



KidsNewsZone

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**CHILDREN'S
MINISTRIES**

MISSION: TO NURTURE CHILDREN INTO A LOVING, SERVING RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

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KidsNewsZone

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Reaching Out to Kids in Times of Crisis

We are living in unprecedented times in history. With the coronavirus pandemic lockdown in many countries of the world, parents and families have to juggle their schedules of working from home and the needs of their children who are home with them every day. Clinical psychologists and other professionals have responded to these emergencies by providing suggestions and tips for how parents and caregivers can help children cope with frightening or traumatic events.

What about Children's Ministries leaders from the division down to the local churches? What can we do in reaching out to children and teens at this time of the coronavirus crisis? How can we have a productive children's ministry? Many of you have already responded immediately to this crisis. Websites and links with useful information about the coronavirus were uploaded promptly for parents and children. Activities and online games were developed to engage children who have to stay home with school

closed till further notice. Sabbath School leaders and teachers got together to stage virtual Sabbath Schools for children. What an outstanding job you have done!

Let's not stop there! There are many days still ahead of us with the lockdown still in place, so maybe we can look for more way to reach out to children and teens. Here are a few suggestions that you can encourage your union, conference or local churches to try:





COME, YE CHILDREN, HEARKEN UNTO ME: I WILL
TEACH YOU THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

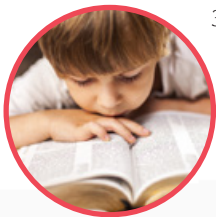
(PSALM 34:11 KJV)



1. Organizing United Prayer Time – plan a specific time each day calling all children, children’s leaders and teachers for united prayer. You can choose a specific time whether it be 7:00 pm or 9:00 am, that suits the union or conference. It’s a signal to call all children and teens at that time to stop whatever they are doing for a moment of united prayer for all those infected with COVID-19 and that God will lead us through this crisis and bring it to an end. For such a time as this, unity is the key—to seek God together.



2. Planning an Encourage Service – encourage children and teens to be “on mission” by writing cards of encouragement to health-care professionals who are on the frontline working to save those infected with COVID-19. Have them FaceTime their grandparents and read a Bible verse or read a Bible story to them. Children and teens can also make and decorate notes to encourage sick children in the hospital that they are praying for them.



3. Learning Bible Verses – encourage children and teens to learn a Bible passage, such as The Lord’s Prayer, Ten Commandments, The Shepherd’s Psalm, Beatitudes, etc. Have them draw or illustrate what this passage means to them. Let them know that when church is opened again for worship, they will be given an opportunity to share this passage with the church as a group.



4. Reaching Out to Love Your Neighbor – many Christian leaders realize that the COVID-19 crisis presents a God-given opportunity to help and reach the community, bringing hope and the love of God to them. Children’s leaders on every level can be creative in coming up with new ideas of being a good Samaritan to those in need in their community. Some acts of love and kindness may include:

- Giving free masks to migrant or refugee children and their families.
- Giving out food baskets to migrant or refugee children whose parents have lost their jobs because all businesses have stopped operation when the lockdown was in effect.
- Giving out children’s *GLOW* tracts to kids in the neighborhood.
- Passing out free Bible story books for children in the neighborhood.

We have not seen the light at the end of the tunnel, but we can trust the Lord to bring an end to this pandemic because He is in control. In the meantime, children’s leaders can still have a very productive ministry by reaching out to children and teens in creative ways of involving them in ministry and service to others while being lockdown at home.

Linda Mei Lin Koh
GC Children’s Ministries Director





CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES NEWS



AROUND THE WORLD

EAST-CENTRAL AFRICA DIVISION

Uganda Union Mission – Makerere Church Children's TMI Evangelism

On January 10-18, 2020, about one hundred excited children and teens filled the church hall of the Makerere Church in Kampala each afternoon to attend the Total Member Involvement (TMI) evangelistic meetings conducted by Dr. Linda Koh, GC Children's Ministries director. Children and teens took on the platform responsibilities reading scripture, praying, welcoming the visitors, and presenting special songs before the sermon. It was wonderful to see children using their gifts and talents for the Lord! Dr. Koh presented the message using the Truth4Youth evangelistic series, after which the children had a craft and then an evening meal. The entire union was having two baptisms on two Sabbaths. At the end of the first Sabbath when the appeal was made, 28 children and teens responded to the call and were baptized. There was great joy in heaven that Sabbath!



TMI kids with their crafts



Kids Listening Attentively at the TMI Evangelistic Meetings



Children with Dr Linda Koh at the TMI meetings



TMI children singing



Makerere Church children's choir with speaker and CHM



AND SAID, 'TRULY I SAY TO YOU, UNLESS YOU ARE CONVERTED AND BECOME LIKE CHILDREN, YOU WILL NOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN!'

(MATTHEW 18:3 NASB)



► TMI Baptismal candidates happy to accept Jesus



► Baptismal candidates getting ready for baptism

experienced Babylonian times when Daniel was serving as a high-ranking officer through the Babylon VBS. On Sunday the children learned to make purses and keychains. CHM leaders in Kawanda also conducted VBS and everywhere 60-100 children were excited to participate in the singing, the Bible stories, and the crafts. May the seeds of the gospel be sown in these little hearts as they respond to the love of Jesus.



► Kampala, C. Region VBS

Uganda Union Launches VBS

Under the leadership of CHM leaders Esther Waisa, Union CHM director, many Vacation Bible Schools were launched throughout Kampala. One passionate leader was Esther Kyazze, Makerere Church CHM director, who ran an excellent VBS in the church. Even with limited funds, the children



► Kawanda area VBS



► Babylon VBS at Makerere Church



► Boy reciting memory verses at the Kawanda VBS



INTER-AMERICA DIVISION

Central Mexican Union – Children’s Ministries Leadership Training

A one-day training was organized for children’s leaders in Mexico City on January 25, 2020 by Ariadne Cuevas Calderon, the union CHM director. Dr. Linda Koh, GC CHM director and Dinorah Rivera, IAD Children and Adolescent’s Ministries director did some training seminars and Dinorah introduced the second Talking Backpack series. She encouraged the leaders to involve children and teens in using this new series to get involve in evangelism. Children participated in music, Bible memorization, and prayer. It was exciting to see children and teens using their gifts and talents for the Lord!

Division-wide VBS Launching and Training

Inter-America Division launched its 2020 Vacation Bible School (VBS), Escalando Montanas, in Spanish, English and French on February 18-19. Under the leadership of Dinorah Rivera, IAD CHM director, a new VBS package is introduced every year for her 24 unions. A total of 260 children’s leaders from the unions and conferences attended this VBS training. Drs. Linda Koh and Saustin Mfuné were invited to grace the occasion and they joined the other leaders to sample all the activities in the different stations, such as the health, craft, Bible lesson, etc. On the last evening a big banquet was prepared to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of Children’s Ministries. Awards were given out to each union’s outstanding children’s leader. However, one surprise was still to unfold when Dr. Linda Koh was called to the stage to unveil a gift that IAD CHM director had planned.

When Dr. Koh unveiled it, she could hardly believe her eyes—an oil painting of Jesus and the children of IAD territory with Dr Linda Koh’s image right in the midst of the children. This was her gift of appreciation for her service in CHM as she was planning to retire at the 2020 GC Session. It was indeed an invaluable gift!



► CHM Training in Central Mexico Union



► IAD CHM VBS Training



► 4-year-old sharing a testimony



► IAD Children & Teens singing the VBS Theme song



► Kids Participating in Special Music



SEE THAT YOU DO NOT DESPISE ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES.
FOR I TELL YOU THAT IN HEAVEN THEIR ANGELS ALWAYS SEE
THE FACE OF MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN.



(MATTHEW 18:10 ESV)



► Escalando Montanas VBS Food Station



► More Food Designs



► Bible Story Station



► IAD's Farewell gift for Dr. Koh

INTER-EUROPEAN DIVISION

Romania Union – Pastors & Children's Sabbath School Teachers Training

Florian Ristea, Children's Sabbath School director of the union organized two training events back to back. The first training was for pastors from March 3-5, 2020, bringing together sixty over pastors to learn more about Children's Ministries and how they can inspire their churches to actively involve the children and teens. Linda Koh, GC CHM director and Elsa Cozzi, EUD CHM director presented relevant topics such as Reaching the Digital Natives, Teaching Children to Witness, Active learning/Object Lessons, Faith Development of Children and others. May resources were given out to the pastors and witnessing gadgets and resources were shared with the pastors. Many were happy with the training.



► Pastors' Training in Children's Ministries



► Pastors with Linda & Elsa



Following this event, about eighty or more children's Sabbath School teachers arrived for their training event from March 6-7, 2020. Linda and Elsa presented interesting ideas for helping teachers how to decorate their Sabbath School rooms with simple materials, teaching with object lessons, witnessing tools, etc. At the end the participants received many free resources and they were happy for the training. A wonderful gift was given by the union director to all children's Sabbath School teachers. Guess what? It was a beautiful umbrella!

NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION NAD Children's Ministries Retreat

Tanya Muganda, GC CHM Administrative Assistant attended the North American Division Children's Ministries annual retreat in Alexandria, Virginia from January 29th – February 1st. The theme of this retreat was Say Yes to Jesus! There were general sessions by Rick Chromey, and NAD CHM presenters with so many ideas for self-care and to teach children.

There were tours of the North American Division offices and the Museum of the Bible. The highlight of this retreat was the



► *Children's Sabbath School Teachers Listening Attentively*



► *NAD CHM Retreat*



► *Some Teachers with the Presenters*



► *Children's Sabbath School Teachers with Umbrellas*



► *Tanya at the Heroes VBS Training*



COME, YE CHILDREN, HEARKEN UNTO ME: I WILL
TEACH YOU THE FEAR OF THE LORD.

(PSALM 34:11 KJV)



“VBS Live” to introduce the upcoming Vacation Bible School 2020! At the VBS live, attendees, were able to go through the various stations and be a part of the songs, activities, games and food. The Sabbath message by Josant Barrientos, Youth Director of Potomac Conference, empowered attendees with their gifts, dedication and the importance of Children’s Ministries in the church.

Thankful to the NAD Children’s Ministries team, Kati Britton, Sherri Uhrig, Gerry Lopez, Franklin Dorsey, and the many volunteers for all their hard work and commitment.

Hawaii Conference – Leadership Training for Children’s Ministries Leaders

Madonna Tauau, CHM director of the conference invited Dr. Linda Koh, GC CHM director to conduct some Children’s Ministries training in Hilo and Honolulu from February 14-16, 2020. At Hilo Linda also provided morning devotions for the children at the Adventist School followed by Sabbath worship and seminars in the afternoon. After this the two leaders then flew on to Honolulu to provide more training.



▶ *Dr. Koh with kids from the Hilo Adventist school*



▶ *Dr. Koh showing the kids a witnessing tool*

**NORTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION
Japan Union Conference – Children’s Ministries Leadership Training**

Dr. Linda Koh, GC CHM director and Dr. Lisa Clouset, NSD CHM had a wonderful two-week training event in Tokyo, Hiroshima, and Okinawa. They conducted seminars for children’s leaders and teachers in various churches and schools on the effect of food and diet on character development, recruiting new children to church, making family worship fun, and others. The leaders and teachers were eager to participate in group activities making the training more interesting. Many free resources were given out to the participants and they greatly appreciated it.



▶ *CHM Training in Harajuku Church, Tokyo*



▶ *Training at Koganei Church, Tokyo*



► CHM Leadership Training in Okinawa

In the evening, both Linda and Litiana attended the opening of the Creative Spaces Children's Resource Center of the North New South Wales Conference. Dr. Koh was invited to open this newly renovated resource center. This idea was the brainchild of Daron Pratt, CHM director of the conference who loves children and wants to see them come to Jesus. One is fascinated by the variety of resources children's leaders and teachers can use for Sabbath Schools, children's camps, etc. You can find a potpourri of items from VBS kits to large backdrops, puppets, Bible costumes, etc.

Sabbath was a busy one for both the leaders as each had to preach at different churches. In the afternoon, Dr. Linda Koh presented seminars for children's leaders and parents at the Cabramatta Central Church where both the Fijian and Chinese Church members gathered. Many free resources were given to the participants and many expressed their gratitude for such valuable materials.

SOUTH PACIFIC DIVISION Australian Union Conference – CHM Training

Litiana Turner, SPD Discipleship Team Leader for CHM and Dr. Linda Koh, GC CHM director started their trip in Sydney on March 13 by visiting the Abide Family Ministry in Cooranbong. They got to see the new studio built by Kimberly and Rob Houliston who are passionate about children and have produced many children's programs in the form of Arnie's Shack to teach children about Jesus.



► CHM Leaders Visited Arnie's Shack



► A Potpourri of VBS Kits & Stuffed Animals in the Children's Resource Center



► Opening of Creative Spaces Children's Resource Center at NNSWC

“ AND SAID, ‘TRULY I SAY TO YOU, UNLESS YOU ARE CONVERTED AND BECOME LIKE CHILDREN, YOU WILL NOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN!’ ”

(MATTHEW 18:3 NASB)

Both Dr. Koh and Litiana were to fly to Melbourne and onto Tonga for the next training events, but unfortunately Dr. Koh had to cut short her trip to return to the US as the General Conference has sent out a mandate for all directors to return immediately because of the widespread conditions of the coronavirus.



▶ CHM Training at the Cabramatta Central Church in West Sydney

SOUTHERN AFRICA INDIAN-OCEAN DIVISION

North Malawi Conference – Leadership Training for CHM Leaders

Dr. Saustin Mfuné conducted a one-day short notice CHM leadership training for Mzuzu leaders before he started his evangelistic meetings. Thirty-seven leaders took advantage of Mfuné's presence. Dr. Mfuné, GC Associate CHM Director, emphasized that the major problem is not lack of information and material. In most places like Mzuzu, the problem is a lack of dedication and commitment. While there are many very dedicated leaders, there is also a number of those who don't implement the things they learn.

Another problem Mfuné pointed out is not lack of creativity because Africans by nature are survivors and are very creative but it is refusing to put into practice the creativity ability God embedded in the African. Since creativity takes hard work, the tendency is to depend on external help. And definitely, external help is needed and it is very much appreciated, but we cannot

depend on it to give us everything. Donation dependence, as helpful as it is, has the potential of destroying creativity.

The point which Mfuné also brought out was that Children's Ministries is not singing with children all the time. While there is a time for singing, children also need to have hands-on activities.

The leaders showcased some of the things they do and they have very impressive projects. We continue to pray for the success of North Malawi Conference CHM leaders, their programs and ideas, and the children themselves.

North Malawi Conference – 447 People Baptized at a 3-Week Evangelistic Campaign

North Malawi Conference situated in Mzuzu town invited Dr. Mfuné to conduct an evangelistic campaign for them in Mzuzu town, North of Malawi. He invited his friend, Dr. George Dzimiri to partner with him. Apart from preaching, Dr. Dzimiri gave out eyeglasses to the people.

Dr. Dzimiri had the meetings from March 1 to 7 and Dr. Mfuné would continue from March 7 to March 21st. Mzuzu City stadium would host our meetings. On March 7, at the close of Dr. Dzimiri's week, 93 people were baptized. Then Dr. Mfuné started his series on the afternoon of the 7th. By the 14th of March, we had 201 people who were ready for baptism. Then on 15th, Dr. Mfuné received an email from the General Conference headquarters to return immediately because of the COVID-19 pandemic. After discussing the matter with Dr. Wilbert Mwale, the President of the Conference, called his committee and they finally resolved to invite Dr. Mfuné's son, Pastor Dingani Mfuné who pastors in Lilongwe City, the Capital of Malawi some 365 kilometers away to come and take over the remaining days. Pastor Dingani arrived on Tuesday night to take over.

When Pastor Dingani made the final appeal on Sabbath, 21st March, a total of 354 people were ready for baptism. To God be the glory. We thank Pastor Wilbert Mwale and his evangelism team for the amazing teamwork displayed during the meetings. We hope that the follow-up team will no tire as they nurture the new converts to grow in the Lord so that sooner than later, the new converts can also begin to win other of Jesus.



Cape Conference – 259 Graduate at the 2nd Conference-wide CHM Leadership Convention

Jeffery Bay in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, hosted Cape Conference 2nd Children's Ministries' Leadership Convention from February 28th to March 1. The Convention entitled Leading them to Christ attracted 380 energetic and eager-to-learn participants. On Sabbath, the number of attendants swelled to 420. Facilitators of this event were CHM Directors, Estelle Baker, Northern Conference, Zodwa Kunene, SAUC, Caroline Chola, SID, Dr. Saustin Sampson Mfune, GC CHM Associate Director and Dr. Alex Llaguno, a medical doctor, Adventist AIDS International Ministry GC Director based in South Africa. The host was Nomthandazo Papu.

The weekend was a beehive of activities. Lessons included Prayer ideas for Kids, How to Minister to Children with HIV, Involve Them (that is—children), How to lead them when you are not in charge, the launching of a VBS ki—the Jamii Kingdom and many more. The involvement of child preachers and the Motherwell Children's Choir who led magnificently the song "African Children" was the icing on the cake.

Saturday evening witnessed 259 leaders graduating at different levels from Level's 1–8. It was some sight to see. There was excitement imaginable. With "such an army like this," one does not doubt that Port Elizabeth has been empowered to help families march with their children to the heavenly Canaan. These leaders need our prayers.

Sometimes our programs are on the academic side. But this program was wholistic. It encapsulated the social, mental, physical, and spiritual aspects of a human being. Thanks to Mama Papu for putting together such an excellent program.



► Dr Llaguno and Dr Mfune promoting the new HIV material



► Graduates



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THE FACE OF MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN.



(MATTHEW 18:10 ESV)

SOUTHERN ASIA-PACIFIC DIVISION

East Indonesia Union Conference – Child Evangelism and CHM 25th Anniversary Celebration

On March 15-21, 2020, EIUC CHM director, Lieke Lilir Sibilang, organized a big CHM 25th Anniversary celebration in conjunction with the union-wide evangelistic meetings to be held at Tompaso Academy, Minahasa Conference. It was amazing to see the entire stage emerged as a mockup of Noah’s Ark measuring 33 long, 6 meter wide and 8 meters high. The children preached, sang, and performed inside the ark. Indeed, it captivated the audience! The opening night saw the hall filled to capacity with over 400 children and adults attending. Unfortunately, COVID-19 spread so quickly around the world that it became a pandemic. Hence, the Indonesian government announced the need for social distancing and the entire evangelism outreach program came to an end just after one night of meeting. The children were greatly disappointed, but not discouraged for they know that they will have an opportunity to witness for the Lord again when the crisis is over.



► Final State of the Ark



► A full hall on the opening night of the evangelistic meeting

TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION

Irish Mission – “Letters From God” Outreach to Children Amidst COVID-19

On 12 March 2020, the Irish nation changed, along with many others as a result of attacks from an invisible enemy in the form of Covid-19. There was an enormous shift in our way of life, as we knew it. No one could have imagined such drastic changes in such a short space of time. The world as we knew it was no more.

With the closure of our church building and subsequently the cancellation of our Children’s Church, we wanted a way of connecting with the kids and keeping a sense of belonging for them.

From this, “Letters from God” was born, an initiative of the Ranelagh Children’s Ministries Department, Dublin.

The thought of children ripping through the envelopes, of children finding letters addressed specifically to them with gleams in their eyes, unable to contain their excitement about its content and thinking, “Someone took their time amidst all the chaos to write to me!” - was a motivating factor in the development of the idea.

Adapting to changes can prove difficult for adults, let alone kids, so the “Letters from God” were supposed to be source of comfort for the kids in these troubling times.

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God” (2 Corinthians 1:3–4).



► Letters from God



Also to alleviate their fears and anxiety with an assurance that God is always in control no matter what is happening around them.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand" (Isaiah 41:10).

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1).

It is an affirmation of God's unfailing, unconditional love. His love is not moved by the storms of life, it endures forever.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

Letters from God started with 64 kids in Ranelagh church, Dublin and now we have 112 throughout the Irish Mission with 3 kids in America. Finland has started using the letters and around the world some directors have registered an interest in the idea.

In this changing world, now more than ever, we all need God. As the daily struggles and death tolls increase, we can easily fall into despair. What better way to remind them that God will not leave them in the darkest moments; His love will strengthen them and when life gets tough, God's love doesn't waver.



▶ Letters from God



Children's Prayers

"The prayer of a child is close to Jesus' heart."

"Hang in there, Jefe! Things might be bad now, but there is always a chance something good happens. Praying for you."

"Dear God, my Grandpa says you were around when he was a little boy. How far back do you go?"

"I pray for you that a miracle will happen in your life."

"Help me, Jesus, I am so sad. I know you don't mind if I cry, 'cos you know me."

"Dear Jesus, I miss my grandparents. I can't talk to them 'cos they don't anything about computer."

"Dear God, it must be super hard to love all the people in the world, especially my brother. I don't know how You do it."

"Dear God, I didn't think orange went with purple until I saw the sunset you made on Tuesday night. That was really cool."

“ AND SAID, 'TRULY I SAY TO YOU, UNLESS YOU ARE CONVERTED AND BECOME LIKE CHILDREN, YOU WILL NOT ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN!' ”

(MATTHEW 18:3 NASB)



Farewell Message

Greetings CHM leaders around the world. It was my great opportunity to work with you all. I have enjoyed myself immensely and learned a lot from you all. It's time to bid you farewell. As from July end, I will be officially retiring and will be relinquishing my title GC Associate CHM Director. As of August, I will no longer be in the office. My wife will be around but I will be moving to Malawi in August. I wish you the best in all that you do. May the Almighty God bless you abundantly. Please forgive my sins of commission and omission.

If it is God's will, my sons and I will be launching a Ministry and we will see how God will lead us. I have been purchasing equipment for this purpose. We hope to have our first programs in digital and paper format soon. We have put together a great team of international talent. God connected me to people while here at the GC. God bless you all. If I don't see some of you here on earth, [because I know some of you we will meet], we will meet on the sea of glass.

Allow me to close with a poem I wrote some years ago entitled, If you trust the Lord:-



If you trust the Lord, He will turn your pain into gain.

If you trust the Lord, He will be a guide by your side.

If you trust the Lord, He will put a glide in your stride.

If you trust the Lord, He will fill your smallness with His greatness.

If you trust the Lord, He will change your scars into stars.

If you trust the Lord, He will put the walk-in your talk.

If you trust the Lord, He will put some pep in your step.

*If you trust the Lord, He'll take you from where you are tolerated to
where you will be celebrated.*

If you trust the Lord, He will give new life after strife.

If you trust the Lord, He will change your lethargy into energy.

If you trust the Lord, He will give you hope for you to cope.

If you trust the Lord, He will flip your flop into hope.

If you trust the Lord, He will give you ideas you can use.

If you trust the Lord, He will give you meals instead of bills.

If you trust the Lord, He will turn your night into light.

If you trust the Lord, He will give you tomorrow without sorrow.

If you trust the Lord, He will turn your tears into cheers.

If you trust the Lord, He will replace your shrugs with warm hugs.

If you trust the Lord, He will give you joy by and by.

If you trust the Lord, you will meet Christ. Home at Last.

With what is happening, the world cannot last much longer. Let's
keep trusting the Lord. Soon we will be in our heavenly home.

Sanstin Sampson Mfune





SEE THAT YOU DO NOT DESPISE ONE OF THESE LITTLE ONES.
FOR I TELL YOU THAT IN HEAVEN THEIR ANGELS ALWAYS SEE
THE FACE OF MY FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN.



(MATTHEW 18:10 ESV)

TIPS FOR
PARENTS
AND
TEACHERS

SOMETHING MORE THAN COVID-19 IS COMING: *Are our children Ready?*

The media is inundated with COVID-19 pandemic stories. I would like to add my voice to this ocean of information. I will start my writeup by defining Christian parenting. It is a process of defining reality for children including the reality of the gospel. In a nutshell, this means helping children to grow up knowing Jesus Christ as their personal friend and Savior.

Life is a journey full of crossroads and constant choices as to which to follow. If we fail to prepare children to make wise choices at the crossroads of life, or if we fail to help them know how to come back to the right path when they've made a wrong choice, then we would have failed in our job.

From a Christian point of view, parenting can be boiled down to two philosophies—Christian and non-Christian. Many public schools function under a non-Christian triangle philosophy of parenting with its sides labeled mental, social and physical. On the other hand, we have a Christian philosophy of development. This can be drawn as a rectangle with its four sides labeled physical, mental, social, and Spiritual.

We breathe a sigh of relief and we say, "That's excellent. Christianity is included." Let's not rush to conclusions. I see two philosophical problems with this Christian philosophy of development. Firstly, it places the physical, mental, social and Spiritual components on the same level. Christianity is one of the sides of the rectangle. This rectangle philosophy, as good as it seems, has the potential of developing a continuum-type of Christian mentality. A person operating on a continuum mentality, or scale, will always ask how far he or she can

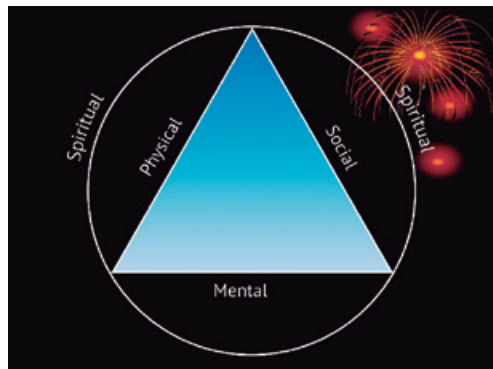
go toward non-Christian activities and still be a Christian. It is like trying to see how far a Christian can circle on a continuum of 1 to 10, starting from Christian activities going toward non-Christian activities, and still be a Christian. See illustration below:-



Secondly, it develops a dichotomous way of thinking. This philosophy will subsequently lead to the loss of being holistic. I remember attending a class where my teacher with a Ph.D in theology told us that what he would teach us that day would be from him as a scholar and not as a Christian. This example illustrates a dichotomous way of thinking and operating. How does one compartmentalize Christianity? Is not Christianity a way of life? Is Christianity not the total fullness of one's being?

A HOLISTIC PHILOSOPHY

Observing Luke 2:52, the Bible talks of the way Jesus developed. We note that He developed symmetrically. And that is mental (wisdom), physical (stature), Spiritual (in favor with God) and social (in favor with man). These are the same four components we observed in the Christian philosophy of education. But the difference is in the way they are positioned in one's life. Below is the suggested holistic diagram of parenting.



This holistic philosophy of parenting is important for at least two reasons. Firstly, it puts the Spiritual component in its proper perspective as it relates to the physical, mental and social components of a person. And secondly, it places all the activities of parents and children to be done within the milieu of the Spiritual atmosphere.

As a leader (parent), when this holistic philosophy become your mode of operation, continuously praying that God helps you live it in your everyday life:-

- It will help you put your priorities in the right perspective.
- You will be a parent/leader who knows that there is something always looming over our children which is eternally destructive. While we cannot dismiss the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has upset and instilled fear in many claiming people's lives indiscriminately, as Christians we know that its destructiveness is temporary. There is something more deadly than this pandemic and that is the pandemic of sin. Hence on everyday

basis, leaders ought to sincerely blanket themselves and children in prayer.

- While there will be social distance between you and sin, you will not live in isolation. Through appropriate use of social media, you will remain in contact with the children you lead.
- Everybody will see in you the *fruit* of the Spirit as stated in Galatians 5:22-23. And note that the Bible does not say the fruits of the Spirit. It's singular. Just as the segments inside an orange make one fruit—the orange, so will your Christian life. It will be a blend of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. (NKJV). Gossip and castigating others will cease to be part of your life because you would have come to realize that you cannot be a person of peace while harboring animosity against a colleague.
- Children's Ministries will cease to be a department where programs are developed to keep your job going, but the programs developed will be your way of life.

May I bring this thought to our attention. The first words God spoke to Adam and Even are concerning children. In Genesis 3:28 (part one) God said to our first parents, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; ..." (NKJV). Subdue is translated from a Hebrew word—*kabash*. The word *kabash* is a word of war and denotes an idea that the way to overcome it is not by going around it but by enslaving it. Through our children, we can enslave the world. But for children to do it, they must be in Jesus, the one who enslaved the world on our behalf.

Numbers 31:49 has these words:- After the war, the Israelites came to Moses and said, "Your servants have counted the soldiers under our command, and not one is missing." (NIV). It is possible that after the COVID-19 pandemic you will be able to tell your acquaintances that none of our children are missing. That will be great. But we will be able to say the same on the day of judgment after the sin pandemic that none of our children is missing? Remember, the purpose of the Children's Ministries Department is not just to create programs and keep children and families busy but through those programs be able to create a lifestyle in us and our children which will lead all of us to the heavenly kingdom.



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