

GLAD TIDINGS

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Who is running the church ?

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In a recent interview with *The Christian Chronicle*, a paper chronicling the events among churches of Christ, F LaGard Smith makes the following comments regarding the church: “...We have a youth culture that is driving the church. The youth culture is not driven by issues of truth, but issues of the heart. And the heart is just volatile. A younger generation does not perceive authority in the same way previous generations have. And in the absence of that collective understanding of biblical divine authority, every man is his own law.”

What does this popular author and respected scholar at Lipscomb University suggest for a remedy? He says, “In all seriousness, I would call on the church to abandon youth ministries, which have toppled the spiritual hierarchy. Throughout Scripture, spiritual leadership is not only male, but it’s elder. It’s the wisdom of years that leads and nurtures younger generations. We’re just a youth-driven church, like the youth-driven culture we’re part of.”

Often we hear people ask, “What are you doing for the

young people?” No, they do not want to hear about your teaching program, but they are wanting to know if you provide social events designed to keep the young people together and interested.

The church of Christ is made up of people who are related to each other as members. Regardless of age, sex or race, we are one man in Christ, and members one of another (Galatians 3:28, Romans 12:5). The better the local church blends all members together in service, more like the New Testament church will she be.

Local churches had young and old, and married and single among the members. The young were meshed with the old, not constantly separated from them. Older women taught, not entertained, the younger women (Titus 2:3). The younger were taught to respect the elder, and live exemplary lives, giving no occasion for anyone to look down on their youth (I Peter 5:5, I Timothy 4:12). While there were both married couples and singles in the local church in Corinth (I Corinthians 7), Paul did not join a “single’s group” to discuss the special problems and needs of single people. He did not suggest that the

married couples get together and talk about issues with which the single’s could not identify.

While groups need special attention from time to time (cf. Acts 6), the constant emphasis upon felt needs of groups distinguished by age or marital status is a mistake. F. LaGard Smith sees youth running the church among the more liberal brethren who have embraced the social gospel.

Today, we see some of our own brethren sponsoring brotherhood wide “Youth Singings”. Special contemporary music is designed to cater to the “tastes” of the youth. Where will this lead in the youth’s attitude regarding singing with brethren in general? Will they be just as interested in having a mere “local singing” with “older” brethren?

Churches might want to look over the fence and see what some are saying who have experienced the youth driven church and see it as failing in promoting New Testament Christianity. May we all, regardless of age, interact with one another and encourage one another to serve the one Lord, Jesus Christ.