

Dear Friend of [Abiding Above](#),

March 2011

My wife Kellie and I were recently walking slowly through an old church that was built in the 1850s. The careful attention to detail was evident everywhere you looked in the woodwork, furnishings, and right up to the beautiful stained glass windows. It reminded me of how God meticulously constructed the tabernacle and the order we see in His beautiful creation.

There was a reverence about this old church though no one else was there. I found myself wondering what it must have been like to worship there many years ago. People and life were different back then. Not perfect but different. Technology was limited so people voraciously read the best in literature and practiced letter writing. People read by candlelight or next to their fireplaces. It was simple back then.

Walking through this charming old church reminded me of how important our godly history is. Reading God's Holy Word is certainly paramount to our understanding God and His ways. Reading the works of godly men and women who lived long ago I have also found to be of great value in my own life.

It seems in our rush to be relevant, and on the cutting edge, we have ceased to learn from history in matters of godliness, discipline, discipleship, and church growth. For too long we have been led to believe that something old is boring and somehow inferior. Some pride themselves in the grasp they have of secular history and the arts, but religious history and God embarrasses them.

Part of the reason the church has fallen into this trouble is by turning the biblical order of things on its head. According to Scripture, age is to be respected, and youth is to defer to age. Yet in our society, and in our churches, the cry is that we must give the young people what they want in the way of music, or we will lose them. We are losing the young people because of their music, not in spite of it. Statistics show that 88% leave the church after high school and 90% of churches are in decline.

This is the result of a materialistic, entertainment-driven world. We have to amuse the listeners in order to get them to listen to the Word of God. We have to sate their appetite before the Holy Spirit can effectively work on their hearts. So we think. When I browse the music section in the Christian bookstores, I do not see the difference in looks between the gangster rappers or hard rockers and some of the Christian groups.

The hairstyles, clothes, body piercings, and tattoos are all geared to look like the world because that is what the kids don't want to give up. Let's call this what it is, the inability to relinquish that which the world has to offer. "*The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life*". 1 John 2:16.

Recent studies show that U.S. children are exposed to 8½ hours of TV, video games, computers and other media a day, often at once, and they are losing the ability to concentrate. Unless something changes, we will continue to see a generation that is simply not capable of guiding the local church. This situation, as well as preparing for tough economic times ahead, will require prayer and action on the part of God's people. We must return to simplicity with Moms and Dads teaching their children God's Word.

I praise the Lord for the remnant of young boys and girls who have chosen not to be conformed to this world, but instead, have let God renew their minds by His Word and the Holy Spirit. Let's praise and encourage these godly young people whenever we are blessed to meet one. You can see and hear the difference. Society will consider them odd, but we know they are godly not worldly. Remember Lot's wife.

My friend, let's pray that God will raise up men in ministry to take us back to where we belong. Let's pray for simplicity in home life and church life. Let's get back to simply teaching God's Word to edify the saints. Let's be involved in discipling one-to-one as we lead others to Christ in our daily living. Let's practice again modesty in all that we do. Let's practice hospitality. May the church sanctuaries once again echo those beautiful doctrinal hymns of the faith. Let's spend more time in our community as God's lights, than in the building we call church. Let's not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, nor should we forsake the Great Commission by exhausting ourselves in an overabundance of activity. Let's not be content in being busy.

Please pray for me as I fly to Fort Smith to preach both Sunday services at the opening of the "*Neighbors and Nations Bible Conference*" at First Baptist Lavaca in Lavaca, Arkansas.

Ministry Updates: It is through your support of Abiding Above Ministries that we are able to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ. It continues to be our desire to be good stewards of your financial gifts and to use them in a manner that brings honor and glory to God. In 2009, the broadcasting ministry of "*Abiding Above with Chris Hodges*," began its first radio broadcast on station WCRV 640 AM Bott-Radio Network in Memphis, TN and its first international broadcast on 107.5 FM in Cape Town, South Africa. In 2010, we expanded our partnership with Bott-Radio Network to include WCRT 1160 AM in Nashville, TN and WAFT 101.1 FM in Valdosta, GA. As we enter into 2011, we continue to expand our programming even further to include Bott-Radio Network's newest acquisition of FM stations which are 99.5 FM (Clarksville, TN), 93.9 FM (Gallatin, TN), 101.9 FM (Lebanon, TN), 89.1 FM (Nashville), and 91.5 FM (Dickson, TN). Thank you for allowing us to represent the desire of your heart, to take the gospel into all the world! We are grateful for your support and your trust.

Abiding above,



Chris S. Hodges
President
Abiding Above Ministries
Colossians 3:1-3