

RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION FOR THE CHURCH LIFE

A Conference for the Perfecting of the Children's Work
October 15, 2011, Diamond Bar, California

Message #1

The Importance of the Children's Work in the Church

Scripture Reading: Deut. 6:7-9; Prov. 22:6; 2 Tim. 3:15; Acts 16:31; 1:14; Rom. 12:12

- I. In the past we did not focus on the children's work; however, if children's education is not developed, it will be difficult to have a healthy society—cf. Deut. 6:7-9; 11:18-20; Prov. 22:6; Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 3:15.**
- II. At the beginning, children's meeting was mainly to care for the saints who brought their children to the meeting; it was simply a child-care service; gradually, the matter of preparing teachers came in, and we compiled material:**
 - A. From our experience we feel that the children's work is very important; the children's work should not simply be babysitting in order for the saints to come to the meetings.
 - B. However, the children's work has another function, that is, to cultivate and nurture our next generation; this is worthy of our careful consideration and examination.
- III. The children's work has an additional function, which is to gain the families of the children—Acts 16:31; cf. Exo. 12:3-4; Gen. 7:1:**
 - A. Children like to make friends; it is particularly easy for children between the ages of six and twelve to make friends, and they listen to their friends:
 1. It is therefore easy for a child to lead another child; when the children sing hymns together, the gospel is operating and spreads from one child to another child.
 2. Our purpose, however, is not focused only on the children, but even more, through the children, we want to reach their parents and siblings.
 - B. From this we can see the importance of the children's work; the children's work is greatly related to the growth of the church.
- IV. There is not a definite way to take care of the children's work; there should not be only one aspect to the children's work:**
 - A. There should be many locations for the children's work, meetings can be held at different times, and we can use different methods to conduct the children's meetings; there should also be many goals, and the teaching material should also cover many aspects:
 1. Having many locations—their meetings must have many locations; every saint should open his home and have a children's meeting in his home.
 2. Having material—we have considered using videotaped material, which some localities use; we want to produce a video that shows children from various countries wearing their traditional dress and singing the hymns.

3. Having many purposes—we can also contact the children’s parents and preach the gospel to them and to their relatives; this is the principle of our gospel work; the more people we contact, the better.
 4. Having many ways—the households with children can take the initiative to open their homes and ask their children to invite other children in the neighborhood; the children can watch the children’s videotapes, sing children’s songs, or listen to a story; this is the way to have a children’s meeting once a week.
 5. Having different times—it is best to have different meeting times for the children’s meetings; the schedule should be flexible; we need to utilize the time when the children are out of school to have children’s meetings.
- B. The way to carry out the children’s work depends on the brothers taking the lead in the children’s work:
1. We should not make any special arrangements to get teachers for the children’s meetings in the meeting halls; rather, we should find a number of younger brothers and sisters who meet regularly to be the teachers; this kind of service does not require much manpower.
 2. We need to prepare material for the children’s meeting; we should not have children’s meetings without preparation:
 - a. The brothers taking the lead in the children’s work need to write and compile material; but the saints can decide the best way to use it.
 - b. If some saints are designated to prepare teaching material, the saints will not need to labor that much; we can give only some principles related to the children’s work; it is up to the saints to carry them out.
 3. The children’s meetings should be in many locations, at different times, and use different methods; we hope that all the saints will pray concerning this matter and not take it lightly; this requires everyone’s cooperation—Acts 1:14; Col. 4:2; Rom. 12:12.

[THIS OUTLINE WAS TAKEN FROM RAISING UP THE NEXT GENERATION FOR THE CHURCH LIFE,
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Message #2

**The Children's Work being to Build Children Up in
their Humanity to be Proper Human Beings**

Scripture Reading: 1 Tim. 3:7; Matt. 19:19; Prov. 22:6; 2 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 6:1-2, 4; Rom. 9:21, 23;
13:1

2 Tim. 2:20-21; Gal. 3:24; 1 Tim. 3:15; 1 Cor. 3:2

- V. Today, many young people have been damaged with respect to their character; it is because of this that we have a children's work for the children; we need to build up their character—1 Tim. 3:7; Acts 6:3; Prov. 28:20a:**
- A. The children must be built up as proper human beings; this is a matter of character, that is, behavior and habit—Matt. 5:16.
 - B. From their youth they must learn to honor their parents, love their brothers and sisters, and respect others—19:19.
 - C. We do not need to give the young ones too much knowledge of the Bible; we should rather build them up with the proper ethics and morality that will constitute a proper character—Prov. 22:6.
- VI. Character has very much to do with the Lord's service; consider those persons in the Bible whom God used; they were used by God because they possessed a character that was fit for His use—Rom. 12:1; Phil. 2:17; 2 Tim. 2:21; 4:11:**
- A. Since Abraham, Moses, and Paul all had an excellent character, God greatly used them; the destiny of our usefulness to the Lord hinges on our character—Acts 15:40; Luke 24:27; Matt. 1:2.
 - B. Character is a serious matter; the measure of grace we receive of the Lord and the degree to which the function of that grace is manifested are determined by the kind of character that we have—Eph. 4:7; 1 Pet. 4:10.
- VII. To build up a proper humanity is the way to prepare the children to be the best material to receive God's grace—Rom. 9:21, 23; 2 Tim. 2:20-21; 1 Pet. 2:5; Matt. 16:18:**
- A. It is best to help the children grow up in their humanity by helping them know what a proper human being is; how to honor their parents, and how to be a proper child—Eph. 6:1-2; Col. 1:10; Prov. 22:6.
 - B. Since our families are part of the fallen race, we parents must exercise God's ordination to restrict our children by ethical teachings, regulations, and discipline.
 - C. For proper human living in your home, you must teach your children to behave properly by honoring their parents, caring for their brothers and sisters, respecting their neighbors, and not stealing—v. 6; Eph. 6:4.

- D. Because children are too young to behave according to Christ, they must be taught to behave according to culture; children are preserved by culture while they are growing up—Rom. 13:1; Gal. 3:23.
- E. In caring for their children, Christian parents need to preach the law to them; we should not first preach grace to the children; if we give them regulations according to the law, the law will keep them in custody for Christ—2 Tim. 3:15; Rom. 13:1; Gal. 3:24.

VIII. To compile material for the teachers, we need a number of brothers who know the truth and are also skilled in writing—1 Tim. 3:15; 2:4; Titus 1:1:

- A. We should give the five- and six-year-olds one thing and the seven- and eight-year-olds something else; we need some brothers and sisters who understand this principle to prepare the lessons—1 John 2:12-13.
- B. This requires the careful work of the brothers who compile the teaching material so that the children do not receive premature knowledge—1 Tim. 1:4; Mark 4:8, 11:
 - 1. The most important matter is to build up the humanity and character of the children; this is neglected by many parents today.
 - 2. There is the need for some brothers and sisters to spend the time to prepare lessons and instructions on how to use them—Rom. 12:7; cf. 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 John 2:27.
 - 3. We should not prepare uniform printed lessons to be read in each class; perhaps half a page of points, illustrations, and instructions is adequate; it should be easy to prepare lessons in this way.

IX. When many of us were young, we received too much knowledge that only damaged us; we were given many stories, but we were not given the proper verses in a practical way—1 Cor. 3:2; Titus 3:9; 1 Cor. 8:2-3:

- A. After hearing all the teachings and stories from the Bible, young ones become "slippery" so that nothing sticks to them; we must not spoil the young ones in this way.
- B. Those who have never heard the stories before are easily inspired by them; this is why we should withhold certain stories and simply help the children to know the things of humanity and of God in a practical way—Phil. 4:9.
- C. Then when they are saved and begin to attend the church meetings, what they hear will be new to them.
- D. We have to beware of two things; first, there is the possibility of premature spiritual knowledge; second, we can give away biblical truths too cheaply:
 - 1. Some teachers are too spiritual; they tell children teachings that are too high and too spiritual; this gives the children premature spiritual knowledge—1 Cor. 3:2.
 - 2. Other teachers treat spiritual things too lightly in an attempt to make the children understand; their speaking does not do justice to the spiritual weight of their subject; this gives away the truth too cheaply—John 5:39; 1 Tim. 6:19.

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Message #3

Having the Increase of the Church also through the Children

Scripture reading: Acts 1:8; 2:38-39; 1 Cor. 3:8; Luke 1:77; Matt. 13:3; Rom. 1:16

- X. Many years ago, we did not realize that the children are a big gospel work; we only cared to preach the gospel, while neglecting the fact that the children also are the fruit of the gospel—Acts 2:38-39; Matt. 28:19-20:**
- A. We may be doing our best to preach the gospel, but if we pay proper attention to the children's work, in time many more brothers and sisters will be properly brought up in the church:
1. Even if only half of the children came into the church life, we would have thousands of more saints meeting with us.
 2. This is a much more effective way to gain the increase than preaching the gospel; moreover, those who are gained in this way will have a good foundation.
- B. When children are saved, they become our young brothers and sisters; after they graduate from primary school, they become the seeds of the gospel in the junior high school—Matt. 13:3; John 12:24:
1. When we work in the schools, the young brothers and sisters become our inside helpers and bring their classmates to us; in this way, it is easier to work in the junior high schools.
 2. The young brothers and sisters in a junior high school can be likened to little seeds; they are waiting to sprout by responding to our call and bringing their classmates to salvation.
- C. When they enter into high school, they again become seeds of the gospel; during their three years of high school, we can bring three times as many people to salvation.
- D. When these young saints finish high school and enter college, they are seeds of the gospel in their college; in this way the number of people saved is continually multiplied.
- E. Suppose these children begin to be cultivated in the children's meeting at the age of six and are saved, and they continue to be cultivated through three years of junior high school, three years of high school, and four years of college; in all, they will receive a total of sixteen years of spiritual education and cultivation.
- F. We should not do a work merely among the children in the church; our work must include the children outside the church; this is the children's gospel work—cf. Rom. 9:24:
1. Every children's home meeting should frequently preach the gospel and invite their relatives and the children of their neighbors; even though some parents will not come, they will allow their children to come.
 2. We believe that many people will be brought in through the children's gospel work; the children's meetings will open up a way to gain people, especially the parents of the other children.

- 3. We should not limit our work to the children of the saints who are in our meetings; we also need to invite the children of our neighbors and friends; furthermore, we hope that every home will be open for the gospel.
- G. If we continue the children's work, we will be unable to estimate the long-term results; if we labor on the children, our numbers will continually grow—Acts 2:47.
- H. We must realize that the children's work is a crucial burden; every locality must be aggressive in the children's work, because there is a greater future in the children's work than in the campus work:
 - 1. When we preach the gospel, we frequently have to go out to gain people; we even go to the campuses to gain people; these people are along the roads and hedges—Luke 14:23.
 - 2. There is only one group of people who are not along the roads: the children in our own homes.
 - 3. The people along the roads might come today or tomorrow, but the people in our own homes will always be there; furthermore, our children can bring other children.

XI. Our work for the Lord should have a long-term view; six years go by very quickly; soon the children in first grade will be young brothers and sisters; when they enter junior high school, we can preach the gospel to their classmates in junior high—Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 3:8; 15:58:

- A. While in junior high, they will bring some classmates to salvation—Luke 1:77; Matt. 13:3.
- B. After graduation, they will proceed to high school and become the gospel seed in high school; in their three years of high school they will bring three times as many students to the Lord.
- C. After these brothers and sisters graduate, they will go on to college and become the gospel seed in college; this kind of multiplying is incredible—cf. John 12:24.
- D. These children would be gospel seeds in junior high school, they would be gospel seeds in high school, and they would be gospel seeds in college; they would be seeds the entire time that they are in school—Rom 1:16.

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