

## **The Parable of the Mighty Whitey Oak**

Once upon a time, a small acorn fell to the forest floor. As it nestled among the leaves, it spent its first winter waiting. When the spring sun warmed the air and rains moistened the soil, the acorn sent out a root below and a shoot above.

The small tree established itself. Gradually the oak began to enjoy more space as older trees died away. Its waistline also grew with the increase in water and nutrients.

Over a few hundred years, this sturdy oak occupied a prominent place in the woodlands. His branches housed countless broods of birds. Its acorns fed deer, squirrels, and turkeys.

About a hundred years ago, however, this mighty tree began noticing changes. At first his chestnut neighbors took ill and fell to the ground. These trees had worked with Whitey's family to feed the wildlife and provide wood for people to warm themselves. Now the oaks would have to carry more of this load.

A while later, some of his offspring were severely weakened by a new caterpillar with blue and red spots. They were not able to survive the harsh winter. The load on the old trees grew heavier.

A few years later, the stately monarch realized his ash friends were dying after a green beetle visited each one. The Ash family had also helped provide wood and food, but no more.

In place of these once-established givers, new invasive neighbors moved in. They grew very fast but the wood of ailanthus was of little use. Its seeds fed nothing. These trees occupied space and absorbed nutrients needed by Whitey and his few remaining helpers.

As the aged oak took stock, he lamented the ecosystem his children would grow up in. They would have to compete against these fast growers and carry the responsibility of feeding the forest and providing raw materials. The old oak prayed for things to improve somehow.

The situation experienced by our oaken friend reminds us of how our culture has changed around us. A country that once taught the Bible to its children and looked to God's Word for national guidance is radically different from the one in which we live today.

Many Christian influences in schools, media, government and athletics have been replaced by politically correct and atheistic viewpoints. In Europe, it's even worse. For the first time since the Dark Ages, less than 50% of Europeans identify as Christian. The cultural costs are obvious.

While Christians historically protected religious freedom and championed human liberty, many atheists and non-Christians do not. Many of these invasive worldviews fail to care for society's poor and infirm.

Thankfully, we have an opportunity to impact our cultural environment in a way the oak did not. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the most transformative power on earth. We just need to share Jesus with others. In the interest of our children and the entire forest of our culture, let's work together to reach our society with the Good News!

**George Bowers – Executive Board member**

**Weekly Prayer Request**

Pray for the Youth and Adults who are leaving on the CBC Youth Mission Trip to Guatemala on Friday. Pray for their physical and personal safety and for much good fruit to be produced on this trip. Pray that their own faith will be strengthened and that they will be a good witness to all with whom they come in contact.

**Please pray for the following pastors and churches.**

New Haven Congregation in Sparta, NC and Pastor Robert Reed  
New Life Congregation in Mt. Solon, VA seeking pastoral leadership

**CBC Prayer Committee**