



GOSPEL DEFENCE LEAGUE

P O Box 587, SEA POINT, 8060 RSA
TEL/FAX (021) 510-6854

November/December 2007

Dear Friends,

We wish you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, praying that God may bless all your festivities. Jesus Christ is the Word become flesh who dwelt among us, and as Christmas approaches, we feel again His Spirit of peace and goodwill, which lifts us above our normal life. All the commercialism of Christmas cannot banish it. That is why those who hate God attack Christmas and try to expunge its real meaning from public consciousness. In America, for instance, "Christmas" signs have been removed from schools because someone claimed to be offended, and whole school districts have banned carols and Christmas trees. In Scotland, a hospital would not allow Christmas CDs to be given to sick children, and Members of Parliament were told not to send out "Merry Christmas" cards. Incidences like these are increasing worldwide, and the media help to secularise the celebration of the birth of the Son of God. 1)

"God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) It was foretold that He would be *"a shoot... from the stump of Jesse,"* (Isaiah 11:1) that he would be born of the kingly line of David. Though He was conceived of the Holy Spirit, he was firmly embedded in a human family. It shows how God uses the families of man for His divine purpose, and how He prepared the way for Jesus through a family member, His cousin John who, being of the priestly lineage of Aaron, even baptised Him.

The Family

God works through families to carry out His plans. But today the 'Family' is not regarded with the same respect as in the past. Generally speaking, family pride is at an all time low. When introducing themselves, many people identify themselves only by their first names, and with this they indicate that they have no strong identity. But a person who disregards his/her heavenly and earthly parentage becomes almost anonymous.

It is especially sad to see children and young people who regard family identity as unimportant, for it makes them disoriented and often wayward. In recent times shocking reports have appeared in the newspapers. *"Our children are raping each other,"* claims the Sunday Times. Rape, it says, is the most extreme kind of bullying, and almost half of all reported cases are perpetrated by youngsters under 18 years. 2) Not surprisingly, the same paper speaks of a *"School pregnancy shock."* A grade 11 class of 30 girls at Boijane High School near Vryburg, we read, *"boasts the dubious distinction of having 25 teen mothers."* Some 85 girl-mothers of this school get their "income" by collecting the government's R200 child support grants. In George, nearly one third of the girls of the Thembelethu High School have infants, and in four provinces, (Natal, Free State, Gauteng and Eastern Cape) 15 562 babies were conceived at school during the past year. - What a sad state of personal morality, family life, and state education. Even at Oprah Winfrey's elite *Academy for Girls* near Johannesburg five girls were indecently assaulted (by a staff member).

God's priority for the family is that a child be trained up *"in the way he should go."* (Proverbs 22:6) Parents and teachers should *"tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power and the wonders He has done... so that the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God..."* (Psalm 78:4-8) Parents and teachers should *impress God's commandments on their children, and to raise them to love the Lord their God with all their heart.* (Deuteronomy 6:1-13) These are God's standards, but today children are often exposed to other influences. Schools are no longer protected areas. In Cape Town, for instance, a homosexual costume ball has been booked by the *"Mother City Queer Project"* at the Cape Town High School. It is advertised as a *"Matric Dance – Back to School."* 3) Though this will be during the Christmas holidays and cover some of the school's urgent financial needs, what about the immorality of it? Does not God condemn it? But today, even the Church does not speak with an undivided voice. The former archbishop Desmond Tutu thinks God approves of homosexuality. He says: *"If God, as they say, is homophobic, I wouldn't worship that God."* 4)

"Another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what He had done... they followed and worshipped various gods. They provoked the Lord to anger." (Judges 2:10-12)

God wants us to be part of *"the whole family in heaven and on earth."* (Eph. 3:15) He wants us to know that He is our Father and we are His children. He tells us to obey His law, advance His kingdom, and enjoy His blessings here, now, and for ever. He has set us into families and commanded that we raise our children well. But the enemies of God, the

feminists, gay rights activists, divorce lawyers, and cultural Marxists, relentlessly assault the family. As the family is breaking down, Christian society is being destroyed and the survival of our civilization threatened. Too many children grow up fatherless, and the tide of juvenile misery is rising. Teen suicide is a reality, and fatherlessness, both divine and human, is at the heart of almost every social ill from educational failure to drug abuse and violent crime.

Gender Mainstreaming

It is not only children but women, too, who are targeted for family destruction. At the Fourth World Women's Conference of the United Nations held in Beijing in 1995, the feminists came up with a new idea called "*Gender Mainstreaming*." This policy aims not only at giving women equal opportunities with men. It wants to equalise men and women altogether. A baby, say some Gender Mainstreamers, is not born male or female. It is born a human being. When he grows up he can himself decide what his gender is. - This thinking has greatly strengthened the homosexual movement. For instance, the British Labour Party has now decreed that divisive terms such as 'husband', 'wife,' and 'spouse' be removed from official forms and replaced with 'partner'. 5) California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has signed a law (SB777) which will purge from text books such discriminative terms as 'mother' and 'father', 'mom' and 'dad'. This law also allows boys and girls to use one another's rest and locker rooms depending on who/what they feel they are. 6)

This is deliberate gender confusion. It is contrary to the Law of Nature and to the Moral Law. God created mankind male and female, and gave to the family a patriarchal order, saying: "*The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*" (Eph. 5:23,24) This does not mean that the woman is inferior, but that husbands and wives have different roles, and that the man carries, under God, the ultimate responsibility for his family. The enemies of God, however, want to reinvent humanity and establish a sort of totalitarian Communism in matters of sex and gender.

Through gender mainstreaming women are pushed into top positions in business, politics, and culture. The aim is not only to give them equal opportunities, but also to keep them from having children, for the new world order calls for a massive global population reduction. We hear much talk about abortion rights, reproductive legislation, inalienable and biological rights, and all this is designed to keep women from being mothers. - In Germany, a television presenter by the name of Eva Herman, an acclaimed career woman, came to the conclusion that emancipated women have become professional slaves and that their husbands and children are neglected. The constant competition of the sexes, she said, makes normal relationships between men and women almost impossible. She called upon women to return to God-ordained gender roles, to allow the man to be strong and protective and enjoy children and family blessings. She compared the poor family life of today with the rich family life of the past, and was promptly dismissed from her job.

In South Africa, too, young people are seemingly gender-mainstreamed. At a recent camp organised by 'Stone Dragon Education' for a Cape girls' high school, the pupils had to discuss their identity as 'sharks', 'angels', or 'angel-sharks.' For this purpose they received a booklet featuring on its cover a woman's boot firmly placed on a man's face. A work book contained pictures of Greek and Egyptian goddesses (Athena, Artemis, Aphrodite, Isis etc) sporting leather straps, steel finger-nails, flaming swords, and occult symbols. The camp exercises were masculine.

At this Christmas time we need to be particularly aware of the onslaught onto our Christian faith and culture, and especially the onslaught onto our families. We need to remember that just as God selected certain families to carry out His plan through Jesus and John, so He wants our families to carry out the Cultural Mandate (Genesis 1:28) and the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). If our families are confused, broken, unhealthy, or in disarray, God cannot work through them. God needs people of strong faith and family ties, solid members of "*the whole family of God in heaven and on earth.*" He needs people who know that He is their Father and Jesus their Brother. He needs people who are true children of God. Let us thankfully remember that when Christ came into this world, He gave "*to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*" (John 1)

May God bless you richly,

D. Scarborough.

Footnotes:

1. Edgar J Steele, "Weapons of Christmas Destruction", www.ConspiracyPenPal.com, 15.12.2004.
2. The Sunday Times of 18 November 2007, front page headline.
3. Cape Times, School's out and proud as city's gay bash celebrates its new theme, October 23, 2007.
4. Tutu chides Church for gay stance. Interview with BBC Radio 4, 18.11.2007
5. Labour kills off 'husbands' and 'wives', Daily Mail, 18.11.2007
6. Alan Stang, Republican Governor hands California Kids to Homosexuals, October 16, 2007
Also: Bob Unruh, California 'Mom', 'Dad' ban garners international scorn, World Daily, 17.10.2007

REFORMING OUR FAMILIES

From Biblical Principles for Africa, by Dr Peter Hammond, chapter 10, shortened.

A Solemn Responsibility

Parents have an awesome responsibility. We are to bring our children up “*in the training and instruction of the Lord.*” (Ephesians 6:4) We are to “*train a child in the way he should go...*” (Proverbs 22:6) We are to manage our own family well and see that our children learn to obey with proper respect. (1 Timothy 3:4)

We are to “*tell the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power and the wonders He has done... so that the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget His deeds, but would keep His commands. They would not be... stubborn and rebellious... whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to Him.*” (Psalm 78:4-8)

The Bible tells us to not just raise God-fearing sons, but sons who will become God-fearing fathers, who in turn will raise God-fearing sons to become fathers who will love, honour, trust and obey God. We are to raise disciples who raise disciples so that God’s generational blessings are passed down and the chain is unbroken.

The First Priority of Parents

One of the most important passages in the Bible comes in Deuteronomy 6, right after the restating of the Ten Commandments. It contains the most important statement and command and the first priority of parents:

“These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe... so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all His decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey, so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in the land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord the God of your fathers promised you. Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates... Be careful that you do not forget the Lord who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. Fear the Lord your God, serve Him only...” (Deuteronomy 6:1-13)

Here, at a most important occasion, after reminding all Israel of the Ten Commandments, the uniqueness of our Sovereign Lord is proclaimed. Then what our Lord Jesus identified as the greatest commandment is given: “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.*” This is the summary of all the commandments. And as our Lord reminded us: “*If you love Me, you will obey what I command.*” (John 14:15)

Educating the Next Generation

The very first application of this, the greatest commandment, is to “*impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*” The education and discipleship of the next generation is given as the very first application of God’s Law and the highest priority of God’s people. We are not merely to teach a head knowledge, but a wholehearted love for the Lord, not just with all our heart, but with all our soul and with all our strength. Body, mind and spirit, in every aspect of our lives, we are to radiate and reflect our love for our Lord. These commandments should be discussed morning, noon and night - from the first thing in the morning to the last thing at night.

God’s Word is to be such an integral part of our lives that everything we do with our hands and everything that we think with our minds is to be guided and governed by Scripture. Our homes should also reflect the Lordship of Christ in all areas of life and everything within our gates, even our gardens. People should be able to tell the difference Christ makes in our lives. If we fail to do this, we may reach the disgraceful and disastrous situation described in Judges 2:10: “*Another generation grew up, who knew neither the Lord nor what He had done...*”

We are in danger of this today since many children of Christian parents are more enthusiastic for Pokémon and Harry Potter (which are occultic) than for the Lord Jesus and the Bible.

“My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also reject you as My priests; because you have ignored the Law of your God, I will also ignore your children.” (Hosea 4:6)

We are commanded in Scripture *“only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them.”* (Deuteronomy 4:9)

“Their children, who do not know this Law, must hear it and learn to fear the Lord your God...” (Deuteronomy 31:13)

Failures Never to Forget

The Bible includes many frightening examples of tragic failure by Christian leaders to adequately disciple and discipline their children in the ways of the Lord. The High Priest, Eli, failed to restrain his sons (who were priests) from dishonourable and disastrous conduct. (1 Samuel 3:13) The children of the prophet Samuel also behaved in a disgraceful way, accepting bribes and perverting justice. (1 Samuel 8:3)

King David’s failure to discipline his rebellious sons, Amnon and Absalom, had the most disastrous consequences for the kingdom, even leading to civil war.

Of the stories of the Exodus from Egypt and Israel’s wanderings in the wilderness the Scripture says: *“These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us...”* (1 Corinthians 10:11)

The Scriptures also warn us of a time that will come when *“people will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying its power... always learning but never able to acknowledge the truth.”* (2 Timothy 3:2-7)

That description could so accurately be applied to much of what is going on in our society today. Notice how the Scripture places those who are *“abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful”* amongst some of the most brutal and vicious sins.

Respect for Authority

Indeed, God’s Law declares: *“Cursed is the man who dishonours his father or his mother. Then all the people shall say Amen!”* (Deuteronomy 27:16)

“The eye that mocks a father, that scorns obedience to a mother, will be pecked out by the ravens of the valley, will be eaten by the vultures.” (Proverbs 30:17)

Our Lord Jesus declared: *“Honour your father and mother and anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.”* (Matthew 15:4)

Tragically, respect for parents and elders is becoming increasingly rare today, even in Christian circles. Yet, God’s Law makes clear that we are to *“rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly”* (Leviticus 19:32) and *“listen to your father, who gave you life, and do not despise your mother when she is old.”* (Proverbs 23:22)

These commands are not just to young children. No matter what our age, whether we are living under our parents’ roof or running our own household, we are still responsible to honour and respect our parents in the Lord. (Exodus 20:12) *“Each of you must revere his mother and father, and you must observe My Sabbaths. I am the Lord your God.”* (Leviticus 19:3)

In the light of the overwhelming pressures which assail families, and the relentless temptations that surround young people today, parents must take extraordinary steps to ensure that our children are raised in the love and fear of the Lord. We need to lay solid foundations and form good habits, which will discipline, disciple, strengthen and prepare our children for lives of godliness and productive service in our congregations, communities and countries.

Bible before Breakfast

It is important to have the Bible before breakfast, the Scripture before Supper, and Devotions after dinner. Family devotions need not be long but could incorporate memorisations of the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Apostles’ Creed. One of the most important times of any Christian family with children should be Bible stories and prayer before bed. Parents should also make Sundays special and teach their children a love and respect for God’s Word, for the Church, and for the Lord’s Day. Bishop JC Ryle challenged us: *“Common sense, reason and conscience will combine, I think, to say that if we cannot spare God one day in a week, we cannot be living as those ought to live who must die one day.”* And the Puritan writer, Richard Baxter, advised: *“See that the Lord’s Day be spent in holy preparation for eternity.”*

Let us then disciple our children by word and deed, by our lives and our lips, by education and by example – consistently. (Deuteronomy 6:6-7)

“Let the Word of Christ dwell in your heart richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom and as you sing Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or in deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.” (Colossians 3:16-17)

“Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; He is the faithful God, keeping His covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments.” (Deuteronomy 7:9)