

The Lakeview Lamp

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” – Psalm 119:105

Sept 5

2010

“Almost Christian” Teens

Troy Nicholson

(Wednesday night Robert spoke of the following article. We are going to take another look at it from a different approach.)

This past week both the *Tennessean* and *The Hendersonville Star News* contained an article entitled “‘Almost Christian’ teens trouble some.” I believe the article appeared in both papers because of the important topic addressed.

A major study of religion in youth found that many young people are “almost Christian” – they believe in God, but they don’t believe Christian doctrines (As Joel Plunkett put it recently in our meeting, why do people believe in God but not believe what He says?). One factor believed to be contributing to this trend is the focus on fun and games in youth groups. Some churches focus more on being nice and being happy than on pleasing God.

Several “youth ministries” have shifted from that mindset to more intense Bible studies. One local church has returned to “an old-fashioned approach” on Sunday mornings of having no video screen or microphones or band for its young people. “Instead, the kids sat in small groups and talked about the Bible and how it applies to their lives.” For some reason, though, it still has doughnuts and other treats on Sunday mornings and brings back the band on Wednesday nights. Go figure.

But is the problem simply the fun and games approach by local churches? Here we offer no doughnuts or other treats, have no video screen or band, and focus on the Bible; yet we still have young people leave here who either never become Christians or do not live like them – who are “almost Christian” teens.

While the local church can definitely play a role in the outcome of our young people, we need to keep the main responsibility where God put it. He says that parents, especially fathers, are responsible for “*bring(ing) them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*” (Eph 6:4). As one person in the article said, “...we slip into gray areas...When we focus on the world and not on the Word.” Maybe there is too much focus on the world and not enough on the Word, not only in some churches, but also in our homes. Maybe “almost Christian” parents are producing “almost Christian” teens.

The church should always be looking for ways to improve its classes for teens (and all), staying focused on the Bible while making its study interesting; but if we as parents are the least bit concerned about having “almost Christian” teens, then we had better be altogether committed to the Bible in our homes.

Satisfied with God's Goodness

David McClister

“And My people will be satisfied with My goodness,” declares the Lord” (Jeremiah 31:14).

In Jeremiah's day, Israel was dissatisfied with God. It was the other gods, they thought, that were the keys to their happiness. The problem was that Israel had become so materialistic that she thought of her well being solely in material terms. Good times were measured by physical abundance, prosperity, and possessions, and these things were believed to be the gifts of gods such as Baal and Asherah. Yahweh had become associated with destitution and need. There was an element of truth to this. God had withheld physical prosperity from Israel in the effort to get her attention, so she would see her need for God and her need to be in a right relationship with Him. Instead, however, Israel began to think that if God would not bless them, Baal would. So, they turned from almighty God to an impotent idol.

Israel had failed to see that rightness with God is the only truly important thing in life. As Jesus tells us *"Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" (Matt 6:25)*. He also said *"Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions" (Luke 12:15)*. The apostle Paul encouraged the same attitude when He said *"But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment. For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content" (1 Tim 6:6-8)*. Our physical circumstances and comforts are not our biggest problems. Yet, we spend so much of our lives as if they were.

What is truly important, far beyond anything else, is being right with God. God has made that possible by the gift of His Son who gave his life for us on the cross. In **Jeremiah 31:10-14** God was speaking of the day when he would fill Israel with His goodness again, but it was not mere physical blessing God had in mind. It was a blessing that would be spiritual in nature, one that would be proclaimed to the Gentiles (**v 10**). The announcement of God's gathering his Israel unto himself would be such wonderful news that God's people would be happy simply knowing that fellowship with God had been restored. After all, what could be

News and Notes

Members:

- * Earl Lanning has had pneumonia for several days.
- * Cotton Read suffered a spider bite on his leg.

Friends and Family:

- * Vonda Lee Waldrep, an older cousin of Jennifer Nicholson, died Friday at her home in Alabama. Her funeral is today.

Absent: Nicholson children (Natchez Trace).

New Reports: Gary Hunt (NY).

Meetings: Sept 11-12 – Lost River in Bowling Green, Young Men's Lectures
12-17 – Broadmoor in Nashville, Biblical Home Improvement

more important? What greater goodness from God could there possibly be?

How about us? Are we satisfied knowing that we have been blessed by God with the greatest gift ever – salvation from the terrible consequences of sin? Is our attitude that if we have that, we really need nothing else? Or are we like the ancient Israelites, who were so shortsighted that physical things were all they saw and valued?



“My eyes fail with longing for Your salvation and for Your righteous word.”

Psalm 119:123