

The Sunday School Lesson

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Missionary Baptist Church

Encouraging One Another
(Hebrews 10:19-25; 32-39)

Outline

- I. Source of Encouragement (Hebrews 10:19-23)
- II. Object of Encouragement (Hebrews 10:24-25)
- III. Remembrance of Encouragement (Hebrews 10:32-34)
- IV. Cause for Encouragement (Hebrews 10:35-39)

I. Source of Encouragement (Hebrews 10:19-23)

Unlike the faithful of the old covenant who had to go to the priest to get him to offer a sacrifice for sin, Christians today can come boldly to the throne of God. The inner wall of partition has been torn down. Christians have access to the Father through the High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shed His blood for our sins. The way that is provided by the blood of Jesus is a more perfect way.

When we look back to the cross and see what Christ has done for us, it should encourage us to go forward. Every child of God ought to stand firm in faith that he professes. Christ is true and faithful to all who are His. We ought to be as the Apostle Paul said: "I know in whom I have believed and am persuaded that He will keep that which I have committed unto Him."

If Christ is faithful, and He is, that is all the more reason for us not to waver in our faith.

II. Object of Encouragement (Hebrews 10:24-25)

Fellowship with God's people is a key to encouragement. Christians have to fellowship with one another to gain strength and faith. Sharing the love of Jesus with one another and sharing the experiences help Christians to grow in the faith. When a child of God is down or in need, he needs a helping hand or words of encouragement, not a kick in the

rear, but words of encouragement. Jesus instructed us to gather together that we can teach one another and be taught. The more we learn, the more we can grow and the more mature in Christ we will be. When we are willing to surrender all to Christ, we will be vessels for God's service and be an encouragement to others.

III Remembrance of Encouragement (Hebrews 10:32-34)

The early Christians were faced with sufferings and afflictions. They were reminded how they had suffered for Christ's sake. They had endured those afflictions and come through if okay; therefore, they could endure future trials.

Many times we wonder why God allows us to face certain things, but we can learn from them and become more mature Christians. Like the early Christians, we can look back from where God has brought us from and get encouragement to move on.

The early Christians even when faced with difficulty were willing to offer gifts to Paul while he was in prison. Certainly we need to have compassion for the needs of others, even when we face difficulty. There is joy in helping others and also there is reward for us in heaven.

IV. Cause for Encouragement (Hebrews 10:35-39)

In Acts 1:9 the angels told the disciples that the same Jesus they saw ascending would return in like manner. Jesus is coming back for the church, just as He said. Jesus will not put off His coming just as Christ came in the fullness of time. He will come when it is time. We need to learn to wait on the Lord and seek His will for our lives, so that we can receive blessed hope.

Right living comes by faith. Therefore, if we walk by faith we will not turn away from following Jesus. God is not pleased with those who choose to be disobedient. The writer tells us that if we have been born again, then we are not of those who turn back to sin. Genuine faith will endure all the trials that it is faced with and come out triumph.

God bless you all until next week.

The Way I See It

by Dr. Dean Chavers, President
Native American Scholarship Fund
Albuquerque, NM



We Need Indian Teachers

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We need to produce at least 15,000 new Indian teachers in the next ten years. That is the conclusion I have come to after looking at the present numbers of Indian teachers, the annual turnover rate of teachers in Indian schools, and the conditions of these schools.

Let's face the facts. Indian high school students drop out at a rate of 50%. Only 17% of Indian students who are graduated from high school go on to college, compared to 62% of the U.S. as a whole. Only 20% of those who enter college, however, ever complete their degrees, compared to 56% for the nation as a whole.

Where I work we hear horror stories often. The worst one is the Indian student who is the valedictorian at an Indian high school who goes off to college and almost flunks out. This has happened to at least six students I know of in the past eight years. The worst part of it is that three of the six all came from the same high school! All three had perfect 4.0 GPAs in high school. Something is very wrong with our education systems on reservations.

Why are they so far behind? (1) Indian students do not attend school regularly; they have to be there to learn. Data I collected in one high school last year showed students were in school 70% of the time. That is not enough. They need to be there over 90% of the time.

(2) Indian students do not read, and reading is essential to success in college. Data I collected last year on one reservation showed that Indian students there had read less than one book each outside the classroom in the previous year (0.95 books). Ninety-three percent of the tenth graders had read no books at all on their own.

(3) Indian students are not taking college-prep courses in high school. Too often, the Indian student who is graduated with a 4.0 GPA has not had advanced algebra, trig, geometry, and advanced biology and chemistry. He or she is still not reading many books.

(4) Indian students are not being challenged. They are put into courses that are too easy. Teachers have expectations for them that are way too easy. Teachers will put non-Indian students into the courses they should be in, and let them pass or fail. But it has been a mystery to me for 30 years why they will not do the same with Indian students. They don't want to work Indian students too hard.

(5) Indian parents are not helping much in the process. Every Indian parent who complains about the teachers giving his child too much homework is doing a disservice to the child. He is cheating the child. He should stop it. Indian parents need to do a whole lot more to help their children get a good education—read to them, monitor their homework, help them with homework, visit with the teachers on a regular basis, take them to libraries, etc.

(6) Indian students are not writing enough. We have processed over 500 student essays in the past ten

years where I work, and no more than five have been well-written. And that is from the best of our Indian students. I shudder to think what the worst are like.

I said all this to make a case for more Indian teachers. But these new Indian teachers have to be good. They can't be like the run of the mill we now have. They have to help raise the quality of Indian schools to levels they have never had before.

Would they make a difference? I believe that would, if we had enough. The teachers in Indian schools now don't stay long enough to make a difference.

There are 1,800 Indian schools in the U.S.—Public, BIA, contract and mission. Most of them, at least 1,500 are public schools. They employ about 54,000 teachers (at an average of 30 teachers per school), most of them non-Indians. Each year, about 15,000-18,000 of these teachers leave; the turnover rate is 35%. They are replaced with new teachers, who in a year or two will also leave. It is rare to find a non-Indian teacher who has made a career teaching in Indian schools.

Now, the non-Indian teacher who leaves is replaced by another non-Indian teacher. If we could get enough new Indian teachers coming out of college each year, they would come home to teach and stay instead of leaving. Then we could have some stability in Indian schools, some continuity, something many of them seldom have.

Earl Sibson, the leading authority on personnel replacement in the U.S., said in one of his books 15 years ago that it cost them \$5,000 to replace a secretary and \$15,000 to replace an engineer. Today, it most cost \$10,000 to replace a teacher. Thus the school with 30 teachers which has to replace 10 of them every year is spending \$100,000 of its hard-earned money doing the replacing! Most people don't realize they are spending this much; they need to read Sibson to learn why they are.

The money to produce these teachers could come from a variety of places—federal dollars (unlikely), foundations, corporations, Indian casinos, private individuals, churches, professional associations, etc.

The Ford Foundation gave the Navajo nation \$1 million to produce 1,000 new Indian teachers five years ago. That has been the only such initiative that I know about recently. It needs to be enlarged and made national.

The mechanism is in place to produce the teachers. We recently compiled a list of all the Indian education professors we could find out of 500 college catalogs, and found 217 of them in place. Some of them are enthusiastic about finding new Indian teachers and producing more. Many of these professors now have a hard time finding Indian students who want to be teachers.

Ten years ago, there were 16 Indian education programs on college campuses funded by federal dollars under the Title IX program. That program was eliminated two years ago, and most of the programs have folded. Some of the professors in the programs found jobs on a campus somewhere, mostly in an education department. But they have little money to play with now to encourage Indian students to major in education.

What we need is the funding to make it happen. It would take only

\$15 million to produce according to the Ford/Navajo formula. To many of us that is a huge amount. But to the real money people in this country, that is not so much. Some of them make decisions on more money than that on a daily basis. Right now, this possibility is just an idea. But we are collecting data now to determine what the actual numbers are. If my estimates are correct, there are fewer than 500 new Indian teachers graduating each year, to replace the 15,000+ teachers in Indian schools who leave each year. At this rate, the percentage of teachers who are Indian will remain below 5% for decades.

Could we expect these new Indian teachers to do much to improve Indian schools? That is my whole premise. In a book we published last November called "Exemplary Programs in Indian Education," I documented how 16 exceptional people are changing the face of Indian education. They are reducing drop out rate from 60% to 15%, raising reading levels through the roof, getting 70% or more of their graduates into college, and improving calculus scores for Native students to higher level than non-Indians. Clearly some of these new Indian teachers have what it takes. We just need more of them.



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