

## **The Church of No Teenagers** **By James A. Hull**

Today we visit The Church of No Teenagers.

There are no teenagers in this church. None!

As the tour bus pulls into the parking lot, we are in disbelief. This church has no disruptive young people on the back pews? No disrespectful teens passing notes written on tithe envelopes? Incredible!

As we walk to the front door, someone scoffs, “Without teenagers, there is no mass exodus to the restroom when the altar music begins. This congregation must live in continual revival!”

### **Is This a Blessing?**

We step inside the church foyer, and we’re ready to shout when we realize there is no fund-raiser taking place here. Woo-hoo!

But wait, let’s not get ahead of ourselves. We just arrived.

In The Church of No Teenagers, what is immediately noticeable? The floors are immaculately clean, no wads of gum smooshed into the carpet, no candy wrappers and no signs of a spit-wad battle. In fact, you’ll not find a single Coke spill! This carpet looks as new as the day it was installed. Jesus himself might count it a joy to walk barefoot across it. We glance to the right and—look in here—the restrooms are spotless. No wet paper towels are flung against the wall. A faucet left running? Gobs of liquid soap in the sink? A roll of “30-grit” causing an overflowed toilet? No way, not here! Pranking is unheard-of, and there’s never any damage to church property here at The Church of No Teenagers!

### **Would You Want to Belong Here?**

What? Did someone say, “I’m ready to transfer my membership right now”? Not so fast! There’s more to see on this tour. Let’s head into the sanctuary.

This beautiful auditorium is in pristine condition. It’s perfectly suited for adults who want to give their highest praise to the Almighty. Dishonor would never come to this holy temple by letting teenagers have an all-night lock-in here. This is exclusively set aside for Sunday camp-meeting services where believers are serious about getting into “the river of God’s anointing!”

Holiness is never an issue at The Church of No Teenagers. No problems with a worldly dress code. No skin-tight dresses up to here and no baggy pants sagging down to there. And you’ll see only sensible haircuts in this body of believers. Church folks here may dye their hair, but nothing ungodly like green, pink or purple.

And why in the world would they do that to their nose? Don’t they know that you’re not supposed to pierce anything between the ears?

See those instruments on stage? They’re only played by real musicians. None of that loud framing going on here at The Church of No Teenagers!

Let’s move on. Can’t spend too much time here in the “holy of holies.”

It’s starting to hit you now, isn’t it? How great attending a church like this must be! Here are a few more pluses to get excited about:

At The Church of No Teenagers, there are no worries about hellions smoking behind the gym. No concerns about where that hooligan got off to with the pastor’s daughter. And there is never embarrassment caused by a cuss word left written on a Sunday school dry erase board!

It is absolutely blissful to consider that at this church, day-care snacks can still be found on Monday mornings, academy desks are never pillaged or plundered, and the exquisite velvet couches in the ladies’ room won’t mysteriously end up in the men’s room.

As we continue through offices and classrooms, we are overcome. This is simply stunning. As extravagant as the surroundings are, keep this in mind: Without teenagers to destroy things, your church could look this good!

Finances are no problem here. Money is saved because insurance premiums are kept to a bare minimum. Without teenagers, why would this church even need a van or a shuttle bus? Remember,

there's never damage to church property, there are no such things as horseplay "accidents," and there's never a fight to break up!

As we walk each corridor and marvel at every breathtaking sight, it becomes apparent that teenagers really would NOT fit in here, even if they wanted to. It's way too beautiful to allow irresponsible children to callously tear it up. That would be unconscionable.

The tour concludes, and you return to the vehicle, but somehow something's changed. Most of us no longer want to join this church. We feel a hollowness inside, and we try to determine what it is.

### **What Is the Church's Purpose, Anyway?**

We board the bus and shuffle to our seats. Plopping down and perhaps leaning our heads against the window, we ponder, *What is not right about all this?* On departing, we take one last glimpse at this spectacular edifice. And now clear thinking begins to take over.

Who would want to be a member of a church *without* teenagers—or children, for that matter? A church like that is a dying church. The building may look magnificent to the natural eye; but on looking deeper, we see the organism is seriously deficient. There are things far more important than grandiose furnishings and ultraclean surroundings.

- **Wholeness**—When all generations are represented in a congregation, it is a sign of a complete, healthy church. Subtract any group from the body of Christ and the body diminishes. Jesus died for every age level, and it is His desire that we should all fit *together*: infants, children, teenagers, college and career, young married, older adults, and the elderly.

- **Nurturing**—We need to learn from one another, to interact with each other, to laugh and cry together, to celebrate victories, and to bear each other up in adversity. Is there a way to model our faith and pass the baton to our family more effectively?

- **Mission**—We're supposed to preach the gospel to every creature. Since when did we get selective? Studies show that most people make their commitment to Christ before they reach the age of 18. Eliminate young people and salvation experiences are severely reduced. Eliminate salvation and we have no reason to exist.

- **Excitement**—Kids can't be quiet. They provide enthusiasm and inject life to an event. Some of our greatest services are comprised of musicals, plays and skits with our children in them. Parents beam to see little Johnny minister on stage. (And just try to imagine the General Assembly minus the Teen Talent program!)

Yes, it's true that churches without young people would be less noisy, cleaner, and suffer less damage than those with them. But the cost of maintaining a church with teenagers is not nearly as high as the cost that will be paid by The Church of No Teenagers.

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