

OUR CHILDREN, OUR BLESSINGS
Prov. 31:28a; Eph. 6:1-4; Mark 10:13-16

Int. In September 1990, the largest gathering of world leaders in history assembled at the United Nations to attend the World summit for children. Led by 71 heads of state and ministers, the World summit adopted a Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and a Plan of Action.

Summit like this tells us that children are very important in the life and survival of our world. To ensure that the children will take their place in our society, the parents, the family, the government and the church are challenged to bless their children. For us to be able to respond to the challenge ably let us reflect on several things.

I. HOW DOES GOD SEE CHILDREN?

The Word of God through the Psalmist said, that, "Children are a gift from God, ' Ps. 127:3. Their present with us then are not accident nor the result of our whims and desires. They were given to us by God. God has a purpose and plan for them. In fact God's eye is focus on them. Proof of what I am saying, look at what God has done.

He annointed the shepherd boy, David, as king rather than his elder brothers because God look not as a man does but on the heart. (I Sam.16:7)

When Jeremiah complained that he was too young for prophetic ministry, God assured him that he would be with him, putting his words in Jeremiah's mouth. (Jer. 1:7-9)

Through timothy's mentor, Paul. God exhorted him to not "let anyone look down" on him because he was young, but to "set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. (I Tim.4:12)

About the Pharisees, Jesus instructed that God had "hidden... things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children" (Matt. 11:25). And to his disciples an indignant Jesus rebuked: "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these, I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it (Mk.10:14-15), and furthermore he warned: "If anyone should cause one of these little ones to lose faith in me, it would be better for that person to have a large millstone tied around his neck and be drowned in the deep sea." (Mtt. 18:6

This is how God see children! God love's them and he cares for them. Christ himself blessed the little children. Their humility and faith were traits he desired of all those who wished to enter his kingdom. If Christ himself valued the children highly, we cannot do any less.

II. YES, IF GOD VALUES THE CHILDREN VERY HIGHLY, WE CANNOT DO ANY LESS.

He sees to it, that every child in normal circumstances will have his or her parents, who by nature have been given the responsibility to see to it that his best interest be given him.

The importance of the parents and their role in child rearing is illustrated by an experiment made by King Frederick II of Prussia. He attempted to raise children without maternal affection. He wanted to find out what kind of speech children would have when they grew up if they spoke to no one beforehand. so he gave them foster mothers and nurses to suckle the children, to bathe and to wash them but in no way to hug them or to speak to them, for he wanted to learn whether they would speak the Hebrew language, which was the oldest, or Greek, or Latin, or Arabic, or perhaps the language of their parents, of whom they have been born. But the experiment failed, because the children all died. For they could not live without the petting and joyful faces and loving words of their foster mothers.

Such an experiment of long ago could be complimented by the result of a 1978 survey which revealed that the main causes of loneliness usually have their origins in childhood. Children who were less than six years old of age when parents were divorced were by far the loneliest as adults.

These findings are beacons for parents to be pro-active in initiating the direction, growth, discipline and training of their children. When parents and or family are not pro-active in this endeavor, they surely will just be reacting to what has already molded or directed the life of their children. Mostly, these reactions are to solve a problem already there. When we analysed the causes of these problems, we find out they could have been avoided if we have given them guidance, instruction and example for them to consider. Our in-action to pro-active opportunities of molding our children, is one way of giving a waiver for others to mold your children.

Our Filipino forebears have always use the obvious in illustrating to parents the urgency of their responsibility to their children. They say, when the bamboo is young, it is pliant and easy to mold according to what we want. This principle is basic in making bamboo yoked for our farmers. They prepare a molder and then gently placed the young bamboo to the molder and let it grow as directed and guided by the molder. When the bamboo is old and ready for harvest, it is cut and prepared for used. The molded bamboo yoked will stand whatever pressure, thus it is very useful for the farmers. Try making a bamboo yoke out of a mature bamboo. It is impossible to do it. If you insist you will break the bamboo and destroy it. Our grandparents would say, "mold your children while they are young and pliant like the bamboo, and with God's help you will never regret what you have done."

III- GOD ALSO SEES CHILDREN AS PARTICIPANTS IN THE FULFILMENT OF GOD'S PLAN FOR THEM.

In his words through St. Paul, he urges and command the children to obey their parents. Christian parents are God's partners, and as such their authority to mold, discipline and trained their children emanates from God. Thus the parents main concern for you are God's concern. When they act, as the Lord guides them, will always be for your best interest.

Proof of this truth is that children who obey their parents, as the Lord promises, will be blessed with long life.

Concl. Let me close with a story of a women's group studying Prov. 31. The group leader was emphasizing that one of the result and reward of a a loving and caring mother is clearly indicated in verse 28, "Her children will rise up early in the morning and call her blessed." One mother complained saying, how I wish that is so, but when my children rise up in the morning, their first word would be "Where are my uniforms mommy?"

This only means that our task is not easy? Let us not be discourage, parents, for in due time, I mean God's time our labors will not be in vain.

A word for our children, your obedience are our inspiration and your gratitude our rewards. This is the Word of the Lord.

Who are these superlative Christians in the line of Paul, that prompted him to write his first letter to the Corinthians. They are strong believers in Christ as their Savior and Lord. They are confident in the scriptures, in fact so knowledgeable that they think other anyone who differs from them are wrong. Many of them are well-gifted, they speak in tongues, they performed miracles, they had great faith, they were wise, the list was impressive. They are saying, anything is possible through the gifts, that is just the way it is. Because of their feeling and thought that they are better than others, they are always criticizing the not so perfect Christians. They even look down on those Christians with a gift as important gifts from the Holy Spirit. So they revealed superlatives among the Christians, church, and ultimately started the creation of other groups, making the Corinthian church a divided church.