



NEW LIFE BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

Vol. 18 No. 36

LORD’S DAY 07 SEPTEMBER 2014

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Morning Service – 11am

Evening Service – 4pm

Prelude

The Lord Is in His Holy Temple

Call to Worship

2 Peter 1:16-19

1 Peter 3:18-22

*Opening Hymn **

RHC 84 – *“This is the Day of Light”*

RHC 100 – *“He Lifted Me”*

*Opening Prayer **

Jonathan Kim

Jonathan Kim

*Gloria Patri **

Glory Be to the Father

Responsive Reading

Psalm 85

*Second Hymn **

Psalm 85 verses 1-7
(to the tune of Evan, RHC 259)

Announcements & Memory Verse

Jonathan Kim

Jonathan Kim

*Tithes & Offerings & Doxology **

RHC 322 – *“Is My Name Written There?”*

Scriptural Text

Amos 9:6-10

John 14:7-11

Pastoral Prayer

Dr Carl Martin

Dr Carl Martin

Sermon Message

National Loyalty and the Lord

Missing the Obvious

*Closing Hymn **

RHC 473 – *“Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life”*

RHC 474 – *“We Would See Jesus”*

*Benediction/3-Fold Amen **

Dr Carl Martin

Dr Carl Martin

Postlude

The Lord Bless You

* Congregation Stands

THE LORD IS IN HIS HOLY TEMPLE

The Lord is in His holy temple,
The Lord is in His holy temple:
Let all the earth keep silence,
Let all the earth keep silence before Him -
Keep silence, keep silence before Him. Amen.

DOXOLOGY

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise Him, all creatures here below;
Praise Him above, ye heav’nly host;
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

GLORIA PATRI

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost,
As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world
without end. Amen, Amen.

THE LORD BLESS YOU

The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord lift His countenance upon you,
and give you peace, and give you peace;
The Lord make His face to shine upon you,
And be gracious unto you, be gracious,
The Lord be gracious, gracious unto you. Amen.

Church Theme 2014 – “Waiting for God” – Isaiah 30:18

Dear Brethren in the Lord,

For this week's article, I would like to refer you to the below exhortation from Pastor J. J. Lim, who was the former minister of this church during the earlier years, and while he was furthering his theological study in Wales. He is now currently the pastor of Pilgrims Covenant Church in Singapore.

The subject of his exhortation is one that is of great concern to me as I observed many practices in many churches that are not warranted in the scripture. These practices are in place since time immemorial, and it continues without any review or consideration whether it is scriptural. Most of these practices, as Pastor Lim pointed out, is out of pragmatism, and/or humanistic reasoning and out of a sincere intention for good. But sadly, more often than not, we are sincerely wrong in the light of scripture.

Therefore, there is a great need for us to take a step back, and with the aid of the Bible, to review some of these practices that are prevalent in many churches, to see whether our practices are right and acceptable in the sight of the Lord, and this subject in respect of children in worship is one that has a far-reaching effect to our posterity than we could ever imagine.

I trust that we will take heed to God's Word and make amends to our practices and seek to do what is right and pleasing in the sight of God in every aspect of our ministries.

Yours in Christ

Mok

CHILDREN IN WORSHIP

It is an interesting fact that most Christian worship halls in Singapore have a little room which is designated a 'cry room.' Ask around what is the function of a 'cry room,' and you are likely to get a response to the effect: "The cry room is a play room in which mothers, with infants and toddlers who are too young for Sunday School, can sit in during worship service." This statement reveals several facts with regards to the modern use of the cry room and the place of children in worship in general. Firstly, most cry rooms today are soundproof rooms which are separated from the main worship hall with a glass panel, or connected by close-circuit TV. Mothers who use the cry room can in fact observe or at least listen in to the worship service. Secondly, cry rooms are designed to isolate noisy children from the congregation so that no one will be disturbed by their noises. Generally mothers with their young children would use the room for the entire service: they go into the room at the beginning of the service and stay there to the end of the service. Thirdly, many who use cry rooms generally do not follow the form of the worship service. For example, parents may sit throughout the service even at the times when the congregation is required to stand. This is especially so when there is no immediate visual link with the main worship hall, such as when the room is not separated by a glass panel. Children, on the other hand, are usually allowed to play freely in the rooms. Indeed, some cry rooms are even equipped with play mats and toys.

When cry rooms are so used, it is no wonder that many a church soon begin to organise nurseries, crèches and even full-fledged Sunday Schools. Why let the children play in the cry rooms and disturb their parents when you could maximise the use of the time to teach the children some biblical truths or get them to do some 'biblical activities'? What's more, not only would a new area of service be created, but parents could worship in peace!

So prevalent is this concept of the cry room and its logical derivatives, that most of us, I am quite sure, would be surprised when told that cry rooms in earlier days,—meaning, till less than 50 years ago,—had very different functions. 'Cry rooms' or 'crying rooms' were literally for the purpose of crying. You see, it had always been a common practice that children, toddlers and infants all worship together with their parents. When a baby or toddler cries, he is brought immediately into the crying room in order that his cry may not disturb the rest of the congregation. He stays there until he stops crying, and then he is brought back into the worship hall again. In the same way if a toddler or a young child needs to be disciplined for being rowdy or irreverent during the worship service, this room could also be used. Again the child is brought back into the worship hall after appropriate admonition.

How did the original function of the cry room so disappear from modern Christianity that few know why the room is called a 'cry room' today? I believe the answer is two-fold.

First, I believe that it is because most of us today have a pragmatic, rather than biblical or theological, attitude when it comes to worship. This attitude appears even in churches, which have children worshipping with the adults, such as when a mother tells a child to keep quiet during worship service it is for no other reason than not to disturb other worshippers. With this attitude, it would not be uncommon to see parents entertaining a toddler by playing during worship service so that the child would not cry for attention.

Secondly, spurred by pragmatism, many a church today develops the idea that children have special needs, which are distinct from that of adults. By this reasoning, it is thought that it makes no sense to have children sit through “adult worship services.” One respected writer, for example, complains that “there is an almost superstitious idea abroad in the churches that if the children are made to sit through adult sermons, God will be especially pleased, and some spiritual benefit will wash off on them whether they understand anything or not.” The writer is, I suppose, referring to the more conservative churches in the United Kingdom.

It is not difficult to see from our lengthy introduction that we do not agree that children should be taken out of worship services into separate programmes, whether formal or informal. We are, of course, not denying the usefulness of a crying room when properly used. In fact, we are not even opposed to the use of crying rooms to training children who are still not used to sitting quietly in public worship with the whole congregation. What we must attempt to do, however, is to provide some biblical basis for our belief lest we become legalistic in our practice, or be easily swayed by new innovations “to cater to the needs of our children.”

Let me suggest five reasons why we ought to keep our children with us during worship and why they must be trained to attend to worship reverently.

God’s Covenant

The first reason why we should keep our children in our worship services is that God is not only concerned with us individually, but with our families. This is by virtue not only of biblical examples of God’s dealings with families (e.g., Lk 19:9; Acts 16:31); but by the biblical assertion that: “the promise is unto you, and to your children” (Acts 2:38–39). The Apostle Peter, who first enunciated these words, was clearly referring to the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 17:7; cf. Gal 3:13–14, 29) in which God instructed Abraham to circumcise his male children because among them would be the “children of the promise” (Rom 9:8; Gal 4:28). This is also why we baptise our infants. The Church is essentially God’s covenant people, whether in the Old or New Testament. It is an organic body comprised of families and not just individuals. Though an individual believer may be considered as a planting of the Lord (Mt 15:13), the Church must not be conceived of as a collection of individual plants, rather, it must be conceived of as a tree (cf. Rom 11). Children form part of the tree, as branches. If the branches do not bear fruit, they would be cut off (Jn 15:6). But as long as they remain in the congregation, they are covenantally holy (1 Cor 7:14) and are to be regarded as members of the church.

Thus, when the congregation is addressed with the singular second-person pronouns by the Lord, such as in the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2–3, the children are included. This is especially clear in Deuteronomy 29:10–13 in which a gathered congregation, which explicitly included little children, was addressed with the singular pronouns ‘thee’ and ‘thou’: “That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the LORD thy God, and into his oath, which the LORD thy God maketh with thee this day: That he may establish thee to day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God, as he hath said unto thee, and as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob” (Deut 29:12–13).

Naturally, then, when the church gathers for worship, the children, being members of the church, should be included.

Biblical Pattern

Secondly, I believe that it is a biblical pattern that children be included in congregation worship, together with their parents. In the Old Testament, the Jews were seldom required to come together to worship the Lord in the hearing and exposition of the Law, but when they did come together the children were normally included in the worship. For examples, firstly, at the renewal of the covenant recorded in Deuteronomy 29, we are specifically told that the “little ones” (v. 11) were present. The word translated “little ones” literally means: “those who walk with quick tripping steps,” i.e., toddlers. Similarly at the sabbatical year convocation, we are told that not only were the men, but women, strangers and children, were to be gathered and instructed: “When all Israel is come to appear before the LORD thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing.

Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the LORD your God..." (Deut 31:11–13). Then again, in Joshua 8:35, we are told that "all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them" attended to the reading of the Word by Joshua. And again we read of similar gatherings during the time of Jehoshaphat (2 Chr 20:13) and during the Reformation of Ezra (Neh 8:2–3; 12:43).

In the New Testament, when the people gathered to hear our Lord, the young children were usually present too (see Mt 14:21; 15:38; etc.). On one occasion, we are told that the people began bringing their young children to the Lord to be touched by Him (Mk 10:13). For some reasons the disciples tried to stop them. Perhaps they thought that the Lord should not be encumbered with anything other than preaching or healing the sick. Perhaps they had baptised the children, but their parents were not satisfied, and they wanted the Lord at least to touch their children, believing that they could receive a special blessing that way. Whatever the case, the disciples did not think it necessary for the Lord to accede to their request and so they rebuked them. We are told, however, that "when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mk 10:13–14). The word translated 'little children' here is the Greek *paidion* (*paidion*), which means "very young child or infant."

This statement of our Lord is instructive, for how do we suffer the little children to come unto Christ in post-ascension Christian worship, but to bring them to worship with the body of Christ?

Whatever the case may be, there is little doubt that the practice of having children in the worship service was the norm in the early church. This is suggested by the fact that the apostolic epistles, which were read during congregational worship in the early church, addressed the children directly (e.g., Eph 6:1; Col 3:20; and perhaps 1 Jn 2:12). In general, the biblical pattern is that the Christian family, being heirs together in the covenant of grace, ought to worship together. It is a matter of historical fact that the exclusion of children from congregational worship is a very recent innovation, which is probably an offshoot of the Sunday School movement.

The Call of the Gospel

The third reason why children should worship with the congregation is that the ordinary means by which God calls His people is the preaching of the Word of God: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom 10:17).

Those with Arminian tendencies will generally insist that there is such a thing as an "age of accountability," before which a child would not be held accountable for his or her sins or for rejecting the Gospel. They reason that before such an age of accountability, which is generally arbitrary, the child is incapable of conceptual thoughts. This "age of accountability" is however an unscriptural idea based on secular psychology and popular morality. The Scripture declares every child of Adam to be guilty before God from the moment he is conceived (cf. Ps 51:5). Conversely, the Scripture also indicates that it is possible for a child to be regenerated at a very young age and so come unto faith and justification. John the Baptist was apparently regenerated while he was still in his mother's womb. The angel Gabriel had foretold this when he prophesied that "he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (Lk 1:15). Then when Mary came to visit John's mother, the baby, sensing the presence of Christ, leapt for joy (Lk 1:44).

From the example of John the Baptist, we see that regeneration is a sovereign work of God, not dependant on rational profession of faith. Indeed, it is the consistent teaching of Scripture that regeneration precedes faith. In the case of covenant infants, it is possible that the child is regenerate long before he is able to express faith. Surely a regenerate child would benefit from the preaching of the Word. John Willison puts it well when he says: "Though children be young, yet bring them with you; for they are capable of getting good by the word sooner than we are aware. ... If we lay our children by the pool-side, who knows how early the Spirit of God may help them in, and heal them?" (Works, 77).

Moreover, experience has shown us that children as young as a year and a half (as was a case of a little girl I know in London) could understand adult conversation reasonably. Experience has also taught us that children 4 to 5 years old could actually benefit from sermons and respond to them by way of obedience.

Such being the case, it would be rather presumptuous for the church or for parents to exclude their children from the preaching of the Word of God, which is designed for the spiritual well-being of every member in the church. Would it not be exceedingly strange for parents to pray for the salvation of their infants and then remove them from the ordinary means ordained to call them unto Christ?

The Praises of Babes and Sucklings

The fourth rationale behind having children worshipping with the congregation is that God is well-pleased with the praises of babes and sucklings.

Those who advocate an age of accountability are also likely to think that the praises of babes and sucklings are meaningless, since they are unable to worship God consciously. This is however contrary to what our Lord teaches. We read in Matthew 21 of how the children in the temple praised the Lord with the words: “Hosanna to the Son of David” as they beheld Him clearing the compound of those who bought and sold and exchanged money; and healing the blind and the lame that came to Him (Mt 21:12–15). The chief priests were displeased and so chided the Lord, but the Lord replied: “Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?” (Mt 21:16). The terms, “babes and sucklings,” as their designations imply, refer to infants and babies who are still suckling, i.e., under 3 years old since Jewish mothers were wont to nurse their babies till three. From our Lord’s statement, we can be sure that God is especially honoured by the praises of little children.

If this is the case, then, removing children from the worship of the church would be like removing a range of violins from an orchestra, or excising toes and fingers from the body.

The Training of Children

The fifth reason why we include our children in worship is a pragmatic one, which is to train our children to revere and worship God. Children who are taught to sit still during worship when young are likely to grow up understanding the importance of reverential worship. More than one godly persons I know have expressed their gratitude to their fathers for disciplining them to keep them still and quiet during worship when they were young. Matthew Henry, who was himself trained from young, explains: “Little children should learn betimes to worship God. Their parents should instruct them in his worship and bring them to it, put them upon engaging in it as well as they can, and God will graciously accept them and teach them to do better” (Comm. on 1 Samuel 1:19). Also: “It is for the honour of Christ that children should attend on public worship, and he is pleased with their hosannas” (Comm. on Luke 2:41).

Conclusion

Baptist churches, in general, which see children of believing parents as being no different from children of pagan families, had led the way of separating children from their parents during worship. We are glad to know that even Baptist churches, that is, Calvinistic Baptist churches, have begun to return to the old paths and are conscientiously including their children in their worship services. It would be such a shame for us, who claim to believe in God’s gracious covenant and favour towards His families, to persist in doing what is right in our own eyes rather than what is warranted by Scripture.

It is true that many children are unable to sit for the duration of the sermon without becoming a distraction to their parents and fellow worshippers, but I believe that this problem can be overcome by persistent training, with the co-operation of a sympathetic congregation. It is also true that many children are unable to understand adult sermons and would become so accustomed to the sound of preaching that they would shut off completely, so much so, that even when they are older and ought to be able to understand, they will make no effort to listen. To overcome this problem, may I suggest that parents, especially fathers, ought always to make sure that their children pay attention during the worship and help them to understand the sermon or at least the gist of it by taking simple notes during the sermon, and discussing the sermon during family worship.

May the Lord help us to persevere as we seek to do what is right and pleasing in the sight of God. May we neither bow to the pressure for numerical growth nor humanistic reasonings, however pious they may sound. Amen.

—JJ Lim

WELCOME TO NEW LIFE B-P CHURCH LONDON

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.

APPOINTMENTS FOR THE WEEK			WELCOME
Tues 09 Sept	No Ladies Mid-Week Bible Study		We extend a warm welcome to all worshippers this Lord's Day. We like to welcome Michael to our worship services last Lord's Day.
Fri 12 Sept	No Young Adults Fellowship		
Sat 13 Sept	Bible Study & Prayer Meeting		
Next Lord's Day	Morning Service	Evening Service	LORD'S DAY DUTIES
Preacher	Dr Carl Martin	Dr Carl Martin	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>TODAY: 07/09/2014</u></p> <p>Chairman: Jonathan</p> <p>Organist: Anthony</p> <p>Pianist: Jasmine</p> <p>Ushers: Daniel / Evelyn</p> <p>Sunday School: Hannah / Rachael</p> <p>Lunch: Helen</p> <p>Washing Up: Volunteers</p> <p>PA Crew: Scott</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>NEXT WEEK: 14/09/2014</u></p> <p>Chairman: John</p> <p>Organist: Anthony</p> <p>Pianist: Jasmine</p> <p>Ushers: Tom / Yetta</p> <p>Sunday School: Hannah / Rachael</p> <p>Lunch: Maureen</p> <p>Washing Up: Volunteers</p> <p>PA Crew: Jonathan</p>
Message	A New Day of Opportunity	Greater Works	
Text	Amos 9:11-15	John 14:12-14	
NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-lunch Bible Study: Dr Martin will lead this week's study. • Pray for those who are sick: Douglas, Barbara, Prema, Margaret, May Chew, Constance, Deborah, Pastor & Mrs Ki, Susan, Dr Carl Martin, Dr Scott-Pearson, Nina, Helen, Eld Chew's mother, Rev Colin Wong, Patricia, Hannah, Shirley, Daniel, Dr Brian Green. • Pray for those seeking employment: Yetta, Magdalene. • Pray for those on travel: Margaret, Constance, Helen, Nina. • Pulpit Ministry: Please pray for the church's sponsorship application and Pr Mok Chee Cheong's visa. • The Lord's Supper: We will be observing the Lord's Supper next week. Please come with hearts prepared. 			
<p>Worship Service Collections - Last Sunday: £931.19, Lunch: £37.00</p> <p>Attendance - Morning: 27 (A) 8 (C), Evening: 19 (A) 4 (C)</p>			

SHORTER CATECHISM QUESTION 32

Q: What benefits do they that are effectually called partake of in this life?

A: They that are effectually called do in this life partake of JUSTIFICATION, ADOPTION, and SANCTIFICATION, and the several benefits which, in this life, do either accompany or flow from them.

Comments:

Faith in Christ insures certain blessings, some of which are enjoyed in this life, others in the world to come. Of these enjoyed in this life, justification, adoption, and sanctification are the chief, and are of such a nature as to hold within them, or bring along with them, every other blessing.

Scriptural Reference:

1 Corinthians 1:30, Romans 8:30

MEMORY VERSE

	This Week	Next Week
<p>Last Week</p> <p><i>"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;"</i></p> <p>Ephesians 2:1</p>	<p><i>"Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:"</i></p> <p>Ephesians 2:2</p>	<p><i>"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others"</i></p> <p>Ephesians 2:3</p>