

## **Kloud Kids** by Gramps Curtis

**“He spelled it wrong, Ross. Look.** There's no K in 'cloud',” Hope Tappin told her silver-haired husband, both seated about 4 rows back in the sizable sanctuary packed with adults. Everyone was starving for answers on how to successfully reach out to youth.

The youth pastor stepped to the podium, welcomed everyone and invited Sam Henton to lead all hearts in prayer for this terribly needed blending of burdens for the youth and their spiritual and emotional future. Sam finished with an amen that was echoed by all in attendance.

Pointing at the easel and poster on the platform a few steps from him, Pastor Tom began with, “You'll all learn in a little bit, why I spelled it with a K. I assure you, it was intentional,” he said with a touch of a smile.

“I know your time is valuable today as it is every day. So I'll try to be just as brief as possible. I want to talk about a stampede. Yes. A stampede. The Bible talks about one. It begins in Matthew 8:30. The details of that horrible incident in history is repeated in two other gospels. The reason for my sharing this message with you, is that you and I are in a stampede. Or more accurately, on the fringe of one that is gaining intensity even as you and I are in this room.”

“As the youth pastor of this church, I believe many church leaders and parents are turning their heads from the stampede and labeling it as a lost cause. I looked up a fancy word I seldom use, but it seems to be appropriate at this time. The word is AMBIVALENCE. Ambivalence is the force; the energy that drives this stampede to the same terrible destruction as the one in Matthew. The dictionary says that 'ambivalence is a state of uncertainty or fluctuation, especially when caused by inability to make a choice or by a simultaneous desire to say or do two opposite or conflicting things.’”

“Pastor Tom continued, “This uncertainty causes youth to seek the company of other youth throughout each day, in school and everywhere; easily 8 or more hours every day. The challenge of this online community; this online social network, can be visualized as a cloud; a misty group that seems to have no leader and certainly no defined goal or purpose. For emphasis, I call this a KLOUD OF KIDS.”

“Now do you remember I said that you and I were on the fringe of this growing stampede; this Kloud of Kids? Each of us in this room are likely to be sucked into this kloud and share in the ambivalence unless we declare to Heaven and those around us that God has infinitely more power and love for our future generations, and our's also.”

“Each one of us who truly love the Lord and believe He is All-powerful, must reach into that Kloud of Kids with our heart, to the point of tears, and see no one in the stampede wants to be there. Their only hope is to find someone who truly cares. Can you hear their heart cries above the thundering hoof beats and clouds of dust and confusion? The dictionary word for that is EMPATHY. We must have feelings for each youth as God's creation. Each one is a gift to this church and us as a church family.”

Pastor Tom paused a moment, and took a noticeable swallow that told everyone that what was to follow would be especially important. It was.

“I want to tell you all a big secret. It's certainly no secret that most silver-haired folks are turned off by all this computer toys and gadgetry. These tech tools have me buffaloed quite often too. But the big secret is that silver-haired folks are the best people to reach into that herd of hurting hearts. Did you hear that? The two generations that need each other the most, are separated by all the technology stuff.”

“You can reach into that stampede and rescue one precious soul at a time, by sharing ideas to reach the youth in real love. Partner with other adults that have Heaven-sent ideas too. That partnering; that harmony, turns empathy into sympathy. Do you want to be used mightily by God in the lives of youth today. It takes junk. It takes grownups that use broken pieces of computers as parables to teach God's incredible love and leadership.