3. To share the miraculous and mighty works of God with their children.

Exodus 10:2 *"…that you may tell your children and grandchildren how I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I performed my signs among them, and that you may know that I am the LORD."*

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Exodus 12:26-27 *"And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when He struck down the Egyptians.' Then the people bowed down and worshiped."*

4. To tell their children about the Lord's faithfulness, and to give Him praise for it!

Isaiah 38:19 *"The living, the living–they praise You, as I am doing today; fathers tell their children about Your faithfulness."*

5. To dedicate their households to the service of the Lord.

Joshua 24:15 *"But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."*

6. To spend whatever time is necessary to train godly children.

Proverbs 22:6 *"Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it."*

7. Not to cause little children to stumble into sin.

Matthew 18:6 *"But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."*

We have not done well at this through the years, as evidenced by the fact that although parents believe they are the primary source for the spiritual development of their children, they do not spend any time during the week imparting spiritual principles to them. They count on the church to provide *all* of their children's spiritual training. (Charisma Magazine, July 2003).

God Shares His Desire for Intergenerational Unity in the Body of Christ

1. When God calls for a prayer meeting of His people, it is intergenerational.

Joel 2:16 *"Gather the people, consecrate the assembly; bring together the elders, gather the children, those nursing at the breast. Let the bridegroom leave his room and the bride her chamber."*

2. God intends to pour out His Spirit on young and old alike.

Joel 2:28 *"And afterward, I will pour out My Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions."*

3. God is preparing His unified body to be the Bride of Christ.

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Malachi 4:5-6 *"See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."*

Luke 1:17 *"And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous–to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."*

4. God desires adults to welcome little children into their midst.

Matthew 18:5 *"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in My name welcomes Me."*

God Reveals His Plans to Work in and through Children

1. The Father has ordained the praise and prayers of little children for the purpose of defeating the enemy.

Psalm 8:2 *"From the lips of children and infants You have ordained praise because of Your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger."*

Matthew 21:15-16 *"But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things He did and the children shouting in the temple area, 'Hosanna to the Son of David,' they were indignant. 'Do You hear what these children are saying?' they asked Him. 'Yes,' replied Jesus, 'have you never read, "From the lips of children and infants You have ordained praise"?'"*

2. There are things God intends to reveal only to children.

Matthew 11:25-26 *"At that time Jesus said, 'I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was Your good pleasure.'"*

3. God demonstrates how everyone must come to Him with the humility of a child.

Matthew 18:1-4 *"At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' He called a little child and had him stand among them. And He said: 'I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'"*

4. God gives a special blessing to children.

Matthew 19:15 *"When He had placed His hands on them, He went on from there."*

In Matthew 19:14, *"Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'"* As mentioned above, 52% of the world's population is under the age of 15. It is therefore extremely important that we do not hinder them. As a nation, we have fallen way short in our responsibility to spiritually train children. Our

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examples are weak because we have allowed our busyness to rob us of our time in studying the Word, prayer, meditation, and other spiritual disciplines. One generation after another is being consistently raised without spiritual training in the home. Children have little opportunity to grow in the wisdom and knowledge of Christ because there is no one to mentor or disciple them. God's Kingdom belongs to them! How can we possibly hope to complete the Great Commission without a major paradigm shift? Jesus told us to *"…go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age"* (Matthew 28:19-20). How is this even in the realm of possibility when we will not even reach our own children? It will take a revived Church!

Prayer Response for Families

How can we, as praying families, lift up the parents and children of our nation and of the world and pray that they will come to a saving knowledge of Jesus…and then be trained and equipped to reach others for His kingdom as the intergenerational and complete body of Christ? Here are some suggestions:

1. Pray for strong and solid two-parent families, and for the sanctity of marriage.

2. Pray for children at risk in areas such as abuse, abortion, forced labor, poverty, etc.

3. Pray for parents, grandparents and all adults in the Church to take responsibility for the training and nurturing of children and youth.

4. Pray that those who don't know Jesus will be drawn to Him!

5. Pray for the Church to rise up and function as the intergenerational body God intended it to be!

6. Pray for the Holy Spirit to visit and anoint children in power!

7. Pray for the bringing down of pitfalls and traps that the enemy has laid before children through the media, games, books, etc.

8. Pray for godly mentors and discipleship in the Church!

9. Pray for REVIVAL! It is only through revived individuals, and then revived families, that a revived Church will be enabled to reach the unsaved individuals and families in our pews and out!

The bride of Christ has been deformed and unwhole for too long. She will only be prepared and made beautiful when she is made up of the entire body – young and old – functioning in the fullness of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the Father's plans and purposes! I pray that God will use us all to this end so that He is given all glory and honor!

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