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PRESENTING SOUTHERN BAPTISTS' MINISTRY TO YOUTH

By J. D. Grey

Someone has rightly said that the youth of today is the church of tomorrow. If we carry that one step further, another truth can be recognized--neglect the youth of today and we lose the church of tomorrow. Realizing this, our total youth program endeavors to approach, teach, lead, and win our young people for Christ. It is a co-operative enterprise--a program that consumes many hours of preparation, planning, and presentation. Each phase of the youth program is designed to fulfill a definite purpose so that as a child grows into adulthood, a great cycle of training is accomplished.

Our youth ministry is a living thing capable of growth, improvement, and progress. Vital is the realization that the same person is being contacted through the years in different organizations. The young person is not a different individual because he is a member of two or more organizations in the church. There is no place for a divided or separate ministry.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

According to Baptist thinking, a working knowledge of the Bible is basic to the Christian way of life. Individual interpretation is one of our beliefs and traditions. Without proper guidance young people will turn to wrong sources for help.

Mr. J. N. Barnette, Gainer E. Bryan, Jr., and Mack R. Douglas represent the leaders and teachers who have the personal responsibility of guiding without exploiting that which will become a way of life. The Sunday school is a church training agency dealing not only with Bible study, but also with soul-winning, administration, finances, missionary activities, social life improvement, and promotion of the Baptist spirit.

TRAINING UNION

Dr. W. A. Criswell has well said that the Training Union is a marvelous instrument for the building up of a church, for it is in this organization that we learn the privileges and responsibilities of church membership. Such men as J. E. Lambdin, Versil Crenshaw, and Maines Rawls aid us in formulating plans for a greater youth program.

Under the influence of Training Union, our Baptist young people can feel more definitely the need for full-time Christian vocations. Thousands of the finest young people in Southern Baptist churches are choosing the ministry, missionary service, Christian educational service, sacred music vocations, and others as their life contribution. The Training Union is a vital factor in producing this result in our young people.

W. M. U.

Remembering that our young people will assume adult responsibility soon, it is essential to the missionary cause that they be impressed with the purpose and duty of world missions. Under the leadership of Miss Margaret Bruce and Mr. J. I. Bishop, the Y.W.A.'s, G.A.'s, and R.A.'s, youth organizations of the W.M.U., are helping to carry the story to the nations as Jesus himself commanded us to do.

BAPTIST STUDENT UNION

One of the greatest transition periods of our life takes place during the later teens. It is a time when high school days have concluded and the serious business of life is directly ahead. The B.S.U., under the leadership of Kearnie Keegan and his associates, William Hall Preston, Estelle Slater, Billie Russell and Robert S. Denny, has as an objective the enlistment and further training of any Baptist student who is away from his home, and home church, or is living at his home and attending college.

B. S. U. is the young person in a college situation; B. S. U. indicates Christian scholarship; B. S. U. means students in action for their church and their Christ.

BROTHERHOOD

The Brotherhood sponsors the "Father and Son" and "Father and Daughter" banquets, also the "Man and Boy" movement under the leadership of George Schroeder. Working with the Boy Scouts and the Royal Ambassadors in co-operation with the W.M.U. as well as the directors and superintendents of other organizations, the Boys' Work Committee was established in the Brotherhood to lead unchurched boys into the church and to assist them in growing Christian character.

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MUSIC LEADERS

No church program is complete without music. Through the efforts of B. B. McKinney, Hines Sims, and the multitude of music directors and leaders, the young person can develop his appreciation for music in the graded choir program.

Dr. Frank Leavell, at the close of the Baptist World Youth Congress in 1937, expressed what he felt to be one of the greatest needs of our day. He said that we need Maximum Christians in every sphere of life. Maximum Christians - is that not what we try to develop through our youth organizations? The lives of our young people are in our hands.

It is up to us to maintain the church of tomorrow by winning and training our young people today.

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