



Preparing the Next Generation by Pastor Glenn Huebel

One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts.

—Psalm 145:4

It should be self evident that generations have mutual responsibility to and for one another, especially generations that share a temporal border (parents/children). Infants are completely dependent upon their parents and that role often reverses when the parents become old and feeble. The Bible has much to say about this responsibility in both directions. Parents are to prepare their children for adult life, and especially for service in God’s Kingdom (Eph. 6:1-3). Children are to care for aging parents (1 Tim. 5:3-8). Generational sins have tried God’s patience throughout history (Matt. 12:38-42). Each generation inherits a culture from the previous one and modifies it to suit its own purposes. Generational sins,

like seeds, often produce unpleasant harvests in two directions – past and future. We do, indeed, reap what we sow (Gal. 6:7). That is a scary thought when one thinks about who will wield the power and make the laws in our old age. Will the next generation have tender mercy toward the weak, or will it despise the weak in a self-centered quest for personal happiness? How is the next generation trained? Who prepares it? Whatever a generation sows, it will surely reap from the next one. Generations born after 1973 have noticed that their numbers have been significantly depleted by abortion. They are noticing that the burden they bear for the prior generation is considerably heavier than the prior generation bore for their parents and

grandparents. They will probably notice that their lack of numbers will make them exceedingly vulnerable to their enemies in the future. They have inherited the dreadful consequences of the culture of death, a culture that shed much innocent blood on the altar of convenience. Yes, indeed! And might WE become inconvenient to the next generation? “The one that sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption” (Gal. 6:8).

This may seem strange to many, but the first way that one generation can bless the next one is to sufficiently populate it. At the very least we should stop hindering GOD from populating it by destroying what He creates! God says “*Children are a heritage from the Lord and the fruit of the womb is His reward*” (Ps. 127:3). The Psalmist goes on to say that the man with many children “*will not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate*” (Ps. 127:5b). How incredibly short-sighted is that generation that selfishly and foolishly chooses to be childless so that it can have and enjoy all the temporal blessings of life for self. A

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That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. —John 20:31

rapidly increasing number of young married couples is making just that choice in America today. It is like refusing to labor in the fields during the summer without considering that there will be no harvest before winter comes. Who will meet our enemy in the gate when winter comes? Will our enemies be afraid of a massive army of senior citizens? Who is going to protect your temporal wealth if the gates are open to your enemies? We Christians have even greater motive to “be fruitful and multiply.” Whether we like it or not, the vast majority of Christians today were BORN into Christian families and became Christians through the Word and sacraments used in their homes. The proportion of Christians converted in adulthood is extremely small. Though we do not deny that every child born in this world is born sinful and under the wrath of God (Ps. 51:5), we confidently affirm that God begets Christians through baptism and nurtures them through the means of grace, all of which happens in Christian homes. Though we wish we could, we cannot stop unbelievers from refusing to obey God’s command to be fruitful or from slaughtering their sons and daughters by the millions in abortion mills and through abortifacients, but we CAN send forth Christian children to populate the next generation. It appears to me that Christians in the future will deeply appreciate every soldier we send them. God is making those soldiers today (both male and female) through Christian marriages and training them in Christian homes. The command God gave to husband and wife to be fruitful and multiply has never been rescinded and the Christian community would do well to reconsider it in light of present circumstances.

It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to discern that Christians in the future will face spiritual trials and challenges that my generation never imagined. The culture they inherit will not be friendly toward Christ and His Church, but will very likely persecute the Gospel and mock the teachings of Christ. Christian parents will have to guard their children diligently from rapacious wolves who seek to undermine their faith, even at a very young age. Godless propaganda will become prolific. Temptation to unbelief and vice will permeate every nook and cranny of society. Confessing Christ will become costly, if not dangerous. Society’s heroes will be patterns of rebellion and sin, not of integrity and Christian virtue. The Church at large seems almost oblivious and indifferent to this reality. I’m not just talking about the institutional leaders of the Church, but the rank and file members, the mothers and fathers, grandmothers and grandfathers in the pew. Perhaps I am confusing a feeling of powerlessness with indifference, but it seems that many Christians are yielding to the forces of secularization rather than contending with them. Hearing and learning the Word is on the decline rather than on the increase. Many Christian parents are no longer even faithful, much less diligent, in teaching their children the Bible and intentionally nurturing their faith and Christian life. Attending Church and Sunday School is no longer a priority, even in Christian homes. Bible reading in the home has gone the way of the family dinner. The teachings of the Bible are rarely discussed at home. The “rigors” of confirmation instruction are considered too demanding on students today, even though they are actually far less stringent than Lutherans in past

generations. Many Christians today see little or no value of the Christian School, or at least consider it far less valuable than the money and effort it costs to sustain.

How does all this fit with the reality we face? If our children are to survive or to make any spiritual impact upon the future generation they must be well instructed in the Scriptures, grounded in the faith, nurtured and trained up in Christian virtues, and capable of contending with the scoffers. Their faith must be exercised to bring forth the virtues of courage, integrity, gentleness, mercy, and kindness. They must learn how to endure hardship and affliction, especially when it results from doing good (1 Pet. 3:13-17). They must learn to prioritize rightly, especially discerning between things temporal and things eternal (Matt. 6:33, 16:25). They must learn how to forgive those who mistreat them, and to love the unlovable. For this to happen, they must not only be acquainted with the stories of the Bible, but with the theology of the Scriptures centering in the Gospel of Christ. They must thoroughly understand the Gospel and be able to articulate it. They must learn to see the world as God sees it, and to evaluate all things from a Biblical perspective. Most of this happens in spontaneous opportunities for conversation between parents and children, and those conversations and opportunities multiply when the Church’s education ministry is used. Your children will learn the grammar of the Bible by regular attendance in Sunday School. They will learn the basics of Christian theology through a disciplined confirmation program where they are instructed in the six chief parts of Christian doctrine and begin learning

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to think and evaluate theologically. Through our Christian School, they will learn to integrate all academic knowledge in the One who is the Wisdom of God and in Whom is hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). Gathering weekly with fellow believers, they will be nourished by the Spirit in the means of grace so that their faith and spiritual strength continually grows (John 8:31-32).

It takes years to raise up, train, and equip an army. The Christian home is the incubator of faith and virtue in the hearts of our little ones. The congregation is the extended family, the household of God (Eph. 2:19), which supports the vitally important work of Christian parents. We are all in this together, a multi-generational family of faith (Matt 12:48). Some churches have veered toward extreme generational segregation, thinking that each

generation wants to be served according to its unique needs and desires. Though I have no objection to youth groups, singles groups, couples groups, golden age groups, etc., we must never lose sight of the fact that the Church is a multi-generational family. Our Heavenly Father is weaving us together into a multi-colored, multi-aged, multi-cultural, multi-vocational mosaic of love in Christ. This is the family that eats and drinks at the same table, fed the same spiritual food by One Shepherd, Jesus Christ. This is the place where mutual generational responsibilities are most effectively and intentionally carried out, where isolated young families can adopt spiritual grandparents, where inexperienced young parents can be mentored by adopted “moms and dads” who have finished the course, made the mistakes, and learned from experience. This is the place where grandmas can read stories to children

in Sunday School or in the Christian School classroom, where retired people can tutor young students in math and science, where elders can work with confirmation students, where youth can mow lawns and clean houses for the elderly, where congregation workdays can gather young and old to work side by side to keep God’s House in good repair. This is the place where all generations can work together to provide the resources necessary to raise “our” children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Though generational segregation seems to be the default position in our culture, we need to remember that God’s plan is inclusive, not exclusive. Let us strive to become a family where *“one generation shall commend God’s works to another, and shall declare God’s mighty acts.”*

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Huebel

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The mission of the Texas District Church Extension Fund is to extend God’s Kingdom by boldly and responsibly assisting congregation to acquire land and buildings and by linking investors with congregations.

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The church extension ministry provides Texas District Lutherans a unique opportunity to make funds available in support of the Great Commission: “Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations.”

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Tomorrow

Our goal is to anticipate and be responsive to the ministry needs of

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Messiah Lutheran Church & School

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

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Rev. Glenn Huebel, Senior Pastor

Mrs. Ellen Malzahn, Principal, Academy

Mrs. Vicki Main, Kantor

Mrs. Shirleen Simek, Financial Director

www.messiahkeller.org

Sing a new Song... by Vicki Main, Kantor

Our first new hymn in 2014 is *All Praise to Thee, for Thou, O King Divine* LSB 815. Our Adult Choir sang it as their anthem last Sunday in the early service and I have used it twice as part of my postlude music, so it may seem vaguely familiar to your ears. This particular hymn has been published in 34 hymnals. Its text writer, **Francis Bland Tucker** (1895-1984), was born in Norfolk, Virginia. He was known as a Bible scholar, Episcopal priest,

and hymn composer. He served on two commissions, forty-two years apart, that revised hymnals of the Episcopal Church. Last August we learned *Father, We Thank Thee* [LSB 652] that was another of his texts. His pen blessed us with two more texts in our hymnal as well, LSB 697, *Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death*, and LSB 863, *Our Father, by Whose Name*.

The hymn tune name is "Engelberg" and was composed by **Charles Villiers Stanford** (1852-1924). It was originally written for use with the text "For all the saints" and was first published in 1904. Stanford is one of England's most distinguished composers, who lived in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He wrote over 200 works, including seven symphonies, approximately 40 choral works, 9 operas, 11 concertos, and 28 chamber works, as well as songs, piano pieces, incidental music, and organ works. While still an undergraduate, he was appointed organist of Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1892, at the age of 29, he was one of the founding professors of the Royal College of Music where he taught composition for the rest of his life. Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams were two of his pupils surpassing Stanford's own fame.

815 All Praise to Thee, for Thou, O King Divine

- 1 All praise to Thee, for Thou, O King divine,
Didst yield the glory that of right was Thine,
That in our darkened hearts Thy grace might shine.
Alleluia!
- 2 Thou cam'st to us in lowliness of thought;
By Thee the outcast and the poor were sought;
And by Thy death was God's salvation wrought.
Alleluia!
- 3 Let this mind be in us which was in Thee,
Who wast a servant that we might be free,
Humbling Thyself to death on Calvary.
Alleluia!
- 4 Wherefore, by God's eternal purpose, Thou
Art high exalted o'er all creatures now,
And giv'n the name to which all knees shall bow.
Alleluia!
- 5 Let ev'ry tongue confess with one accord,
In heav'n and earth, that Jesus Christ is Lord,
And God the Father be by all adored.
Alleluia!

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This tune is also used in our hymnal for LSB 603, *We Know That Christ Is Raised* (Baptismal Life), and LSB 796, *When In Our Music God is Glorified* (Praise and Adoration).

The scripture references may also be of help in our understanding and appreciation of the hymn
Philippines 2:5-11, Mark 10:45, and Isaiah 55:10-11.

Let ev'ry tongue confess with one accord, in heav'n and earth, that Jesus Christ is Lord. Alleluia! [stanza 5]

Vicki L. Main, Kantor



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