

by
Maria
Morales



Never in history has the need to pass on the love of learning been more important than now. We live in a postmodern world of technology where information is literally at our fingertips. Where our phones and tablets have replaced our books and even Bibles. I see this phenomenon in my own family. We would be at a restaurant having a conversation when a question arises. Naturally, we must know the answer right there on the spot. So, someone whips out their phone (which is already on the table) and in just a few seconds we have the answer. We can rest at peace now with full assurance that the world is not going to end because, well, now we know.

Having information easily available is a great aid and blessing to our teachers, students, pastors and leaders. It takes what could be hours and hours of research and reduces it to a fraction of its time. With just a push of a few buttons we have endless resources within our reach, a privilege our parents' generation did not have. But what are we losing in its place? How does this affect the future of our children's generation and more importantly the Church?

As my husband Miguel and I talk to education directors throughout Latin America and even the United States I have noticed a pattern. People are looking for the easiest and fastest way to get a degree or certificate. They want a piece of paper that will validate what they "know" without taking the time to learn and apply it. Kind of sounds like an oxymoron to me. We have lost the desire to study and examine God's word. Our churches are trading discipleship for an "experience" and Bible Study for "self-help" chats. I believe this is one of the reasons we see so many unbiblical fads in the church today.

Throughout history we have seen the importance that different generations have placed on education. The Greeks established the first institution of higher education in Europe. The church in the Middle Ages established centers of advanced education that later became known as universities. The Renaissance brought forth a new age and new ideas of education in philosophy, religion, arts

and the sciences. Yet having entered the 21st century many have confused the memorization of facts and the ease of information with learning. Learning is much more than that. Learning is acquiring knowledge and skills that ultimately produce change in attitude and behavior. In other words, learning produces transformation.

The church has been significantly impacted by this current trend. In the States, Christian Universities have eliminated or are no longer prioritizing their ministerial training programs. In its place, many districts are offering weekend crash courses to train their ministers. In Latin America, many seek to complete a training program not with a desire to learn, but simply of obtaining a diploma or fulfilling a requirement for credentials as quickly as possible. Some Bible school students discontinue their learning and training process after obtaining their first level of credentialing. It seems that for some attending Bible school is simply a means to an end.

As missionaries, we have a significant role in nurturing a desire to learn. It is our responsibility to instill in those that God has placed under our ministry a life of growth in knowledge and love of God. Jesus is our best example. He spent a little over three years investing in the lives of His disciples. Jesus says, "take my yolk upon you and learn from me" (Mt. 11:29). We "learn Christ" by hearing, reading, and obeying His word (Eph. 4:20-24). Proverbs 1:5 says, "let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance. As we move forward in our ministries may we awaken the love of learning in those that God has placed in our paths.