

The Teaching Church

Howard Hendricks

I. Introduction.

- A. The teaching church, or how to ensure another biblically illiterate generation.
- B. Ayn Rand says, the modern attitude is: “Father forgive them for they do not know what they do, and do not tell them.”
- C. There is a great biblical illiteracy both outside and inside the church.
- D. Dwight L. Moody.
 - 1. The common man’s preacher.
 - 2. What Moody could take for granted in the audience of his day, we can never take for granted in the audience of our day. The common biblical allusions present in his works are conspicuous in their absence today.
- E. The average layman throws his mind into neutral when he goes into church.
 - 1. Personal example of a layman who was transformed from a spectator to a participator.

II. Guaranteed ways of ensuring a Biblically illiterate generation.

- A. By limiting a Christian’s biblical education to Sunday school.
 - 1. Sunday school is good.
 - 2. But we cannot limit our interaction with the Word of God here.
 - 3. The church only has one percent of a child’s time.
 - a. It is wrong to ask for more time unless you have something to offer.
 - b. Our teachers are not passionate about what they are teaching.
 - c. We have become incapable of handling questions.
 - 4. One of the most alarming factors today is the disappearance of the Christian home.
 - a. Some of the world’s greatest missionaries came from Christian homes.
 - b. Where will this come from if we no longer have a Christian home?
 - c. The Christian home must be a factor.
- B. By making many your goal, rather than much.

1. We have confused activity and accomplishment.
2. Jesus was never in a hurry, but always had time to fulfill the Father's will.
3. There is barrenness to business.
4. Activity is an anesthetic to the empty life.
5. Testimonies are not counted, they are weighed.
6. Quality in the spiritual realm produces quantity
 - a. God is interested in numbers - he died for numbers.
 - b. But the question is how did he achieve those numbers? He did it through discipleship, which asked the question "what kind" before "how many".

C. By portraying its people as unrealistic.

1. Generalities are a refuge for a weak mind - Socrates.
2. Christians are often presented as cardboard believers.
3. Sometimes our greatest problem is ourselves - we engender a false stereotype.
4. Christian experience is a battle, not a dream.

D. By wrenching the pastor from his study.

1. The fastest way to embalm the church is to take the pastor out of the role of the educator.
2. The average pulpit is no longer a place of education because the man no longer has time to study and groom his heart for the word of God.
 - a. The minister today that does not spend five hours a day in study is kidding himself about having a ministry.
 - b. You have to be equipped before you can equip.
 - c. Personal example of a professor who said, I would rather have my students drink from a running brook than a stagnant pool.
 - d. It takes time and discipline.
 - e. It is an insult to your congregation to not come to the pulpit prepared.
3. There is no spiritual life without the disciplined life - the fruit of the Spirit is self-control, too.
 - a. Personal example of a 'minister' without a ministry.

E. Underplaying the ministry and role of the Holy Spirit.

1. This is indispensable to spiritual impact.
2. Example of the finest sprinkler system in America failing to get hooked up; this is like the church - we have so many means today that are unused.
3. The great sin of the church today is to distrust the Spirit of God.
4. The Israelites were commanded to teach, but they failed to teach. (Deuteronomy 6; Judges 2:10)

Application questions:

1. What evidence does the speaker provide that his audience's generation is becoming biblically illiterate? What evidence do you see in your own culture, if any?

2. Which method stood out to you the most of guaranteeing a biblically illiterate generation? How do you see this playing out in your own environment?

3. What steps can you take to ensure that your church does not fall down the slope of biblical illiteracy? What objectives need to take primary focus? Be specific.
