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Newsletter

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Dasha Petrenko/Shutterstock.com

Being like children and caring for them: Two sides of the same coin

Some time ago I was reading an article that was presenting some ideas and reflections on the Sermon on the Mountain preached about 2000 years ago. That sermon in Matthew 5:3-12, that most Christians call "The Beatitudes", has been defined also as the essence of justice and social fairness, the core target of Christian behavior and life-style.

What particularly caught my attention was the way that in the Young Reader's Study Bible "adapted" the Beatitudes. Here is the text:

HAPPY ARE THE CHILDREN

Who know they need Me; I will give them My kingdom.

HAPPY ARE THE CHILDREN

Who are sad; I will comfort them.

HAPPY ARE THE CHILDREN

Who are gentle to others; I will bless them here on earth and in heaven, too.

HAPPY ARE THE CHILDREN

Who "hunger" to be good: I will fill them up with goodness.

HAPPY ARE THE CHILDREN

Who are kind and forgiving; I will forgive them, too.

HAPPY ARE THE CHILDREN

With pure, unpolluted hearts; someday they will see Me face to face.

HAPPY ARE THE CHILDREN

Who try to stop fights; they are just like Me!

HAPPY ARE THE CHILDREN

Who are mistreated because of Me; They will be with Me always in My Forever Life.

Actually, the Beatitudes presented by Jesus emphasize childlike abilities and skills as conditions to enter into the Kingdom. If we give a second look on those qualities we will notice that these special conditions are "natural" and specific of children. Today's global trends, such as discrimination, intolerance, hate, lack of trust, are not attitudes that we normally find in children.

Children are confident and trustful; they feel their need of support and guidance.

They are naïve, innocent and loving; they have no prejudices or discriminations; they share feelings and thoughts freely and simply. Jesus speaks about unpolluted hearts, peacemaker, tumbling down barriers and hatred among people, suffering for discrimination or mistreatments and these aspects, either positives or negatives, are part of children's lives.

It is sad to notice that today the situation is not better than 2000 years ago. Children didn't have any rights and today, despite

Continue reading on page 2



Being like children



CHM in the Southern Asia-Pacific Division

How many children are listed?

More than 200.000

How many countries/Unions belong to your division?

14 countries: Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Timor Leste, Indonesia, and Philippines

Which activities are you doing for/with children?

Teen Ministry, Outreach Programs such as Five Loaves Ministry and Plan Learn Serve run by the lay members, Little Trumpet Ministry is focused on building leadership and empowering children to become future leaders, Children's evangelistic meetings run by children

What are your challenges?

- The financial resources and disparity between economic resources
- A person may hold many positions and departments and as a result, CHM work could easily be marginalized and less prioritized
- Cultural differences
- Modernization and secularism
- Lack of strong commitment to the Children of special needs and family with special needs

Which dreams and plans do you have?

It is my dream that children will take up the Christ's perspective and Christian worldview so that they may be able to become resilient individuals to the worldly influences and be God's witnesses.

Which products did you produce?

Teen Ministry materials, inspiring children book, parenting seminars ppt, special needs ministry seminar ppt

What is your program for 2016/2017?

- SID = Schools in Discipleship
- NDR/IEL programs and seminar

Which books would you recommend for reading?

Raising Spiritual Champion, Special Needs Ministry, and Steps to Christ

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of growing concern, hard work, several laws, in some parts of the world children are still suffering, they are the first victims of injustice, disrespect and indifference. Children are born free and equal as adults, created in God's image, they keep being the most vulnerable in society.

As Christ-followers and believers we should do our best to be able to respect and foster children's rights and help them feel accepted and valued. Children are looking to us as models to understand what means to be disciples of Jesus.

We can also learn from children as Jesus advises and urge us in His word.

Jesus was a child-like person and he possessed the very qualities He loved in children. He was friendly, consistent, authentic, true, joyous, shows his feelings, easy to deal with different persons, spontaneous, generous, tender. Like children, he was genuine, transparent, friendly, simple, humble, trusting, etc. Because He himself was 'child-like', Jesus loved children. For this reason Jesus expects from us to be 'child-like' and 'child-loving'.

To love children as Jesus does means to understand them. It means to do all that is in our reach to respect them, to accept them as children, with their weaknesses and limitations. It is also to safeguard their rights and advocate for them in any way and at any time, spending time with them and enjoying their company by talking, listening to them, playing and relating with them as equals.

On the other hand we need to let go of our 'fussiness', 'conventionalism', 'superiority' and start being authentic as children are. As parents and adults, the "children first" attitude to preserve and highlight children's

rights should be one of our priorities to continue the mission Jesus started.

The role of churches towards children is to foster activities and programs in which every child is treasured and all children are given the opportunity to grow up as disciples of Jesus and reliable citizens, healthy in every dimension of their life, with a secure sense of belonging and with the conviction that they can make the difference in the world. This allows children to be regarded as full members and participants in the church from the beginning of their life. Thus, children must be given their own space in every area of the church's life: liturgy, Bible studies and pastoral care, and parent's participation with their children should be promoted and fostered.

Probably we are already familiar with these ideas and already adopting some of these concepts in our communities and churches but some more can and must be done to continue sharing with children Jesus' love and care for them.

"Just know this: What you will do among children is as close to the heart of God and central to his kingdom as anything we could mention." (W. Stafford, *Too Small to Ignore*) Let's continue caring children, as Jesus would do, letting them come to Him and giving them the value and support they deserve.



Elsa Cozzi

Children's Ministries Director
Inter-European Division

Jesus wants
all of me



Just like you

Jesus, I want to be just like You. I want to see what You see. I want to feel what You feel. Come into my heart. Make my heart Your home. Make me just like You.

"May the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely."

1 Thessalonians 5:23

**Out of the
mouths of
babes...**



A little girl screamed and came running into her mother. "There's a tiger in the garden!" The mother jumped up and tore back the curtains. A Saint Bernard was wondering slowly across the lawn.

"That's not a tiger", she said, "that's Billy Smith's dog from over the road. You know perfectly well it isn't a tiger. Go and ask God to forgive you for telling such a lie!" Obediently, the little girl went upstairs. A few minutes later she came down smiling.

"Well", said her mother, "did you ask God to forgive you for telling a lie?"

"Yes", she replied, "and God said it was okay." - "Okay?"

"Yes, God said the first time he saw Billy Smith's dog, he thought it was a tiger, too!"

Taken from Watts M., "Children on the Loose", Mill Hill, London, 2001

In Synergy God's Paradigm of Synergy

Have you ever seen children when they play on the seashore? Almost naturally, they begin to play together. Nobody organizes them to create their teamwork. The shovel, bucket, those who take the sand, those who "take the sea", those seeking to build. It is true, sometimes they quarrel and brawl, and pull away from each other, but have you noticed that then pretty fast they get back again to continue to build together? Behold, for me this is the sense of synergy: seek, act together, collide, divide and seek again. It is an experience that we all lived in our life. Whether we like it or not, we are made to live in synergy. Just consider the concept of family.

The family is the human paradigm of synergy. God delegates the family to become co-creator of life. The family generates the society and society generates the world. "Virtually" the family should provide the "harmonious development of the physical, mental, spiritual faculties", of the children. This is the result of a synergy context.

Also the church is a pattern

of synergy. The Church is a combination of functions, and the most appropriated concept is the "collaborative" one.

Yes, the word collaboration is synonymous of synergy where all the entities can join together for a common purpose: Unity. This invitation to Unity is a first step to empower the church, to foster dynamism, energy, in other words, to join strengths in order to combine them in unique synergy.

The main goal of our church's organization, divided into different departments, is to create this spirit of partnership that provides complementary settings. Although it is obvious that each department follows the objective for which it has been structured, the call to nurture this model of "working together" flows mainly from the fact that we have a common target: the members of the church. What makes the difference is not being able to consolidate more and more the structure of own departments at all levels of the church, but to be able to blend the different resources all departments are

called to offer to the church whose purpose is "to prepare God's people to serve and to build up the body of Christ." Ephesians 4:12.

I have to admit that sometimes there are children on the seashore who do not play with other children. They are used to play alone. The presence of others bother them. But they are still too young to understand that this is an attitude which limits their harmonious development within the society in which they live. What great responsibility do parents have in facilitating this educational development! The same responsibility falls on all of us that through the service offered with our department, we are called to contribute to the harmonious growth of a church whose goal is to prepare the world to meet its God. Together we can.



Corrado Cozzi
Communication Department
Inter-European Division

How do I equip parents to teach their children about faith at home?

According to the Bible, the home is to be the primary place for a child's spiritual nurturing. The church should do all it can to help parents reclaim this responsibility.

- **Inform parents.** Start by informing parents of their children's activities in Sabbath school and other children's programs. You'd be surprised how many parents don't know their children's Sabbath school teachers or are unaware of the goals of your children's ministry. Hold open houses and parent meetings at the beginning of the school year to educate parents about what is happening in children's ministry. Encourage parents to use the church's take-home papers throughout the week to reinforce Sabbath school lessons. Encourage parents to ask their children for any papers that come home from church. This will help ensure that take-home papers actually make it home. If you have a memorization program in your Sabbath school, mail the verses to parents at the beginning of each quarter so they can work on the verses with their children.
- **Newspapers.** Consider developing a monthly or quarterly family newsletter that includes information about what the children are studying in their programs. Include suggestions for family activities that help to reinforce the lessons and the real-life applications. Suggest ways for families to talk about spiritual matters together. Many books are available to help parents incorporate activities in everyday life that teach about God. Stock your church library with books such as *The Pray & Play Bible for Young Children* (Group Publishing, 1997) and *Fun Excuses to Talk*

About God (Group Publishing, 1997). Be sure to let parents know that your church has these resources.

- **Parent training.** Offer parents training in how to talk with their kids about spiritual topics. Parents want to do this but often don't know how, so they don't do it at all. Help them see that spiritual nurturing grows informally out of the everyday activities of life. Above all, be encouraging and available to parents who want to know more about teaching their children.



Taken from Beckwith I., *Quick Relief for Children's Ministry Leaders*. Group Publishing Inc., Loveland, Colorado, USA, 1998

Talk to your children as if you had confidence in their intelligence. Deal with them kindly, tenderly, lovingly. Tell them what God would have them do. Tell them that God would have them educated and trained to be laborers together with Him. When you act your part, you can trust the Lord to act His part.



- Child Guidance, p. 33

Victory March

Have you ever thought that adults' instructions were silly but obeyed anyway and things worked out? Read Joshua 6:1-25 to discover the strange orders God gave His people.

Think About It

- What do you think the Israelites thought about the crazy marching orders? What would the people of Jericho have thought of the silent marching day after day?
- Think of some things God asked you to do that you didn't understand. Did you obey? What happened?

Go deeper

Read Deuteronomy 6:3; Psalm 44:5-8;
John 14:23; 2 Corinthians 10:3-5; Hebrews 11:30.



Prayer Starter

Think of something in the Bible that you don't understand. Thank God that His Word is true, even if it doesn't always seem to make sense.

Facts and Fun

Two kids debated God's existence. The girl asked: "Do you see God?"

Boy: "No."

Girl: "Exactly. We cannot see God because He is not there."

The boy asked: "Can you see yourself in a mirror?"

Girl: "Yes."

Boy: "Do you see your bones?"

Girl: "No."

Boy: "I guess that must mean you don't have any!"

Taken from: Dall, J. et al.: *My Time with God*. Tyndale House Publishers, Wheaton, Illinois, USA, 2000

CHILDREN'S QUESTIONS + ANSWERS

Question: Does God sleep or does he simply rest?

Answer: God doesn't have a physical body, like we do, so he doesn't need to sleep or eat. When the Bible says that God "rested", it means that he stopped to do something. For us it is as if we were resting. But God doesn't get tired, and he is never exhausted, so he doesn't need to rest like us. And when we sleep during the night, God doesn't close his eyes - he continues to keep watch over us.

Key Text

"He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;
indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep."
Psalm 121: 3-4

Additional Texts

Genesis 2:2; 1 Kings 18:27; Ecclesiastes 8:16-17

Additional Questions

Can I feel safe at night? What does God do in heaven?
Does God eat?

Note for Parents

This kind of questions comes from the fact that we have the idea that God resembles human beings. Most of the false gods we find in different cultures, like the gods the Canaanites worshiped, or the Greek gods, were like the super heroes we can see in comics - like people who have superhuman powers. But God is not a superhuman person. While talking about this question, you can correct wrong ideas your children may have about God.



Taken from: Veerman, D. et al.: *101 Questions que les enfants se posent au sujet de Dieu*. Éditions Bérénice, Montréal, Canada, 1998



Peter Waldo and the Waldensians:

Lux Lucet In Tenebris

Peter Waldo, Valdo, Valdes, or Waldes (c. 1140 – c. 1205), also Pierre Vaudès or de Vaux, is credited as the founder of the Waldensians, a Christian spiritual movement of the Middle Ages.

Most details of Waldo's life are unknown. Extant sources relate that he was a wealthy clothier and merchant from Lyons and a man of some learning. Sometime shortly before the year 1160, he was inspired by a series of events, firstly, after hearing a sermon on the life of St. Alexius, secondly, rejection of transubstantiation when it was considered a capital crime to do it, thirdly, the sudden and unexpected death of a friend during an evening meal.

From this point onward he began living a radical Christian life, giving his property over to his wife, while the remainder of his belongings he distributed as alms to the poor. At about this time, Waldo began to preach and teach publicly, based on his

ideas of simplicity and poverty, notably that "No man can serve two masters, God and Mammon." He condemned Papal excesses and Catholic dogmas, including purgatory and transubstantiation. He said that these dogmas were "the harlot" from the book of Revelation. By 1170 Waldo had gathered a large number of followers, referred to as the Poor of Lyons, the Poor of Lombardy, or the Poor of God. They evangelized their teaching while traveling as peddlers. Often referred to as the Waldensians (or Waldenses), they were distinct from the Albigensians or Cathari.

The Waldensian movement was characterized from the beginning by lay preaching, voluntary poverty, and strict adherence to the Bible. Between 1175-1185 Waldo either commissioned a cleric from Lyons to translate the New Testament into the vernacular, the Arpitan (Franco-Provençal) language, or was himself involved in this translation work. Regardless of the source of translation, he is credited with providing to Europe the first translation of the Bible in a 'modern tongue' outside of Latin.

The Waldensian movement first appeared in Lyon in the late 1170s and quickly spread to the Cottian Alps. Today, the Waldensian movement is centered on Piedmont in northern Italy, while small communities are also found in southern Italy, Argentina, Germany, the United States, and Uruguay.

The movement originated in the late twelfth century as *the Poor Men of Lyons*, preaching apostolic poverty as the way to perfection. Waldensian teachings quickly came into conflict with the Catholic Church. By 1215, the Waldensians were declared heretical and subject to intense persecution; the group was nearly annihilated in the seventeenth century and were confronted with organized and generalized discrimination in the centuries that followed.

Waldensians held and preached a number of truths as they read from the Bible. These included:

1. The atoning death and justifying righteousness of Christ
2. The Godhead
3. The fall of man
4. The incarnation of the Son
5. A denial of purgatory as the "invention of the Antichrist"
6. Valued voluntary poverty

Source: www.wikipedia.org

Main Dates & Facts

- ca. 1173:** Waldo had gathered a large number of followers, referred to as "the Poor of Lyons" later called "Waldensians"
- 1175:** beginning of the translation of the New Testament into one "modern language" outside of Latin
- 1179:** Waldo's ideas were condemned by the Catholic Church
- 1182:** Excommunication of Waldo and expulsion from Lyon
- 1215:** principles of the Waldensians declared heresy, begin of persecution
- 1487:** Papal bull for the extermination of the Waldensians
- 1532:** Waldensians joined the Reformation that had started in other parts of Europe
- 1535:** French Bible is published, based in part on a New Testament in the Waldensian vernacular

Ellen White on Waldensians

The faith which for centuries was held and taught by the Waldensian Christians was in marked contrast to the false doctrines put forth from Rome. Their religious belief was founded upon the written word of God, the true system of Christianity. But those humble peasants, in their obscure retreats, shut away from the world, and bound to daily toil among their flocks and their vineyards, had not by themselves arrived at the truth in opposition to the dogmas and heresies of the apostate church. Theirs was not a faith newly received. Their religious belief was their inheritance from their fathers. They contended for the faith of the apostolic church,—“the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” Jude 3. “The church in the wilderness,” and not the proud hierarchy enthroned in the world’s great capital, was the true church of Christ, the guardian of the treasures of truth which God has committed to His people to be given to the world. (...) The Waldenses were among the first of the peoples of Europe to obtain a translation of the Holy Scriptures. Hundreds of years before the Reformation they possessed the Bible in manuscript in their native tongue. They had the truth unadulterated, and this rendered them the special objects of hatred and persecution. They declared the Church of Rome to be the apostate Babylon of the Apocalypse, and at the peril of their lives they stood up to resist her corruptions. While, under the pressure of long-continued persecution, some compromised their faith, little by little yielding its distinctive principles, others held fast the truth. Through ages of darkness and apostasy there were Waldenses who denied the supremacy of Rome, who rejected image worship as idolatry, and who kept the true Sabbath. Under the fiercest tempests

of opposition they maintained their faith. Though gashed by the Savoyard spear, and scorched by the Romish fagot, they stood unflinchingly for God’s word and His honor. Behind the lofty bulwarks of the mountains—in all ages the refuge of the persecuted and oppressed—the Waldenses found a hiding place. Here the light of truth was kept burning amid the darkness of the Middle Ages. Here, for a thousand years, witnesses for the truth maintained the ancient faith. (...)

Pure, simple, and fervent was the piety of these followers of Christ. The principles of truth they valued above houses and lands, friends, kindred, even life itself. These principles they earnestly sought to impress upon the hearts of the young. From earliest childhood the youth were instructed in the Scriptures and taught to regard sacredly the claims of the law of God. Copies of the Bible were rare; therefore its precious words were committed to memory. Many were able to repeat large portions of both the Old and the New Testament. Thoughts of God were associated alike with the sublime scenery of nature and with the humble blessings of daily life. Little children learned to look with gratitude to God as the giver of every favor and every comfort. (...)

The teachings of popes and priests had led men to look upon the character of God, and even of Christ, as stern, gloomy, and forbidding. The Saviour was represented as so far devoid of sympathy with man in his fallen state that the mediation of priests and saints must be invoked. Those whose minds had been enlightened by the word of God longed to point these souls to Jesus as their compassionate, loving Saviour, standing with outstretched arms, inviting all to come to Him with their burden of sin, their care

and weariness. They longed to clear away the obstructions which Satan had piled up that men might not see the promises, and come directly to God, confessing their sins, and obtaining pardon and peace. (...)

The Waldensian missionaries were invading the kingdom of Satan, and the powers of darkness aroused to greater vigilance. Every effort to advance the truth was watched by the prince of evil, and he excited the fears of his agents. The papal leaders saw a portent of danger to their cause from the labors of these humble itinerants. If the light of truth were allowed to shine unobstructed, it would sweep away the heavy clouds of error that enveloped the people. It would direct the minds of men to God alone and would eventually destroy the supremacy of Rome. (...)

The persecutions visited for many centuries upon this God-fearing people were endured by them with a patience and constancy that honored their Redeemer. Notwithstanding the crusades against them, and the inhuman butchery to which they were subjected, they continued to send out their missionaries to scatter the precious truth. They were hunted to death; yet their blood watered the seed sown, and it failed not of yielding fruit. Thus the Waldenses witnessed for God centuries before the birth of Luther. Scattered over many lands, they planted the seeds of the Reformation that began in the time of Wycliffe, grew broad and deep in the days of Luther, and is to be carried forward to the close of time by those who also are willing to suffer all things for “the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 1:9

From: Ellen White, *The Great Controversy*, Chapter 4

Worldwide International Convention

IN A NUTSHELL

- What:** Worldwide International Convention for Children’s, Family, and Women’s Ministries
- When:** May 10-13, 2017
- Where:** Budapest, Hungary
- Organizer:** CHM / FM / WM of the General Conference
- Registration:** <http://gcchildmin.org/resources/budapest.html>



Object Talk: Reflecting Jesus

Theme: Become like Jesus

Object: Mirror (if possible with electric power)

Text: "We can be mirrors that brightly reflect the glory of the Lord. And as the Spirit of the Lord works within us, we become more and more like him."

2 Corinthians 3:18, TLB



Application

Look at this mirror. Don't you just love it? Sometimes you can use a mirror to make light shine in other places in the room. What can I do to make this mirror reflect light? I know! What if I plug it in? (*Look around for an electrical outlet.*) But wait - do I need electricity to make this mirror reflect the light? What is needed? (*Get response.*) Yes! We simply need the light! A mirror reflects any light that shines on it. Look how when the ceiling light shines on it, I can make it reflect light around the room, even though the mirror has no power of its own.

The Bible tells us that we can be mirrors that reflect God's glory. By ourselves we don't have the power to shine, any more than the mirror can reflect light without light to reflect. The only way we can shine is when we are close to Jesus. When we let our lives reflect him, we can shine his light onto others.

If we are mirrors of Jesus, how will we act? (*Discuss: helping others, building others up, obeying, being thankful and loving.*)

Let's pray that we can be like mirrors reflecting the light of Jesus.

Prayer

Lord, may our lives reflect you more each day. Amen.

Taken from: Kokmeyer, V.: *Object Talks for any day*. Standard Publishing, Cincinnati, Ohio, USA, 2001

Upcoming events

**2017 - Year of Reformation
(500 years)**

Special Material for Children's Sabbath is being prepared

March 11, 2017

Valdensian Child
Arad, Romania

March 12, 2017

Special Program:
Balm for Women's Souls
Ramnicu Valcea, Romania

April 21-24, 2017

National Spiritual Congress for the
Italian Union
"Back to Jesus"
Intergenerational program with
workshops for children

May 10-13
Worldwide International
Convention for Children's, Family
and Women's Ministries
Budapest, Hungary

October 15-19, 2017
CHM Leadership Training Course
postponed to 2018

Special for German Speaking People

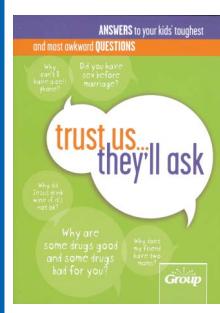
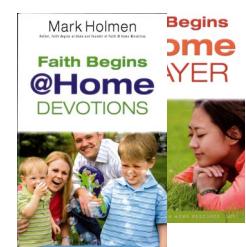
A series on Reformation started on Friday, February 3, 2017. Every Friday (18:00), Saturday (14:30), Sunday (9:30) and Wednesday (18:00), one episode will be broadcasted. The themes are about the Waldensians, John Wycliff, John Hus, Martin Luther and others. Episodes can be watched online on www.fribos-dachboden.de



Last but not least: books worth reading

Holmen, M.: *Faith Begins Booklet Series*

Mark Holmen clearly knows what spiritual development in the family should look like, and he knows how to communicate that message in a warm, transparent and engaging way. Parents who digest the Faith Begins @ Home booklets will have their vision lifted, their hearts warmed, and their minds focused on the practical things they can do to see their children embrace Christ for a lifetime. Available topics: Devotions, Prayer, Family, Mom, Dad, Grandparents



- Group: Trust us... they'll ask**
Be ready when your kids ask the tough questions! Get solid, satisfying answers to questions like these:
- I know God loves me... but does He like me?
 - Why is it a bad thing to put my middle finger up in the air?
 - Is getting a tattoo wrong?

101 hot-topic questions in all - and 101 age-appropriate answers for preschooler, elementary-age child, and preteen.