



NEW LIFE

BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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"For the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Rev 1:9)

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The Covenant Family

We live in an age of individualism. More than ever in the history of mankind are the rights of individuals exalted above their responsibilities to their families and to society. This has directly resulted in the ever increasing number of family break-ups and delinquent children whose parents have given-up all attempts to control. Sadly, the problem has affected not only non-Christian families, but also a great number of church-going families—with the poignant result that many children in such families have grown up in unbelief. This problem may indeed be consistent with Paul's warning of perilous times when self-centred-ness will reign supreme even among professing believers (2Tim 3:1-5), but is there not a reason why the Christian family could be so infected though in days past they have been much more resilient? May I suggest that one of the major cause of the problem is that many families claiming to be Christians today are not really Christian in the manner they function. But how should the Christian family rightly function? May I suggest that it should function as a covenant family.

God always deals with man according to a covenantal family relationship with a covenant head. When Adam was created, God entered into a Covenant of Works with him. Adam was our covenant family head, and when Adam fell, he involved his entire posterity in sin and guilt. And because man is now incapable of life by that covenant, God instituted the Covenant of Grace wherein life is made available by grace through faith in Christ. Christ is therefore the covenant family head of the elect: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor 15:22; cf. Rom 5:12-21).

We see immediately, that God does not relate to man individually but covenantally. We are either covenantally under Adam, or under Christ. All under Adam perishes, all under Christ lives. Not only so, but under the umbrella of the Covenant of Grace, God also relates to us as covenant families. Thus when God establish-ed His covenant with Abraham, He says "I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant" (Gen 17:7a). This does not mean that all who descended from Abraham would be saved as is the case with all who are in Christ's family. But it means that God is concerned with Abraham's posterity. This concern for the families of His people is eventually reflected in the annex of the second commandment (Ex 20:5-6) and in Moses' instructions to the Israelites concerning the importance of godly education in the home (Deut 6:3-9).

This same covenant family concept is carried into the New Testament. Christ crowned it by His ministry. He raised Jairus' daughter, the epileptic boy as well as the son of the official of Capernaum, all on account of their fathers' faith; and when He came to stay with Zacchaeus, He pronounced that salvation is come to his house on account of his faith. Later, Peter in his inaugural sermon reminds us that the Covenant of Grace is made not only with us...

Continued on Page 2...

individually but with our children too: "for the promise is unto you, and to your children" (Acts 2:38-39; cf. Gal 3:13-14; 3:29). Similarly, Paul would tell the Philippian Jailer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31).

So then, God does deal with us as covenant families. Though He does not promise that every child born in a Christian family will be saved, we may be certain that "children of the promise" (Rom 9:8; Gal 4:28) will be found in every generation of a believer—beginning from Adam. In other words, there will be believers in every generation of a believer's seed. So, though Ishmael was not a child of promise, Isaac was; though Esau was not, Jacob was; and though Amnon, Absalom and Adonijah were not, Solomon was. It is on account of the parent's standing with God, and the children of the promise that God requires every Christian family to function as covenant families under the administration of the Covenant of Grace.

But how should a covenant family function? Manifestly, in such a family the father or husband is head of the house just as Christ is the head of the Church. This being so, every member of the family must willingly and respectfully submit to him as the leader of the family (Eph 5:22-23, 6:1). Moreover, as covenant head, the father is responsible to instruct the family in all spiritual matters.

Moses was addressing the fathers in Deut 6:3-9 (as seen in the masculine pronoun in the Hebrew). Similarly, Paul puts it in no uncertain terms that it is primarily the father's responsibility to bring up the children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph 6:4). The father, as such, is supremely concerned about the spiritual welfare of his children (Job 1:5). He realises that his covenant children are not necessarily regenerate and he exhorts them to repentance and belief. He does not delegate the instruction of his children to the Sunday School or to anyone else. He guards his God-given obligation jealously and diligently. He takes time to catechise his family (Deut 6:7) and to lead them in family worship each day.

Such, I submit to you is the covenant family. Such ought to be every Christian family. Without the emphasis on religion in the home the professedly Christian family is functioning as a pagan family at best. And how great a guilt lies upon the breast of the negligent covenant head of house! Listen to the lament of Thomas Manton in his Epistle to the Reader of the Westminster Confession & Catechisms:

Families are societies that must be sanctified to God as well as churches; and the governors of them have as truly a charge of the souls that are therein, as pastors have of the churches. But alas, how little is this considered or regarded! But while negligent ministers are (deservedly) cast out of their places, the negligent masters of families take themselves to be almost blameless. They offer their children to God in baptism, and there they promise to teach them the doctrine of the Gospel, and bring them up in the nurture of the Lord; but they easily promise, and easily break it; and educate their children for the world and the flesh although they have renounced these, and dedicated them to God. This covenant-breaking with God, and betraying the souls of their children to the devil, must lie heavy on them here or hereafter.

Let us seek the Lord's help, therefore, to rebuild or maintain our families according to our covenant obligations. Only then, can we expect to resist the tide of individualism and unbelief that is sweeping across not only our nation but our church.

*Pastor Lim Jyh Jiang
Pilgrim Covenant Church, Singapore*

Would I Be Called Christian

Would I be called a Christian,
If everybody knew
My secret thoughts and feelings,
And everything I do?

Oh, could they see the likeness
Of Christ in me each day?
Oh, could they hear Him speaking
In everything I say?

Would I be called a Christian,
If everybody could know
That I am found in places
Where Jesus would not go?

Oh, could they hear His echo
In every song I sing?
In eating, drinking, dressing,
Could they see Christ, my King?

Would I be called a Christian,
If judged by what I read,
By all my recreations,
And every thought and deed?

Could I be counted Christ-like,
And I now work and pray?
Unselfish, kind, forgiving
To others every day?

- Mrs J. F. Moser

In Green Pastures Devotional Readings for Every Day of the Year

By J.R. Miller, D.D.

10 December 2006

MORNING

MARK 6:34 “And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.”

HE carried the people's sorrows. When He looked upon grief, He felt grief in His own soul. When He looked upon the great throng of people who flocked after Him and saw among them so many suffering ones—lame, sick, blind, palsied—His compassions were stirred. That same compassion exists still in the breast of the risen Lord in glory. He did not lose His tenderness of heart when He was exalted to heaven. “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities;” It ought to be a great comfort in any sorrow of ours to know that from heaven Jesus looks upon us in deep sympathy, and that His compassions are stirred by every pain and need of ours.

The special thing in this company that so moved Christ was that the people were as sheep not having a shepherd. Many men seem prosperous in our eyes, and yet when Christ looks upon them He is moved with compassion because they know not God.

EVENING

UNCHRIST-LIKE FORGIVENESS

THERE are some people whose forgiveness is little better than their malice. They never let you forget that they have forgiven you. Indeed, you sometimes almost wish they had not forgiven you at all, so miserable and so aggravating is their charity. Let us learn to forgive generously, richly, making our forgiveness complete, sweeping for ever away all grudge and bitterness.

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON
CHURCH THEME: STRIVING TO LIVE ABOVE OUR SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS
IN CHRIST (Ephesians 1:3)

Our worship services begin promptly at **11.00 am and 4.00 pm.**

Please stay back for Bible Study and fellowship lunch after the morning worship and for tea after the evening service. Do invite your friends to come to Church.

Worship Services			WELCOME
Morning	Today: 10/12/2006	Next Week: 17/12/2006	We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. Also, a special welcome to Jacqui Chua who attended our worship service last week.
Chairman:	Jonathan Kim	Jonathan Kim	
Speaker:	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
Message:	Consecration & Commitment Part 2	Tbd	
Text:	Romans 12:1-2	Tbd	
Organist:	Anthony	Yanning	NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS
Evening			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evening Service: Westminster Larger Catechism (WLC) Q.153. What doth God require of us that we may escape his wrath and curse due to us by reason of the transgression of the law? Q.154. What are the outward means whereby Christ communicates to us the benefits of his mediation? Q.155. How is the word made effectual to salvation? <p>Do stay back and find out the answers from the Word of God.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Worship: This will take place on 15 Dec (this Friday) at the home of Sis Constance Morton. For those who would like to join the worship, please meet in the church premises at 7pm. <p>Christmas Programme: This year's Christmas programme will include a Carol Service (in place of the Evening Service) as well as Christmas Eve carolling. More details will be made available next week. If you would like to open up your home for carolling or would require accommodation during this period, please see Pr Mok.</p>
Chairman:	John Poh	Jeff Pun	
Speaker:	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	Pr Mok Chee Cheong	
Message:	Repentance, Faith, and use of the Word	Tbd	
Text:	WLC Questions 153-155	WLC Questions 156-158	
Pianist:	Anthony	Anthony	
Other Duties			
	Today	Next Week	
Ushers	John / Evelyn	Jeff / Constance	
Sunday Sch:	Carol	Joyce	
Lunch:	Constance	Maureen	
Washing-up:	YAF Group 1/Volunteers	YAF Group 2/Volunteers	
Bible Study:	Video	DHW – Genesis	
Appointments of the Week			
Fri 15 Dec	7.00 pm	Young Adults Fellowship: BS Leader: Jeff Pun	
Sat 16 Dec	4.00 pm	Prayer Meeting & Bible Study: Spkr/C'man: Pr Mok	
Last Week's Worship Service Collections			
Offering: £501.00		Lunch: £24.00	
YAF: £44.76			
The Lord's Prayer			
<p><i>Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, But deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen</i></p>			