

TEACHING

WITH

*Practical tips and
techniques for more
effective teaching*

VARIETY

Arlo & Jane Moehlenpah

Teaching With Variety

by Arlo and Jane Moehlenpah

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CHAPTER ONE

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THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHING

When we hear that some churches retain only ten percent of their converts, two verses of Scripture come to mind: “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6) and “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it” (Proverbs 22:6). We either train our children and new converts or we lose them. We have no other choice. If we train them we have the promise that we will retain them.

Moses commanded the Israelites to teach the Word of the Lord diligently to their children when they sat down, walked, lay down, and rose up (Deuteronomy 6:7). The priests were to “teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean” (Ezekiel 44:23).

In the New Testament Jesus did considerably more teaching than preaching. He also commanded us to go and teach all nations (Matthew 28:19-20). One of the qualifications of a servant of the Lord and a bishop

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(pastor) is to be “apt to teach” (I Timothy 3:2; II Timothy 2:24). God gave the church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12). We should not consider teaching to be the least important because it is mentioned last in this passage. For example, I Corinthians 13:13 lists charity after faith and hope but then says charity is the greatest. We must recognize that the ministry of teaching is as important to the church as that of evangelizing and pastoring. Someone said that God extends His church through the “foolishness of preaching” and edifies His church through the “simplicity of teaching.”

We have been involved in Bible college teaching for most of the past forty years. Year after year, as we give entrance examinations to incoming students (who are the cream of the crop), we are often appalled at the lack of Bible knowledge of many of them. Many of these young people have grown up in the church. Some of their fathers are pastors and district officials. While we must not deemphasize evangelism, we definitely need an emphasis on teaching. If not, God’s people will be destroyed for a lack of knowledge.

If a child in your Sunday school compared the quality of instruction to that in the public schools, how would your Sunday school fare? What will his attitude toward the Bible be if he sees unprepared teachers trying to function with inadequate equipment and facilities? Often millions are spent on sanctuaries while Sunday school rooms have inadequate equipment without chalkboards, overhead projectors, screens, or other useful equipment.

The Bible contains numerous examples of parents

who failed to train their children and the tragic results that followed. Eli failed to teach his sons, who never came to know the Lord but instead became greedy, vile, and immoral. Samuel's sons also did not walk in his ways but turned after money, took bribes, and perverted judgment. The result was that the people of Israel rejected God's plan and wanted a king like other nations.

Today we can see the tragic results of children who have been neglected. Some have become drug addicts, fornicators, and even murderers. When the training of a child is neglected it not only affects the child's life but also many others. If a servant of the Lord wins the whole world and loses his own children what does it profit him?

Family prayer and devotions have been greatly neglected. In many cases the only hope for spiritual training is the Sunday school. Of course, it costs money to erect Sunday school rooms, buy literature, and carry on the work of Christian education, but it is ten thousand times more costly not to do so.

The following story also emphasizes the importance of teaching. It was taken from Anthony Campolo, *Who Switched the Price Tags?* (Dallas, Texas: Word Books, 1986). (Used by permission.)

TEDDY STALLARD

Teddy Stallard certainly qualified as "one of the least." Disinterested in school. Musty, wrinkled clothes; hair never combed. One of those kids in school with a deadpan face, expressionless—sort of a glassy, unfocused stare. When Miss Thompson spoke to Teddy he always answered in monosyllables. Unattractive, unmotivated, and distant, he was just plain hard to like. Even though