

## Minister's Message – June 2010

### Children Not Welcome

Are children a dying breed? What value do children have in our society? In Australia there are over 90,000 abortions each year. A conceived child has only a 60% chance of being born alive. Once born they have a good chance of surviving – compared to many poorer countries. The under-five mortality rate in Australia is only 5.6 deaths per 1000 live births, while in India it is 78.6 and in Afghanistan it is 235.0 – almost ¼ of children born do not reach the age of five.

We are thankful for the medical care available to children born in Australia. But still we hear of children being abused and even killed as a result of drug and alcohol fuelled violence, and broken relationships. Sexual abuse of children is on the increase – though thankfully not as bad as in South Africa (ABC Four Corners report). Authorities remain vigilant against the scourge of child pornography, and sexual predators that roam 'Facebook' and other websites.

*Children are a heritage from the Lord. The fruit of the womb is his reward (Psalm 127).* Jesus welcomed little children and blessed them (Luke 18:16). Children are a blessing from the Lord, the giver of life. A married couple naturally want to have children – unless they are unusually selfish. Children are a blessing, but they are also a responsibility. They are demanding of our time and energy as well as our money – although less money than some choose to lavish on them.

The greatest need the child has is to be taught how to live in this world. This is the greatest responsibly God gives to parents. School teachers can help but parents are responsible. Many parents are challenged in this matter. They hear conflicting ideas and advice, and have trouble discerning what is best for their child.

The author of a book on bringing up boys in today's world expressed great concern. Boys have trouble sorting out reality from fantasy. They are under pressure to conform. They must wear brand name clothes and shoes. They worry about their hair and body image. Conform to what? you ask. Often it is what advertising portrays. If parents are not alert, such forces will take control of how their children grow up. Even babies' nappies are becoming advertising boards today!

This author said that while children were growing fast physically they were not growing so fast in emotional intelligence. She stressed the importance of family and the 'village' or community, but came up short on detail. Should we go back to the 50's? No. Should parents control the internet? No. That would be to invade the child's privacy. She made a good diagnosis but what is the cure?

Let us go way back beyond the 50's to what our Creator tells us in the Bible. The basic problem with children remains the same – that of growing up in a sinful world. *Parents, bring up your children in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4).* Teach them the truth about this world in which we live and about God who made it. Teach them about the One who died and rose again in order break the power of sin and death.

Teach your children when they wake up and when they go to bed. Teach them at the table and in the car (Deuteronomy 6:7). Turn the TV and PC off and teach your children the truth. Take them out of fantasy land, the land where the devil wants to take them. They will learn little by way of truth listening to those who have not concern for the moral welfare. Children need to learn from their parents.

For sure the school teacher can help. The Sunday school teacher can help also. But teach your children in the home, and bring them along to church where they will learn the truth about living a moral and meaningful life in this fallen world.

*Rev. Dr. Dennis K. Muldoon*