

RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION FOR THE CHURCH LIFE

Message Four

Having the Increase of the Church also through the Children

Scripture reading: Acts 1:8; 2:38-39; 1 Cor. 3:8; Luke 1:77; Matt. 13:3; Rom. 1:16

I. Many years ago, we did not realize that the children are a big gospel work; we only cared to preach the gospel, while neglecting the fact that the children also are the fruit of the gospel—Acts 2:38-39; Matt. 28:19-20:

- A. We may be doing our best to preach the gospel, but if we pay proper attention to the children's work, in time many more brothers and sisters will be properly brought up in the church:
 - 1. Even if only half of the children came into the church life, we would have thousands of more saints meeting with us.
 - 2. This is a much more effective way to gain the increase than preaching the gospel; moreover, those who are gained in this way will have a good foundation.
- B. When children are saved, they become our young brothers and sisters; after they graduate from primary school, they become the seeds of the gospel in the junior high school—Matt. 13:3; John 12:24:
 - 1. When we work in the schools, the young brothers and sisters become our inside helpers and bring their classmates to us; in this way, it is easier to work in the junior high schools.
 - 2. The young brothers and sisters in a junior high school can be likened to little seeds; they are waiting to sprout by responding to our call and bringing their classmates to salvation.
- C. When they enter into high school, they again become seeds of the gospel; during their three years of high school, we can bring three times as many people to salvation.
- D. When these young saints finish high school and enter college, they are seeds of the gospel in their college; in this way the number of people saved is continually multiplied.
- E. Suppose these children begin to be cultivated in the children's meeting at the age of six and are saved, and they continue to be cultivated through three years of junior high school, three years of high school, and four years of college; in all, they will receive a total of sixteen years of spiritual education and cultivation.
- F. We should not do a work merely among the children in the church; our work must include the children outside the church; this is the children's gospel work—cf. Rom. 9:24:
 - 1. Every children's home meeting should frequently preach the gospel and invite their relatives and the children of their neighbors; even though some parents will not come, they will allow their children to come.
 - 2. We believe that many people will be brought in through the children's gospel work; the children's meetings will open up a way to gain people, especially the parents of the other children.
 - 3. We should not limit our work to the children of the saints who are in our meetings; we also need to invite the children of our neighbors and friends; furthermore, we hope that every home will be open for the gospel.
- G. If we continue the children's work, we will be unable to estimate the long-term results; if we labor on the children, our numbers will continually grow—Acts 2:47.

H. We must realize that the children's work is a crucial burden; every locality must be aggressive in the children's work, because there is a greater future in the children's work than in the campus work:

1. When we preach the gospel, we frequently have to go out to gain people; we even go to the campuses to gain people; these people are along the roads and hedges—Luke 14:23.
2. There is only one group of people who are not along the roads: the children in our own homes.
3. The people along the roads might come today or tomorrow, but the people in our own homes will always be there; furthermore, our children can bring other children.

II. Our work for the Lord should have a long-term view; six years go by very quickly; soon the children in first grade will be young brothers and sisters; when they enter junior high school, we can preach the gospel to their classmates in junior high—Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 3:8; 15:58:

- A. While in junior high, they will bring some classmates to salvation—Luke 1:77; Matt. 13:3.
- B. After graduation, they will proceed to high school and become the gospel seed in high school; in their three years of high school they will bring three times as many students to the Lord.
- C. After these brothers and sisters graduate, they will go on to college and become the gospel seed in college; this kind of multiplying is incredible—cf. John 12:24.
- D. These children would be gospel seeds in junior high school, they would be gospel seeds in high school, and they would be gospel seeds in college; they would be seeds the entire time that they are in school—Rom 1:16.