

Sense of Immortality

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Youthful voices in the classroom and young children playing at recess exemplify life with many years to come. To think of limiting life, cutting short the dreams of tomorrow, is much different in a school setting than at a hospital. Is it possible that the teacher can embrace the illusion of immortality and miss the Christian hope of life in Jesus?



Young people think they will live forever. Life lies before them, their bodies are growing, and years of school are still ahead. Marriage, children, a career, earning money, and finally the rest of retirement follows. Young people have a different perspective than that of seniors. This is not to say that youth should be morbid, it is to say that a youthful perspective can give a false sense of immortality that can rub off on the teacher active in their midst. The reality is, there are times when we as educators stand in silence as a youthful dreamer lies in a hospital bed or is placed in the cold ground, and we must ask "Did I give hope?"

One of my most delightful experiences is visiting my hometown of Bridgewater, Nova Scotia. I walk the streets lined with the same houses I saw as a boy, stay in the same home where my family moved when I was four, worship in the church I helped build in 1959, and visit the hockey arena where I spend enjoyable hours reliving "the time when...". So much appears the same, so much in the environment brings back memories, giving the illusion of immortality; yet there are changes. Buildings that once stood firm are now gone, people who were once vital members of the community are no longer there. The reality is that my life too will move on and I need a hope in Jesus beyond the illusion of immortality.

Good health is a wonderful thing. When all systems are working, the mind is clear and active, the doctor states the cholesterol is normal, blood pressure low and even though a little overweight we are given a clean bill of health. Life is good and some think, "I'm like a rock - I am in good shape and death is far off"; however, with one phone call, the "rock" turns out to be a bowl of jelly. It's cancer, it's heart, it's stroke, it's divorce; hope in Jesus becomes the only sure rock and comfort in life.

Education provides the means to accomplish the goals envisioned. From "Mommy, I'm promoted to grade five!", to "Mom, I'm getting my doctorate", the dream of one day marching down the aisle as the organ plays and receiving a parchment, gives the illusion that we will live for years to come. I am not saying that the dream balloon should be pricked; we should dream and work toward goals, but I am saying that to assume we have lots of time and can put off choosing Jesus as the Lord of our lives may be

a choice that meets a moment of mortality.

Routines are a wonderful thing especially for those of us who enjoy living an organized life. Since I did it yesterday, last month, a year ago I will always be able to do it into the future. I got my pay cheque every month for ten years, and there will always be a cheque for me when I work for the Lord. Oh yeah! It is an illusion to think that everything in life is guaranteed. I trust in God that He will care for me and if the moment comes when I am handed a yellow slip, voted out of position, the interruption will not devastate me for I expect things this side of heaven to be mortal - I live trusting in God that He will provide for me.

Science has opened the way for cures, replacement parts, and extended life. We believe in science, rejoicing in the interventions that have resulted in life where there would have been death. My family experienced this when my grandson was born last November. He came very close to death and had it not been for the skill of the doctors, the technology of modern medicine, and the mercy of God he would not have made it. Science with all its benefits, however, has not solved the mortality issue - we still need Jesus.

Living in a world of fantasy seems to relieve stress in the lives of some. Fantasy is living in a make-believe world of walking into the sunset or realizing fame without hard work. The entertainment side of life, especially if feasted upon, can keep one adrift from reality or living a real life.

The Bible encourages us to number our days and gain a heart of wisdom. (Ps. 90:12) Even though our lives may span about seventy years, (Ps.90:10) we realize that there are no guarantees. It is the quality of life, the life living in hope with Jesus Christ that extends beyond the now into time beyond. Realizing in the present the immortality Jesus wants to give me at His coming gives me hope, rest, peace, joy and fulfillment. (1Cor.15:50-54)

As educators we live in the atmosphere of youth who have a sense of immortality but we, realizing our mortality, can have the assurance of immortality in Jesus and can open our hand toward students helping them to realize the same.