

# RESTORATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

## Prophetic Insight

8/18/2020 “Therefore we must pay much more careful heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away”

### Please Avoid The Hezekiah Travesty (Part 3)

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ our Lord,

We are always surprised and grateful when the Holy Spirit brings forth something from our past to apply to current situations. This has happened once again as the Spirit prompted Sue to reread some old material we'd kept over the course of our 19 moves and 50+ years of marriage. The specific catalyst used by the Spirit to write this Prophetic Insight was an article of excerpts from a book published in 1993 by Dr. Chris Schlect entitled *Critique of Modern Youth Ministry*.

A second edition of the book is available from Amazon if after reading this Insight you'd like a deeper understanding of how our society and church families in particular have so relationally disintegrated.

[https://www.amazon.com/dp/188576703X/?coliid=I3IHR8DL9PGJ04&colid=1Q2YTAPUVG87K&psc=1&ref=lv\\_ov\\_lig\\_dp\\_it](https://www.amazon.com/dp/188576703X/?coliid=I3IHR8DL9PGJ04&colid=1Q2YTAPUVG87K&psc=1&ref=lv_ov_lig_dp_it).

A key sentence from the book's Introduction sheds light on an insidious religious program the author intends to expose:

“The church today does not expect what it ought to from children and their parents, and this could be attributed in large part to a flawed concept of youth ministry.”

The goal of Dr. Schlect is a much-needed one: ***to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers***. He purposes to expose how the biblical role of father has been undermined by the advancement of youth ministries within contemporary Christianity and the growing dependence on them to attract and retain young people. The dire necessity to restore right relations between fathers and children has been very near and dear to our hearts throughout the years of our own ministry. Rereading Dr. Schlect's observations over a quarter century after they were first made known rekindled very strong emotions within us about how detrimental religious programs can be for a variety of reasons which we'll discuss.

Years ago as we were receiving the Hebraic foundations, we were startled by a disconcerting discovery: that our heavenly Father deemed the home, not the religious establishment, to be the primary place for the spiritual development of family members. We had an opportunity to test this idea shortly after we came back from Israel in 1994. Mike asked a number of clergy he had previously counseled if they used religious programs, especially youth ministry, to compensate for fathers who were negligent in spiritually training their children. To a man each of them admitted that compensating for uninvolved fathers (and husbands) had been a key rationale for a number of their programs. And they weren't shy about admitting that a vibrant and energetic youth ministry was an effective way to attract families into their congregation.

However, these programs also gave husbands and fathers an excuse in their own minds to forfeit their God-given responsibility and **outsource** their wives and children to the religious establishment for spiritual development. These programs met their family's desires, the men reasoned, so why not? If the evils of outsourcing are unfamiliar to you, please read:

1 “This is what the LORD Almighty says: ‘Give careful thought to your ways’” (Haggai 1:7).

- Turning The Hearts Of The Fathers To The Children, Practice 3.

<<https://restorationministries.org/download/03.fathers.pdf>>.

- May 11, 2017 Prophetic Insight, “Seemingly Disconnected Ways By Which Habitual Mental Deceits Were Infused Into Christianity.”

[https://restorationministries.org/download/36.habitual\\_mental\\_deceit%20\(2\).pdf](https://restorationministries.org/download/36.habitual_mental_deceit%20(2).pdf)

Back then we were deeply concerned and even peeved that husbands and fathers were deliberately being betrayed into irresponsibility in their God-intended roles. Grandfathers and fathers were given a “free pass” by the religious establishment — and today we are seeing the tragic consequences in the lives of our children, and even worse, in our grandchildren. Families have fractured within much of the Christian establishment, and young men and women have no concept of what a godly marriage and godly parenting are all about. They had no role models to draw from, since compromise with the world’s ways has become the norm within so many denominations and congregations. This goes back to our initial premise in agreement with Dr. Schlect: that youth ministry within this nation has been one of the most diabolical programs in the religious system to undermine a father's responsibility to teach his children spiritual truths and raise a godly generation.

We recognize that in some other cultures and among certain ethnic groups in this land, more family-oriented, intergenerational relationships are the norm. Among these family clans, fathers and grandparents and the greater extended family are often more heavily involved in the lives of the next generations, and for that we rejoice. Sadly, though, all too many young people are growing up without the presence of a godly father or grandfather and are suffering because of that void.

### **We Men Were Betrayed By People We Trusted!**

We realize you may be wondering how *youth ministry* has hindered the cooperative involvement we’re proposing for parents and grandparents in instructing their children and grandchildren. First let’s highlight some statistics we’d previously cited in the Introduction of our online article, *Hebraic Home Fellowships Must Produce Godly Generations* (first published in 2004 as *He Has Showed You*.)



- **Why are 77% of the children who’ve been raised in “churched” families abandoning organized Christianity?**
- **Why is youth work considered less than 3% effective in helping young people follow Jesus as Lord of their life?**
- **Why is the divorce rate among “churchgoers” higher than that of people who don’t attend services or who make no claim to follow Jesus?**

Another study that came out in the 1990s stated that “the average time of service of a youth director in a congregation is about 9 months.” This may not have been your experience with youth directors, but this revolving door of leadership is what many young people within a variety of congregations throughout this country have faced.

After years of observation we've concluded this: that the lack of stability in retaining youth directors is the burnout that came from the clergy using youth ministry as a way to compete with other congregations for families with teenagers. Youth ministry became increasingly more competitive among congregations because the clergy were trying to *attract the parents* of these young people. It didn't take long for the young men and women who directed the youth ministry to wear out in their attempts to attract and sufficiently entertain the young people.

It's also important to recognize that our Father's grace wasn't with the competitive purposes of youth ministry nor with the irresponsibility which was taking place within the families involved (see stats on the previous page). The influence of fathers in the lives of their own children was being replaced by a young and exuberant youth director who seemed a lot more appealing than their tired and often cranky Dad.

Schlect's book, *Critique of Modern Youth Ministry*, traces the historical origins of present-day youth ministry and how it negatively affected the influence of fathers. And now in 2020, many of the men who were fathers in 1993 are *grandfathers* who in retrospect wish they could change how they raised their now-adult children. We want to help you and your family if you don't want to embrace the "Hezekiah travesty" which cuts off intergenerational closeness and responsibility. You can't go back and undo the betrayal of ministry systems which removed your children from depending on you for spiritual training. But you *can* press on into the grace our Father will pour out on you in Christ to help your children and grandchildren see their need for a trustworthy Savior and Lord, and how to walk in His steps.

We want to anchor for you three points from the book, points we'd previously been aware of ourselves.

- The erroneous concept of an "**adolescent stage**" or that teens must go through "**adolescent rebellion**" didn't come about until the 1950s. Then it was widely propagated and perpetuated in movies, media, and especially by public school educators (later we'll explain the reason for this broad support).
- The advent of an "**adolescent stage**" coincided with the growth and expansion of youth ministry in Christianity. Both are rooted in Darwinism, in which adolescence is considered a natural part of human evolution.
- Youth ministry, like humanism, is based on the unbiblical premise that all humans are born innately good, and that correction or rebuke hurts their self-esteem. (That's the presupposition of public education from preschool through grad school — the principle which is guiding all those teachers and administrators.)

In the 1950s public school educators got on the Darwinism bandwagon and began to emphasize the adolescence stage. Public educators saw a great advantage in supporting the concept of an adolescent stage. In fact, the National Education Association signed the Humanist Manifesto in 1932 — a document heavily influenced by Darwin's theories. The Manifesto's aim was to remove God and the Bible from the classroom so they might replace the influence of parents in the lives of their children with that of the public school teachers and/or peers.

Humanism places the individual as the central priority of their life. As they pursue whatever makes them happy, there are no spiritual or moral boundaries — and thus no guilt for doing anything wrong. Youth ministries became obsessed with using whatever attracted and entertained teenagers to keep them participating. But this demonic, sin-nature pursuit had no regard for the values of the teens' parents. Biblical goals of training younger people to walk in love-

grounded, obedient trust in Jesus were forsaken as “too dull or preachy or over their heads.” Compromise with the world’s ways (which of course agreed with humanist principles) became the accepted practice of youth directors. And because the youth ministry had the wholehearted support of clergy, parents were reluctant to object to whatever the youth directors were teaching or doing with the kids.

**Fathers and their influence in their families were the first victims as youth ministry became entrenched within the organized religious system. In the decades which followed youth ministry introduction, the divorce rate in Christianity escalated, out-pacing that of unbelievers. And over these past 70 years has emerged another tragic reality: the grandparents who were in their teens back then and became parents are now the least involved generation of grandparents in the spiritual and moral character development of their grandchildren.**

**No longer are we grandparents the center of wise influence in our family. Rather, we’ve separated from our offspring to pursue the comfort of warmer climes, or our next generations have put miles between us and them to pursue personal goals. At any rate, we’ve found ourselves irrelevant in their lives because they want no wise counsel from us in their self-obsessed focus.**

Again, youth ministry within congregations began to flourish in the 1950s. It soon produced many “para-church youth ministries” — each one luring children further from the influence of grandfathers and fathers. We men were reduced to being spiritual and moral “**non-influential eunuchs.**”

Another social phenomenon took place during this same timeframe. The age at which a child was considered an adult began to extend greatly. Sociologists consider adulthood to be the age when a person takes full responsibility for his or her choices and actions. During the 1960s the period of “adolescence” spanned from ages thirteen to nineteen. By 2004 sociologists extended the end of adolescence to age thirty, projecting it to increase substantially. We estimate that in 2020, many don’t achieve adulthood until well into their 40s, with males leading the way in immaturity and prolonged “adolescence”.

***“We speak what we know and testify to what we have seen.”***

Our own involvement in youth ministry began in 1970, several months after we were married. We had personal experience among churched young people for a number of years. So what we read in *Critique of Modern Youth Ministry* and heard from clergy about the purpose for their programs only confirmed what we’d come to recognize in youth ministries in general: they undermine fathers.

During Mike’s navy service we were youth directors in congregations at two different duty stations. In our own upbringing we were taught to respect our parents. So we made sure that in our youth work we were serving the interests of the parents, not the teenagers. We interacted personally with the parents on a regular basis, supporting them in developing their kids’ character.

The teens were very conscious of our ongoing interaction with their folks and our respect for their role. Most Sundays after services the parents and the teenagers often spent time talking with us at length. At one duty station we and most of the families of the youth would go to lunch at the Enlisted Mess which set aside part of the facility for our gathering each week. The continuity of extended spiritual family was like no other we’d experienced. The commitment of parents to their faith, to serving this nation, and to their family made a strong bond for all of us.

In the 1980s and early 90s we ran a retreat center on a 60-acre farm. Mike encouraged the men coming on retreat to bring their teenage boys with them. At first the men resisted, thinking their sons preferred to be with their peers. So he told the men to ask the boys what they thought. Almost unanimously the boys wanted to be with the men.

The men's retreats which involved the teenage boys had a huge effect on the intergenerational male relationships within the congregation. The older men soon found that they really enjoyed interacting with the younger guys. And the boys would listen with deep interest as the older men shared their experiences in growing up. The men's relational commitment to the boys as a whole increased substantially, and that involvement was carried into their relationships back at their congregation.

Mike had experienced the mutual commitment of his uncles in his own character development while he was growing up. And these teenage boys were experiencing the same thing with the older men in their congregation. An added blessing was that boys without dads were adopted into the hearts of other men who began to "father" them.

The women began bringing their daughters with them on retreats too, and youth groups began to dissolve in some congregations. (We found that the teenagers in the home fellowships we've been part of also didn't want to be separated from the adults. They really enjoyed and appreciated the interaction!)

Mike: I want to emphasize something that is near and dear to me in raising our own son and in "fathering" many other young men. **A male is changed by the role models he has, and by the confrontation he receives concerning his wrong attitudes and behaviors.** Consider this scriptural truth: *"Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!"* (Hebrews 12:9). No male grows up to be a man of noble character without embracing rebukes and correction with deference. This truth is diametrically opposed to all that hellish Humanism and its self-absorbed influence on youth ministry has instilled in young men. These two influences are the main reasons within "Christian circles" that adulthood is being achieved later and later in life.

### **An important point we want to make:**

We're not saying that every father has been just and godly in the way he corrected his children. But that a father (and a mother) are to be respected and honored is mandated in the Bible. In the past 70 years more and more children have shipwrecked their lives through unforgiveness especially toward their fathers. If you're a father who has handled something wrong with your children no matter how long ago, you need to ask their forgiveness (Ephesians 6:4).

At no time is any child at any age allowed by God to dishonor the position of a man who is their father. This one biblical truth is what youth ministry and Humanist public educators have undermined in regard to the role of a father. If you have attitudes against your Dad (whether "justified" or not), you go ask his forgiveness. Otherwise, many things in your life won't go well for you (Ephesians 6:1-3).

No matter which older generation you are, if you have unresolved baggage in your offspring, humble yourself and settle it for the sake of cooperating together on behalf of the grandchildren. The last 70 years have produced an epidemic of unresolved issues between parents and their adult children. Forgiveness given and received goes a long way in undoing

the damage. Calamitous events are happening in this nation and in our larger global neighborhood that don't give you a lot of time to take steps together for the sake of your grandchildren.

**One last point for you grandparents and parents to take to heart:**

During youth retreats Mike would often observe the group for awhile and spot a teen who stood out in his or her self-confidence and ability to relate to adults. He'd say, "You're home-schooled aren't you?" With few exceptions the young person said he or she was.

Over the past 70 years too many parents and grandparents have accepted as normal that young people are emotionally wounded or bullied by their peers to "toughen them up." That might be the world's way, but there's no biblical support for this view that is straight out of hell. The home-schooled children hadn't suffered being emotionally beaten down in the public education forum. They hadn't been compared by peers to other kids who might be smarter, better looking, or had better clothes.

We also discovered over the years that the majority of home-schooled young people become confident adults able to communicate with individuals of all ages. What a contrast to many public-educated adults who desperately need our Lord's deliverance and emotional healing from the childhood wounds which produced inferiority, inadequacy, fear of failure, or rejection.

We'd like to end this Insight by saying that in our years of ministering as older adults, we've become increasingly dismayed by grandparents who shrug off any responsibilities to their family. Those who refuse to get involved in helping their families during this crisis are bringing down the compassionate and responsively active reputation of Jesus through their passive, self-serving lethargy. Don't be a "Hezekiah", thinking that you've done all you can and it's up to them to make it on their own. We've written as witnesses to fathers whose roles have been usurped by religious programs. If you don't love your next generations enough to pray and get involved, who will?

Mike & Sue