

SHORTAGE OF FUTURE LEADERS

By: Dr. Hal Webb, Evangelist

"In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths" Prov. 3:6.

The shortage of new leaders training for future service, is prelude to a manpower tragedy. It is beginning to hinder the spread of the Gospel. On the mission field thousands of long time missionaries will soon have to come home because of health and age. Nearly every town has several churches looking for pastors they cannot find. There is a very real shortage of full time workers and fewer than ever are preparing to enter the field. I will sincerely attempt to shed light on the problem from my observations, experience and most of all from the Word of God.. It is first easy to spot among our youth the universal tragedy of **SHALLOW COMMITMENT**. Throngs of possible candidates for future service are simply coasting in their Christian faith. They have decided on salvation of the soul but not surrender to the Saviour. Today's Christianity calls for no cross, no suffering, no total dedication and no surrender. Rom. 12:1 cries *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."* It is very clear that there is far more to pleasing God than ones salvation. There is failure to put first things first along with an unwillingness to stand alone and serve the Lord. Full time service does demand earthly sacrifice, but offers such great eternal reward. Paul said that no man that cared *"entangleth himself with the cares of this life that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier"* II Tim. 2:4. If you cannot remember a time of total surrender, you need to have one and stick with it. Millions of today's young Christians have a **WRONG**

SENSE OF VALUES. To be religiously correct one must press for success and worldly gain. The child of God is bombarded with plans of popularity, possessions and position. Little thought is given to what really matters in the light of eternity. The love of things, including money, eclipses ones desire to find and do the will of God. The Bible urges *"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth"* Col. 3:2. To be earthly minded is to be heaven limited. Our level of reward and position of heavenly service is being decided by our earthly actions. Earthly involvement guarantees loss, but heavenly efforts are forever. *"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul"* Mark 8:36. We should rather *"Be content with such things as ye have"* Heb. 13:5. Earth's possessions and achievements will fall away when we leap to the skies. The most glory will be showered upon those who served with heaven's values in view. I have noted in many a **SAD LOVE OF HUMAN SECURITY**. They seek to wrap themselves in what they consider sure, reachable, easily realized career planning. Faith seems fine for salvation but an unpopular foundation for lifetime service. After all, one must carefully plan for every detail of life and have all the creature comforts possible. We have a tendency to *"Love the praise of men more than the praise of God"* John 12:43. and most *"seek their own, not the things which are Christ's"* Phil. 2:21. Many are not willing to take the risk, set aside personal goals and by faith seek the path of obedience. None of us who have walked the path of total commitment would say it is easy but it is the best. Others would serve God if they were not **GIVEN TO MANY DIVERSIONS**. Our pace of fast living engulfs us in a daily conflict of activities. Each day is so crammed that the Bible is neglected, prayer is unsaid, and time to consider the will of God is pushed aside. I find many that have never taken time to get to a quiet place and seek out God's will. The

horrendous bombardment of the world's entertainment smothers the still small voice of the Lord. The command is to *"turn from vanities unto the living God"* Acts 14:15. One cannot spend every waking moment with one's nose to the grindstone of society. There must be clear established priority. *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God"* Matt. 6:33. Many a car, a girlfriend, or pastime has kept a future servant from finding God's best for them. Further hindrance to knowing the will of God comes from **DEFEATED LIVING**. I John 2:15-17 commands *"Love not the world."* Youth is a thrilling time but one must *"flee youthful lusts"* II Tim 2:22 and *"keep thyself pure"* I Tim. 5:22. One must not waste time and the talents that were given by the Lord. It becomes a daily battle to shut out all that hinders and to forbid Satan to confuse and mislead your steps. Careless spent days of youth can so ruin your life that the Lord will look elsewhere for a servant. Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. used to say, "Never sacrifice the permanent on the altar of the immediate." Don't allow defeated living to destroy the glory of His chosen service for you. Follow His command *"Be ye holy for I am holy"* Lev. 20:7. Further damage comes from **BLIGHTING FRIENDSHIPS**. I have a saying that always brings a chuckle. "You can't run with a skunk and smell like a rose." It can be truthfully stated that every friend you have either lifts you up or pulls you down. Those who would seek the will of God must fly with eagles and not flock with the turkeys. Peer pressure is a dangerous tool used by the devil to dampen the ardor of many potential servants of the Lord. You must remember that "friendship of the world is enmity with God" James 4:4. Paul said, *"Demus hath forsaken me, having loved this present world"* II Tim. 4:10. Much irreparable damage results from friendship which focuses the mind on the worldly and obscures the challenge of the eternal. Read Prov. 4:14-16 which warns *"enter not into the path of the wicked."* Most

public school students will laugh with scorn if you talk of serving Christ with your life. Even in a Christian school there are those who will throw cold water on your dream of Godly service. Dating and marriage out of the will of God will further sabotage your future. The command to *"be not unequally yoked with unbelievers"* II Cor 6:14, is clear warning as to your choice of mate. I have counseled with hundreds of youths who hung the millstone of an unsaved wife or husband around their necks. Careful selection of your friends will enhance the probability you will end up in the service of the Lord. Why not say with the Psalmist *"I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts"* Psm. 119:63. Frankly, I am also saddened by **PARENT FAILURE**. Many Christian parents fail to direct their children toward Christian service. Dear parent, you must not fail to help your offspring to consider His service and His will for them. Teach your children to *"be content with such things as ye have"* Heb. 13:5. By Godly example and daily precept teach them to *"set your affections above"* Col. 3 :2. Remember what God said about Abraham, *"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment"* Gen. 18:19. We parents must not fail to leave behind us those of our children who will serve the Lord. I further observe the **SCARCITY OF CHURCH CHALLENGE**. Most youth departments plan pleasure activities but fail to offer service opportunities. We learned the joy of serving Christ early in life. Church leaders must not let it be said of their youth, *"For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's"* Phil 2:21. Young people have to be taught to *"be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord"* I Cor. 15:58. Let's no longer squander the talents of our youth but teach them to *"remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth"* Ecc.12:1 Many **LACK LOVE**

AND APPRECIATION. The huge price for our salvation can hardly be comprehended. He suffered, He bled, He agonized for our sins. He endured the pangs of hell that we deserved. Christ was made to be sin for us. He left the brightness of His home in heaven and descended to the darkness of this world. True, our salvation is free, but don't we owe Him something in return? Should we not manifest our love and appreciation? *"For the love of Christ constraineth us, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again"* II Cor. 5:14-15. Isn't it time for many to get up from their beds of ease and invest their lives for the one who gave His all for us? Paul is amazed saying, *"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's"* I Cor. 6:19-20. Is it not reasonable that the one who gave us many talents would expect more to be volunteers for His service? God given abilities are best when used in the service of the King. *"For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required"* Luke 12:48. Why not join the ranks of those who give of themselves that others may receive? The rewards and dividends are daily and reach out of this world. To some it is **THE PROBLEM OF TRUSTING FAITH.** In the climate of today there are so many that are afraid to launch out by faith. I keep hearing about the high cost of college. Have we forgotten that God owns the cattle on a thousand hills. Can He not milk or slaughter a few to meet your needs? Those who serve God are clearly promised *"My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"* Phil. 4:19. In the will of God you are safer in the African jungle than the cities of America. Come on young person, where is your faith? Again we are told *"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by*

prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" Phil. 4:6. . *"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths"* Pr. 3:5.6). I hope Christ will never say of your life , *"Oh ye of little faith"* Matt. 8:26. The world has yet to see what the Lord can do with a man totally committed to Him. There is lastly **A FRIGHTFUL LACK OF VISION** among most Christians. Our present world seems to be reeling under the onslaught of sin but *"the fields are still white unto harvest"* John 4:35. We must not hesitate to press the battle and certainly never surrender. *"The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth laborers into His harvest"* Matt. 9:37-38. Please consider the privilege and opportunity of being one of these. Remember, *"Where there is no vision, the people perish"* Prov. 29:18. Wrap yourself in some quiet and just ask God to show you what He wants you to be. He wants to show you His will more than you want to know it. Dear parent remember, your children are your most valuable earthly possession. Raise them carefully by your example and instruction to find the will of God and walk in it. **The will of God is always better than the plans of man.**