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Four Keys for Raising Up a New Generation of Missionaries

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Four Keys for Raising Up a New Generation of Missionaries Dr. Paul Chappell Fri, 11/10/2023 - 16:24 One of the highlights to me of World Impact Missions Conference at Lancaster Baptist Church is seeing missionaries who grew up at Lancaster Baptist and/or graduated from West Coast Baptist College and are now serving the Lord on mission fields around the world. (The picture above is of WCBC alumni who were here for Missions Conference '23 earlier this week and are now planting churches around the world.)? The Lord has allowed us to see many young people from our own church family—kids who grew up right here in our Sunday school classes and, in many cases, whose parents trusted Christ through the outreach ministry of our church—who are now preaching the gospel in foreign countries. Additionally, there are hundreds of WCBC alumni serving the Lord on over forty foreign fields.? One of the trends that concerns me, however, is a decline of young people across America surrendering their lives to missions. The world population is growing, but fewer American young people seem burdened to reach the world with the gospel.? Certainly God is still calling young people to surrender their lives to preach the gospel. Why then does it seem that fewer are responding? There are certainly many contributing factors we could cite to answer that question. But I believe there are four simple areas of emphasis that could change the trend. And when these four are working together, they can bring a monumental shift.? What is needed to raise up a new generation of missionaries?? 1. Parents who believe it would be a privilege if God calls their child Children are the gift of God and entrusted by God to parents to raise for God's honor and glory. Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate. (Psalm 127:3–5) Yet, too often Christian parents raise their children with goals of personal satisfaction. These parents are measuring by the world's goals of financial security and career success.? It's good for young people to grow up knowing that their parents' greatest goal for their lives is that they would serve God in whatever way He calls them—including the foreign field.? 2. Churches that emphasize missions In Acts 13–14, we read of the first organized program for missions in the New Testament. It began as the church at Antioch sent out Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. After preaching the gospel through many cities and establishing churches, Paul and Barnabas returned to report on all that God had done.? And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles. (Acts 14:27) Can you picture what it was like for the children and young people listening to this first missionary report? They heard about the hardships and the blessings, and I can imagine the sense of wonder and even adventure that Paul's stories stirred in their hearts. No doubt some of them eventually became missionaries themselves.? One of the great strengths of the independent Baptist model of missions, based on Acts 13–14, in which a church sends out missionaries who then come back and report of all God has done on the field, is that young people are exposed to missionaries on a regular basis.? To raise up a new generation of missionaries, churches need to keep the Great Commission of Christ—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15)—before young people. Encourage children to pray for missionaries. Host regular missions conferences. And highlight the need for laborers in spiritually-dark places around the world.? 3. Christian schools with vibrant chapel services, emphasizing a life of surrender to Jesus In Acts 13, it was the Holy Spirit who called Paul and Barnabas to the work of missions.? As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. (Acts 13:2) But this calling happened in an environment of total dedication to Christ and service for the Lord. These were people who were already ministering to the Lord and fasting.? Effective Christian schools are not just a place to keep your children from the harmful influences of secular education and cultural brainwashing. They are places that proactively encourage a life of surrender to the Lord and are filled with teachers who model the joy of serving Christ. 4. Bible colleges led by soulwinning pastors and instructors who teach missions and bring missionaries to campus It was striking to hear how many of our West Coast Baptist College alumni who came as missionaries to this year's conference mentioned that they had sensed God's call to missions during their time at WCBC. Several even mentioned that it was during one of the Lancaster Baptist Church missions conferences.? Many young people who have surrendered to serve the Lord in full time ministry do not know right after high school in what capacity God would have them serve. Whether or not they ultimately serve as missionaries, being in a Bible college environment where missions is emphasized will strengthen their understanding of and commitment to being part of the Great Commission of Christ to go into all nations with the gospel.? Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen. (Matthew 28:19–20) About a year and a half ago, while hosting Spiritual Leadership Conference Egypt, I had the opportunity to visit the gravesite of William Borden in Cairo. Borden was a young American missionary living in Egypt to learn Arabic while preparing to preach the gospel to Muslim people in China. While still in Egypt, he contracted meningitis and died at age twenty-five.? As Terrie and I walked through the American cemetery there in Cairo, I was stirred to see the gravesites of other missionaries as well, many who, like Borden, gave their lives for the sake of the gospel on foreign soil. I couldn't help but pray that God will raise up a new generation of men and women who will fully and freely surrender their lives to the spread of the gospel around the world. Whether you are a parent, pastor, Sunday school teacher, Christian educator, or someone with any other influence in young people's lives, I challenge you consider how you can be part of helping young people obey the instruction of Christ to "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35). Category Christian Living