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Gleanings

Leadership by Children



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Children are one of the great delights of life. They bring energy and fun to families. Family events are often focused on children whose carefree lives bring refreshment to adults who are struggling, if not traumatized, by the realities of existence in a fallen world.

Suppose that children were in charge of the fallen world? For example, suppose children led your family, church, organization, or even government?

There are certain general characteristics that would be manifested in all jurisdictions. Every day would be filled with fun, food, and frivolity. Fun would be a major priority; it would be the metric for success and significance. Food would be important; there would be a demand for culinary cuisine such as ice cream, candy, and cookies. Frivolity would trump any serious attempt to personally grow and mature.

Specifically, family life would be characterized by constant play. Meals would be mainly sweets. Fun would trump the discipline and rigor of strong education. Instead education would be based on fun and personal interests. Children would decide what to study and what not to study; they would decide when to study and what schools to attend, if any.

Church activities would be measured by their entertainment value. There would be little demand for sound teaching and certainly little interest in personal sacrifice to grow in Christ. The focus would be attracting people based on fun.

In companies, work would be entertaining. Some would use the workplace as a social venue. Others might choose tasks, but only fun tasks. There would be little concern about the organization's value proposition. Customer service would be poor, at best, because the children would only be concerned about their personal comfort and pleasure. There would be no impetus to sacrifice to serve the customer. Therefore there would be little ability for an organization to produce a viable product or service.

In government, the emphasis would be on happy people with little regard to ethics. In other words, let people do what they want to do, when they want to do it, how they want to do it. To support such a society, government would engage in largess. There would be massive government spending programs to prop up the economy to support the lifestyle choices of its citizens. The debt of such a society would continually grow based on the assumption that there is no day of reckoning. Leaders would be elected based on popularity. Furthermore, there would be an appetite for personal opinion and lifestyle choices without any objective ethics.

Do the above descriptions sound familiar to you? Does this describe the state of affairs where you live? Then perhaps your society is run by adult children. That is, people who are adults according to age but children according to maturity.

Do you think a culture managed by children, who by nature are narcissistic and hedonistic, would accomplish anything? Would civilization grow and advance?

Much of the leadership of today is provided by adult children. Just consider the following issues that arguably are ubiquitous worldwide.

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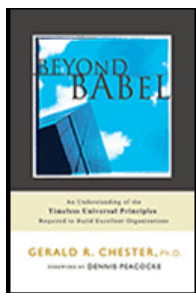


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Obesity. There is increasing concern about obesity in people of all ages. Obesity is the consequence of poor exercise habits and poor food choices. Though the health risks of obesity are well known, there seems to be little change in the trend. People are choosing short-term pleasure rather than long-term health.

Hedonism. The focus on pleasure seems to be exploding. People always seem to have time and resources for fun almost regardless of the price. Even work and church activities are evaluated based on fun. It doesn't seem to matter what a person does or how well he or she does it as long as that person is having fun.

Education. There is a trend to allow children to decide their own educational curriculum. Parents assume their children will make wise choices. If you believe in the biblical doctrine of depravity, however, this trend should be very alarming to you. Children, in general, will not choose the rigors of a disciplined education but will choose topics that they find fun and entertaining. Also, the rise of the mega-church movement is based on teachings that are popular but not necessarily sound. Such teachings focus on helping people feel good about their sin rather than calling them to repentance.

Joblessness. Over the recent months, the unemployment rate in the USA has dropped slightly but is still high by historical standards. Blame is placed, in part, on the inability or unwillingness of manufacturing companies to compete globally. Neither management nor workers are able or willing to make the emotional and financial sacrifices needed to successfully compete globally.

Debt. Public debt continues to soar. Europe was mired in protracted negotiations regarding the financial calamity in Greece, which may be a harbinger for other countries. In the USA, the focus is on lowering the unemployment rate, which gives an illusion of growing economic prosperity. There is little to no thought about the consequences of the exploding federal debt. And certainly there is virtually no action to curb the debt, much less a plan to extinguish it.

All these characteristics are symptomatic of families, churches, businesses, and societies run by adult children. Decisions are based on self-centered agendas and personal comfort. There is no consideration of the impact on future generations. Leaders in all jurisdictions—family, church, workplace, and government—are functioning like narcissistic, hedonistic adult children.

What if the leaders were adult in their understanding? Suppose this understanding was based on knowledge of who God is and how He works. And suppose that God's desired agenda for man is alignment with God's will and ways. Consider again the five issues discussed above.

Obesity would be addressed. Leaders in all jurisdictions would model and guide people into disciplined physical exercise and healthy dietary habits. Over time, obesity would dramatically decline.

The focus on pleasure would wane. Work and church, indeed all life, would be evaluated based on disciplined choices—choices aligned with the will and ways of God.

Education would be a priority. Churches would call people to repentance as the foundation for learning. Parents would choose godly curriculum. Educational curriculum at all levels would be carefully developed and executed by skilled educators committed to helping students of all ages find and fulfill the will of God for their lives according to the ways of God.

Joblessness would dramatically decline because management and workers would make the requisite sacrifices to compete globally. Money would no longer be the focus. Competitively producing excellent products and services would be the priority. To accomplish this, humility would replace pride.

And the public debt would no longer increase. Government leaders would balance the budget, which would include a plan for extinguishing the debt. This sound fiscal policy would lay the foundation for future economic blessings.

Children are a wonderful blessing from God but they are not equipped and prepared to lead. They must be led and trained to maturity in Christ so they can eventually assume the mantle of leadership.

What the world needs today is not leadership by adult children. We need leadership by godly adults—wise, mature people committed to living according to the will and ways of God. Until the world embraces mature leadership, economic and political calamity will continue because leadership by hedonistic, narcissistic, immature, rebellious adult children can never produce lasting blessings.

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