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 In God We Trust - Do You?

**Lumber River Quartet**

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12TH AT 6:30 PM

**Northside Bible Church**  
 1937 N. Whitehall Road in North Muskegon  
 (just north of Tractor Supply Company)



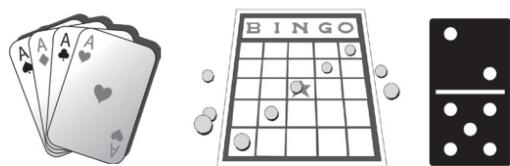
**SOUTHERN GOSPEL MUSIC AT ITS BEST!**

- Refreshments BEFORE the concert
- Fellowship
- Giveaways

No tickets necessary; Freewill offering only  
 Questions: Call (231) 329-1477

**Got time on your hands?**

*Want to do something fun?*  
**Let's play games!!!**



**~ Bring your favorite card or board game on most Wednesdays beginning October 9, 2013 from 12:30 to 2:30 P.M.**



**WE WILL HAVE POPCORN, PUNCH & COFFEE**  
**~ Bring a favorite treat to share, if you wish.**



*All ages are welcome.*



**come to**  
**First Congregational Church**  
 3212 E Pontaluna Rd., Fruitport  
 (across from Fruitport Elementary School)

**~ For questions, please call Tom & Nancy Zeller at 231-733-9519**

**~ CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE ~**

**Young people and Christ**  
 by Rev. R.A. Shackles

What is it that is lacking in the Church's appeal to young people that explains their lack of interest in the Church? Or is that, in fact, the right question? The reality is that, if anything, the Church has for decades now been bending over backwards to reach out to the young people of our communities. So much so that many people have complained about the Church's obsession with "preaching to the infantry!" Nothing irritates many Christians more than those precious efforts to preach "children's sermons," including "children's churches," in the main worship experience of the congregation. The looks of irritation on the adults are more than "trumped" by the utter boredom reflecting in the faces and demeanor of the young people.

Thinking on this (not without our own level of cynicism), one word of Jesus comes to mind: "Suffer the little children to come to Me, and forbid not." Almost immediately a touch of reality comes to mind — "for such is the kingdom of God." Three things seem to be being said here by Jesus.

First, "Suffer the little children to come to Me." Do we satisfy that comment by developing all sorts of imaginative schemes for "winning the infantry?" The track record says "no" in a resounding voice. Church closets are full to overflowing with the magic programs that never worked. All of which suggests that we thought by "suffer" Jesus meant bore the kids to death. Does not Jesus mean parents must make the services, with often self-sacrificing efforts, to accompany by their own faith, their children to the welcoming warmth of congregations where members actually know Christ? The verb used is one that means "send away, dismiss," often translated (RKJV) "let the children come to Me," from distractions to a loving Lord who wants them with Him. That takes parents who will do that sort of "suffering" for the children, who care enough to make that happen.

Second, Jesus says, "And forbid them not." This is a bit tricky. After all, how many parents would seriously say to their children, "I forbid you to go to church"? So how then does this apply to this issue of winning young people to Christ? What may Jesus be speaking of here? The resolution is a subtle one: We often prevent our children's coming to Christ by our own faulty witness as parents! When children see their parents treating church membership casually, ignoring any commitment to worship regularly, or clearly believing as if the Ten Commandments were of no consequence, and such like attitudes, the message is clear — Church is of no great importance. The reality is that we end up inhibiting our children's learning commitment more often than we care to admit, our parental behavior, in fact, working to forbid the children from coming to Christ!

Thirdly, Jesus says, "for of such is the kingdom of God." Here is a most subtle and so most devastating reason why our young people abandon the Church. We fail to help them realize that they are part of the Kingdom of God; that it is a Kingdom already at work in this world; that they are called to be responsible *participants* in the Kingdom. And one powerful reason for their failure to realize who they are meant to be is that most of us adults do not have any real awareness of our own convictions about the Kingdom of God. Because of this, when *we* appeal to young people to "come to Church," we really are not doing so as people who know and believe we are living as members of God's Kingdom and that a Kingdom not of a far-distant future (after death) but powerfully meant to be active here and now. So perhaps if we adults really believed in *our* membership in the Kingdom, our young people would begin to believe it is a life they would want to live!

So, in three parts, Jesus opens to us a positive approach to a desire to welcome more and more young people into Church living: encourage ("suffer" them to come), conduct our lives as examples, and clearly practice, explain, that being members of the church is to live as now in the Kingdom of God. We submit, Jesus' words here, understood, are the answer: "Suffer the little children to come to Me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God."•

**Russia's demise is prophesied**  
 by Rev. William Randall

Troubles in the Middle East involve Russia though they sometimes try to present themselves as brokers for peace.

The United States has sacrificed precious lives of servicemen and women and millions of dollars to help maintain Afghanistan as a free nation by fording off Taliban attacks. We are now in the process of withdrawal. Like Viet Nam and Iraq, it appears that our efforts in Afghanistan will have been for naught. Russia, on the contrary, was an aggressor extending its reach into Afghanistan to control southern Asia at a time the Soviet Union controlled all of central Asia. They could not keep their hold on Afghanistan.

Russia now has political and economic ties with Iran and Syria, and actively supplies armaments and ammunition. Military supplies have been transported across Syria for terrorist efforts against Israel.

Russia is not a friend of Israel. Its allies vow to wipe Israel off the map as Iran continues to develop nuclear bombs. Anti Semitism has been and is prevalent in Russia, therefore Jews continuously emigrate to Israel and the United States.

Russia's stance toward Israel should not come as a

surprise to anyone who has knowledge of the Bible. Read Ezekiel chapters 37 and 38. The people and lands mentioned are names of ancestors of present day Russians. Russia and other northern powers have been persecutors of dispersed Israel. They will launch a combined attack upon Israel. This could be in the near future. It is not the same as the battle of Armageddon, which will be at the close of the future tribulation period.

Russia and the combined Muslim forces will be defeated according to this account in Ezekiel. This makes sense because the Antichrist representing Europe and the revived Roman Empire will come as a man of peace making a covenant with Israel after Muslim forces are eliminated. When three and one half years are passed, the Antichrist will break the treaty with Israel and set himself up as God.

Read Revelation chapter 17 through 19 and II Thessalonians Chapter 2 to get an idea of the Antichrist's program and Christ's final victory. We know that, in recent negotiations and statements, Russia seems to be gaining influence in the Middle East. There are twists and turns, but a careful reading of Ezekiel 37, 38 enables one to see that Russia and confederates from the North will not prevail. God has a purpose and plan for Israel and He will magnify His name. God said, "Thus will I magnify myself and sanctify myself and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord." (See Ezekiel 38:23.) An understanding of the Bible gives one a sense of peace. While everything is happening in the Middle East, keep your eyes upon the Lord. •

**The first and the best**  
 by Al Wezeman

From beginning to end, the Holy Bible tells the story of God's creation. Humans made in God's image show forth and proclaim God's glory. When Jesus was on this earth He said, "God is spirit and must be worshipped in spirit and truth." (See John 4:24.)

We, as humans, were created in God's image so we could recognize God for who He is. No other creature or thing created can do that. Before we were put out of God's presence in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve enjoyed true fellowship with God. The Holy Bible does not give much detail how our first parents enjoyed close fellowship with their Creator, but we are told it was "very good." God walked and talked with Adam and Eve. God must have told our first parents many things that they, in turn, told their children. In those first days, spoken communication must have been how information was passed on from generation to generation.

Adam and Eve certainly must have been devastated when they no longer had that wonderful closeness to God. But God did not forsake His people created in His image. God promised a redemption. Someday a Savior would come who would restore that wonderful fellowship as at first. (See Genesis 3:15.)

From Genesis to Revelation the Holy Bible tells the

story of mankind's redemption. Throughout all of history, God kept His promise in spite of our rebellion against Him

As we know from the Holy Bible's New Testament, the promised Savior came and renewed our fellowship with God. (See the story of Jesus' coming in the Gospel of John.)

The first two chapters of the Holy Bible tell how at first we could be close to God and there was no need to be afraid (See Genesis 3:8-10). Revelation 21 at the end of the Holy Bible tells how God again "...will dwell with them and they shall be His people." (See verses 1-5.)

What a wonderful fact it is that we can know we can be restored to a full fellowship again to our Creator God! But how does that happen? The Holy Bible tells us very clearly how we can have eternal life with God. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world (us) that He gave His only begotten Son (Jesus) that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16 is a summary of the story of Jesus as told in the Gospel of John in the New Testament of the Holy Bible.

When you read the Holy Bible you learn the story that God has given us of His creation and our history and redemption. The Holy Spirit works in your heart and mind to convict you of sin and to repent of your sin and to put your faith and trust in Jesus for eternal life.

The best is yet to come and we can be part of that "best" as we trust in God through Jesus Christ. Read all about the Good News in the Holy Bible! •