

	<p style="text-align: center;">The Order of St James (UK) Newsletter</p> <p style="text-align: center;">December 2023</p> <p style="text-align: center;">www.orderofstjames.info</p>	
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HE CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN

Fr

Ed Elsey OSJ

And so it comes round again - the joy of having a Church year for Christians to celebrate and think more deeply and reflect on the year as it passes is also a discipline of observation and commitment.

As we approach **Advent** once more, we prepare ourselves for the coming to earth of the Saviour of the World, popularly celebrated by the world at Christmas, or for us Anglo-Catholics, **Christ-mass**. I do not apologise if you had this from me before as I feel it is especially relevant with the affairs we see around us today - deeper dependence on the resource that is our adopted faith.

From Heaven You came helpless babe
Entered our world, Your glory veiled
Not to be served but to serve
And give Your life that we might live
This is our God, The Servant King
He calls us now to follow Him
To bring our lives as a daily offering
Of worship to The Servant King

We are invited to come to the manger and 'adore'. As a student I read avidly the writing of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin so I looked back on my notes from those days.

He writes this on Adoration:-

"To adore means to lose oneself in the unfathomable, to plunge into the inexhaustible, to find peace in the incorruptible, to be absorbed in defined immensity, to offer oneself to the fire and the transparency, to annihilate oneself in proportion as one becomes more deliberately conscious of oneself, and to give of one's deepest to that whose depth has no end'.

It was the dramatic and challenging purple prose a student gets excited by, especially as a chapel boy finding new avenues of worship and study than had ever been offered to me in chapel sermons: suddenly a chance to think for myself. Our lecturer, Dr Eric Rolls challenged me - nearly brought me into Methodist pastorate with my chapel background - think what I was spared!!

Archbishop William Temple in his 'The Hope of a New World' wrote:-

"To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.

All this is gathered up in that emotion which most cleanses us from selfishness, because it is the most selfless of all emotions - adoration".

He also later wrote:-

“The Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, ‘the Son’, was no less in heaven during the period of His earthly ministry than either before it or after it. What we see as we watch the birth and life of Jesus is the very life of Heaven - indeed of God - in human expression”.

Not that for the majority of the populace the Christmas story, so commercialised as it has now become, means any of the above, though it should do to us, priests and thinkers; but the manger, the Virgin birth, the faithfulness of Joseph the earthly protector of the infant, the adoration of the Magi and the effect on a Roman world, the starting fuse of a fire that would convert nations, will be relived and repeated, yet again, at such a season.

Who can know the deeper influences of such a story on all ‘ordinary lives’ - to stop and realise their salvation was borne at this hour?

So ‘come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord’ and in our modern challenge, as the popular worship song puts it:

So... let us learn how to serve
And in our lives enthrone Him
Each other's needs to prefer
For it is Christ we're serving.

Amen, and may it be so for His Name’s sake.

Fr Ed Elsey OSJ

PRAYERS:

+David OSJ (Wales)

Let us pause for a short silence, and collect our thoughts together.

Let us give thanks to God.

Let us pray for the Church and for the world, and let us thank God for his goodness. Almighty God, our heavenly father, you promised through your Son Jesus Christ to hear us when we pray in faith.

We pray for the witness of the Church this week, particularly in places where the Christian faith is ignored and forgotten. We pray for those who carry major responsibilities as bishops and church leaders, and are always expected to know what to say and do whatever the situation. Give them compassion, wisdom and the mind of Christ.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for Christians working in places of power and influence who make the decisions which may affect many people. We pray for Christians in politics, the media, advertising and the financial markets, that they may know how to act and what to say, in order to be true to Christ. We pray too that we may examine our own power over others, at home or work, and use it responsibly, by offering it to the one whom laid aside his power and took the form of a servant.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

Bless and guide Charles our King; give wisdom to all in authority; and direct this and every nation in the ways of justice and of peace; that we may honour one another, and seek the common good.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for those whom we love, the special people you have given to us, wherever they may be. We pray for our friends, the close ones and those we sometimes forget, those with a special problem and those who need you. We thank you for each of them and what they give to us. Keep us faithful to them as you are faithful to us. Give grace to us, our families and friends, and to all our neighbours; that we may serve Christ in one another, and love as he loves us.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We pray for those for whom this day will seem long and hard, for those in hospital or ill at home, those struggling with despair or depression, those waiting for a job, or important news, or a friend to call. We pray particularly for those whom this day will be their last. We name in our hearts any one we know who are in special need. Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles; and bring them the joy of your salvation.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

We remember with great gratitude those who have left their mark on our lives by giving us love and laughter, but have now gone before us to be with Christ. We hold them in our hearts, knowing that you, Lord, hold them in yours.

Hear us as we remember those who have died in the faith of Christ according to your promises, grant us with them a share in your eternal kingdom.

Lord in your mercy hear our prayer.

Rejoicing in the fellowship of all your saints, we commend ourselves and all Christian people to your unfailing love.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen

PROTECTING AND CARE OF THE CHILDREN

+David OSJ (Wales)

SINCE CHRIST has taken notice of the children their value has enormously increased.

When our Lord was living, a child born to Roman parents was laid at the Father's feet. If he stooped and took it up, it was permitted to live, if he took no notice of it, it was left to die. But Jesus is the Champion of the children.

He is their Friend and Saviour.

"Suffer them to come to me," he says. And He bids us feed His lambs. The children need Him.

He likens Himself to bread, water, light.

These are essentials; we cannot do without them, and they are necessary for children as for adults.

We are guilty of a great wrong to the children if we hinder them from coming to Christ, for apart from Him they can never be or do their best in life.

Children are naturally religious, it needs but a touch to awaken their response to God whose Heaven lies about us all in our infancy.

Theology they cannot understand, but religion they can and do enjoy. Prayer seems quite easy and natural to them. Your children do not love the science of botany - a talk to them about bracts, stamens, stipules and pistils wearies them; but let them loose in a field amongst the wild flowers and the cup of their happiness is full, and so theology may repel children, religion gives them joy.

The Church owes a great duty to the children - but before the Church there comes the home. In ninety nine cases out of a hundred the child will be what its parents make it.

“If a dog is neglected, his moral character does not seem to suffer materially; he may be as good as another dog; but if a child is neglected, it is left like an empty house, in which unclean creatures are sure to come and make their abode.

Parents should remember that how their children turn out, depends, in the long run, less on what they say to them than on what they themselves are and do. If the children know that father and mother make a point of telling God everything, they will want to do the same. If they see that their parents are unselfish, subordinating money, comfort, ease to the claims of the poor and needy in body and soul, depend upon it, they will catch from them the spirit of the good Samaritan. Religion is more easily caught than taught. The most valuable thing parents can give their children is the light of a Christ like example.

Of Christ it is written that “His life was the light of men.” People said of Him not only “Never man spake as this man,” but “Never man lived as this man.” His living affected them even when His speaking did not.

A son bearing testimony to his father’s noble character says: “My father’s religion was not violent or obtrusive; it was more felt than seen; it made no noise. When it spoke, it spoke in natural tones; and while it did not despise the ear, it had a special love for the heart and understanding . Under it we children came to know, in the quietest possible way, that God was good, and greatly to be feared because He was so good . . . Our family pews were as familiar to us as our family board. My father’s heart I know was in the Sanctuary. We loved it for his sake, and he taught us to love it for Christ’s sake and the Gospel’s. We were always there in one loving and compact group. It was the lifting up of our house bodily, into the house of God, which we felt to be both bigger and better than our own. Thus our sympathies were widened. We were but a part of a larger family; and our home was but one of ‘many mansions’ in the great Father’s House.

The most effective Sunday School in the world is the Christian home.

Parents can never shuffle off their spiritual responsibility to the children by sending them to our Church Schools. Parents are the natural guardians and teachers of their children, and God will require from them an account of their stewardship.

When we remember that no less than eighty per cent of the members of our churches are recruited from the Sunday Schools, we shall at once see the vital importance of getting hold of the children and training them for Christ and His service. (Not brain washing them). No pains should be spared to fill our schools and make them effective in every way. During my ministry it has been a joy to conduct Children's classes and services, and were I able to start my work over again, I confess that I should be quite willing to give up preaching to adults in favour of preaching twice every Sunday to children. These enthusiastic youngsters were never fearful to raise their hand and ask a question if they were unsure of something I or another priest was saying. I too learned so much from them too, asking detailed questions. God bless everyone of them.

A Dr. Garvie once said that when he had a Church he used to preach once a month on a Sunday morning to the children. The adult worshippers did not object; if the truth be known I feel they probably enjoyed the children's sermons as much as the youngsters. The advantage of talking to the children is that they are impressionable; adults who are always listening to sermons are not so easily moved.

When in North Essex and the Cambridgeshire border it was my custom at the Sunday morning service to give the children two or three Scripture problems. The children would send me their written answers during the week, and the names of the successful competitors were announced on the following Sunday.

It was most interesting for me that I read out every child's name!

Every now and then a prize was given to all, there was no prize given to an individual boy or girl with the highest marks.

The prizes I sourced from Charity shops such as good and interesting reading books, having learned in conversations what each child the subject each was interested in.

Their little faces would light up, especially when they were called to the front of the church to be presented with their reward!

Quiet a number of children used to send answers every week. At that time my own children were of their ages and all could be heard later in discussion in the hall giving their impressions and in depth interpretations of the sermon(s).

For me this was most uplifting.

Sadly today the decline in attendance at churches of parents let alone children is so sad. The children were so polite and respectful to all they met. I would like to feel it is they who are our pillars of society today.

One Sunday afternoon being in a certain country parish, and wishing to visit the Church. I found that a children's service was in progress. Boys and girls read lessons and prayers and gave out the hymns, and the offertory (collection) was made by the juveniles.

The only thing the Priest / Vicar did was to give the address.

During the summer, when I found it difficult to secure an adequate staff of teachers I arranged these services. The children are then much interested and behaved excellently well.

As they have so much to do in the conduct of the worship they feel that in a special sense the service is theirs. Is it not that a Clergyman believes that by having the children in the Church, he is training them in reverence, and in the duty of public worship, two very important matters.

In our Sunday Schools it is imperative at the moment to train up the future men and women of this country to believe in Public Worship.

In many schools this subject is never touched upon at all, and yet it is one of the supreme things for national well being and the future of the Christian Church. We are deploring empty pews all over the country, and yet we let children pass through our schools without impressing upon them the need for Public Worship. Addresses and lessons should be given on this important duty. Unfortunately many Sunday Schools can hardly be run at all owing to lack of teachers, and in a considerable number of other schools, where there are teachers, they are badly equipped for their work. Many schools are so short of teachers that almost anybody who volunteers is accepted, however lacking in qualification. Some schools have Teacher's Preparation classes, but the vast majority have not.

As this is so, is it not wise for ministers to hold every now and then, some such services in their churches as the one I have described? The priest (hopefully) being a trained man should be able to talk to the children more successfully than most of the Sunday School Teachers, and if by his kindly interest in their welfare he attaches them to himself, he will have done a good deal to solve the problem of how to retain our young people.

Where it can be arranged, a class during the week to prepare children for Church membership is most desirable.

Personally, I favour Catechetical instruction in our schools; through lack of this, I believe multitudes are without a creed. Such instruction needs, of course, a good deal of wisdom. I believe in a short, simple Catechism. A boneless Christianity does not commend itself to me.

"The neglect of the Catechism, and the indifferent and uninteresting teaching frequently given upon it, is a distinct loss not only to the child, but also to its Churchmanship when an adult.

The Girl Guides and the Boy Scouts ought to enlist our warmest sympathy and help. So should the Cadet movements. One reason why these movements are so valuable is that they call upon the young to render service to others. Service is the very centre of these organisations. The Church must give the children something to do. We must show them that religion is not mere talk, but unselfish service. We are all agreed that the best way of learning is by doing.

General Booth and his wife trained their children excellently. They were brought up to believe that they were in this world for a purpose, that they were here to serve others, that others had need of them. "The Booth parents had faith in their children and for their children. When Katie was still a little girl in socks, her mother would say to her: 'Now, Katie, you are not here in this world for yourself. You have been sent for others. The world is waiting for you.' What a phrase that, with which to send a little girl to bed! There she turned the words over in her own mind." The seed thus sown in the child's heart yielded a rich harvest in future years. In our work amongst the young we must stress the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, and seek above all to enlist their love and service for Him.

An extract from a letter:-

"Woodbine Willie" wrote his wife when he was a war chaplain in France, telling her how he would like his little son to be brought up, touches on this point. "Teach him to love Jesus Christ as the pattern God man. Teach him that and leave him free. Don't force his religion in any way, especially if he has brains. There are bound to be in these coming years very rapid developments in Christian thought; . . .do not be pained nor shocked so long as he keeps his love to Jesus Christ . . . Teach him constantly that a gentleman must give, not get, must serve and not be served." Christ must indeed be at the very centre of our work. It is sad to think that not a few of our scholars go through our Sunday Schools and at the end emerges little better than pagans.

I recall after a request to visit a lad in a large town who was very ill.

He was seventeen or eighteen years of age, and had been in the senior class of a Sunday School. I spoke to him about Jesus, but my words awoke no response in his heart. He seemed to feel no need at all of Christ. He admitted that Christ meant practically nothing to him, and when I asked him to tell me what his own religion was, he replied, "We've just got to do the best we can." That's the answer everybody might give if Jesus Christ had never come into the world. The sad thing was that his reply was the answer of one who had passed through the highest class in a Sunday School.

One Sunday afternoon I went into the class which this lad used to attend, and found that the afternoon had been spent in discussing whether the walls of Jericho ever really fell down. On another Sunday, visiting one of the senior girls' classes I was told there had been a heated argument about Jonah's whale!

Of course I am not so foolish as to suggest that these things should be taboo in our schools; our young people demand, and should have a reasonable interpretation of Old Testament difficulties.

One is thankful for the more intelligent conception that the Church of today as of the earlier books of the Bible. My studies and courses I have undertaken gave me new ideas about Progressive Revelation that have been of priceless value.

But whilst admitting that we must not ignore Old Testament problems in the Sunday School, I still affirm that unless we can, our scholars far beyond the walls of Jericho and such like things and bring them up to Jesus Christ, and make Him to them one Supreme, Vital Figure in the Bible, I see very little good in keeping our schools open.

Our schools, properly conducted, are of the utmost importance, but unfortunately their usefulness is often spoilt because many children come from non Christian homes.

When the parents are indifferent to religion and never attend a Church, one cannot be surprised that the children turn out badly.

And so we come back to what was said at the beginning of this chapter. The best teachers cannot take the place of the Father and Mother, or do their work.

Parents need to think more of their example, and make more of their homes. Even good people, with the best of intentions, sometimes spend much time away from home.

John Howard spent his life in caring for the welfare of others, he was instrumental in reforming the prisons of Europe. Unfortunately he neglected his home, and the philanthropist's life was saddened by seeing his only son go utterly to the bad as a result.

Victor Hugo said: "He who opens a school closes a prison," and we may say with still greater truth, that he who conducts a home in the spirit of Christ opens one of the finest Churches in the world.

If our duties and responsibilities do not end at home they certainly begin there, and when a child is born into the family, the Divine injunction is: "Train this child for Me." Thrice happy the parents who carry out God's command. They bless both themselves and their children by so doing. Amen.

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With Christmas Day ahead of us, I want to spend a little time thinking about the childhood of Christ, not from His point of view but from that of His parents.

The following article is based on our responsibilities towards our children, even if they are not physically ours. They are entrusted to us as was Jesus

-oOo-

On baptism and marriage.

(Following on from +David's article.)

If you research 'Baptism' then typically you will get something like the following.

The edited source extracts are from Christianity.com as they are less denominationally/theologically biased than other digital and printed sources/web sites and they are presented in a simple and straight forward way, and I have selected a number of key statements (shown in italics) which explain the personal meaning and biblically based theological reasoning behind baptism. It seems a good place to start.

The Meaning of Baptism

*If the meaning of baptism could be summarized in one word, that would be **identification**.*

Baptism speaks primarily of personal, public identification with Jesus Christ.

Baptism is your personal identification with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Baptism doesn't save you—salvation comes by faith alone (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Baptism is your personal testimony to and the inward assurance of your faith/personal relationship with God/Jesus.

How Baptism Relates to Jesus.

1. *The act of being baptized/baptism indicates we have turned from the old life of sin to a new life in Jesus Christ. As you stand in the water waiting to be baptized, first, you symbolize Jesus dying on the cross.*

2. *The act of being baptized/baptism means we are publicly identifying with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Second, you symbolize Jesus buried in the tomb as you are lowered into the water. As you are raised from the water, you symbolize Jesus rising from the dead.*

3. *The act of being baptized/baptism means we are openly joining the ranks of those who believe in Christ. And since you personally are being baptized, you are also saying, "I died with Jesus Christ, I was buried with Him and now I am raised with Christ to a brand-new life."*

Actual origin and meaning of the word, 'baptize'.

*The Greek word translated as "baptize" is the verb **baptizo**.*

Most contemporary lexicons say the primary meaning is "to dip, plunge, immerse."

The secondary meaning is to "bring under the influence."

What is the Purpose of Baptism?

Charles Stanley explains the importance of baptism, saying:

"Our Saviour commands us to follow His example in all things, including baptism: Matthew 28:19 says, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."

At the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus chose to be baptized. John the Baptist was calling the Jewish people to confess their sins and demonstrate repentance through immersion in the Jordan River.

Sinless Jesus joined the crowd at the river and asked John to baptize Him. The Lord chose to affiliate Himself with sinful man.

When we follow His example in the waters of baptism, we're publicly confessing our faith in the Saviour and identifying ourselves with Him.

Baptism allows us to demonstrate our connection with Jesus and with our brothers and sisters in Christ. We're all members of one body under the authority of the same Lord.

It's important to remember that Ephesians 2:8-9 says faith in Jesus Christ is the only requirement for salvation, not baptism. But, to fulfil His command, we're to be baptized following our decision to accept Him into our lives."

Key Scriptures about Baptism for reference.

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 2:38)

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.' (Acts 22:16)

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter 3:21)

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. (John 3:5)

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. (Mark 16:16)

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19)

In Summary:

Baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is the rite or ordinance by which persons are admitted into the Church of Christ. It is the public profession of faith and discipleship.

I have stayed away from discussing the actual method of baptizing. I have no ministerial preference when it comes to balancing practicality, location, personal preferences of candidates and those sponsoring them.

For myself, I chose a believer's baptism in the form of full immersion in the river Wharfe at Ilkley in my late teens.

I still remember the confusion my parents felt at my decision to set aside what they knew as baptism for something a bit 'more radical' in their eyes. The only way I could explain it was to say I appreciated the promised made on my behalf as a baby, but I was ready to take them up for myself and this was my way of doing it. It's not for everyone

So let's look at baptism in a slightly different way and the implications it has for Christian groups and the communities they are a part of, and in particular regarding child baptism and by default, marriage.

Baptism and marriage may appear to be a matter of personal choice but it is ritual, and therein lies one important and overlooked factor. It gives a date, time and place to an event to a significant life moment, and reaches beyond the individual and commits a community to support those individuals in their life long journey of discovery.

It may centre around the personal wishes, intentions and desires of the individual candidates involved, but those wishes, intentions and desires become community property and responsibility.

In a society where the individual is encouraged to prioritise their personal needs, rights and privileges over those of others, then such ritual is truly diminished in its importance, significance and relevance.

It's also certainly true that to criticise or comment upon what is a basic lack of commitment is to invite censure in a world that proclaims 'we can be whatever we want to be' and no-one has the right to raise objection because to do so is to go against individual human rights and may be considered a equality/hate crime. 'Rules' and 'responsibilities' are out, 'personal freedom' matters much more than individual obligations to family, friends, others, and 'I' and 'my needs' come first.

Even in church, this attitude is slowly gaining ground. It doesn't seem to matter whether its marriage, baptism or even confirmation, it seems people want the access and rights to aspire to all the sacraments but not the responsibilities that go with them.

To some extent, even ordination could be included in this list – many of the requests I have had for consideration for candidature for ordination have resulted in lots of promises but no commitment or actual effort.

So back to baptism and marriage.

Increasingly I see people want to be baptised/have their children baptised without really knowing why or being prepared to commit to (let alone understand) what they are promising. Similarly the same can be said of marriage.

So who is at fault for this situation?

Certainly the church itself has to take a good cut of the blame, not for making things 'too easy' but for its lack of relevant and consistent biblically based teaching, its lack of dedicated application of support, training and resources.

But is also equally true to say that the almost interminable attitude of 'it's not my job....' when it comes to the communal engagement of open ministry (a consequence of clergy not engaging with or promoting ground level lay ministry) is just as much to blame.

This shows that the communal understanding of the application of the Christian faith has not been fully grasped, understood or employed.

There is no such thing as 'individual ministry'. It can't exist without communal support.

Equally, there is also no such thing as 'communal support' unless individual ministry is recognised, accepted, validated, supported and encouraged.

One cannot exist without the other. When one dies, so does the other.

So what is it about traditional baptism and marriage that is so problematic, that we seem to have difficulty grasping?

1. Each requires a deep and explicit understanding of what is required by candidates making their own personal commitments

2. and also by the church or Christian community/communities they belong to.

3. Each requires personal commitment and a life time engagement if it is to be validated by the church or Christian community

4. and also by the church or Christian community/communities they belong to.

5. Each requires that interventions may be made by the church or Christian community/communities candidates belong to as part of that communal support.

6. That baptism and marriage comes with biblically based responsibilities both to and from the candidates.

7. That biblically based support and encouragement are an obligatory responsibility on the church or the Christian community the candidates are a part of.

8. That these things require mutual acceptance by all parties and are non-negotiable, and not out of a sense of duty but biblically based Christian love.

This is not a mandate for abuse of power or authority but simply a desire to see candidates and community flourish and experience success, but it means the giving up of personal freedoms in favour of the greater good.

The very things that society seems to want to reject.

So what is the Christian biblically based societal model that is causing so much rejection?

1. 'Love God' and 'love your neighbour' are at the very heart of all Christian teaching and are in complete and total opposition to the ego-centric teachings promoted by modern rational and thinking society, the 'it's all about me and my needs' fallacy.

2. God made us who we are and we do not get to choose. There are just two genders, man and woman.

3. Marriage is between one man and one woman (as defined at birth) and is for mutual comfort, the procreation of children, is for life and for the general good of society.

4. Marriage is monogamous in nature and divorce, once marriage is entered into is unacceptable other than on grounds of infidelity.

5. Marriage is not just something that belongs to husband and wife but the whole community. One builds on the other and there is security and stability in this mutually supported relationship which puts love of God and neighbour first and foremost.

6. Children should be born within the confines of Christian marriage, not out of it. Sex is intended to be a part of marriage and outside of marriage is something that is unacceptable in God's eyes.

7. Children should be able to experience first-hand the practice of love within the confines of a permanently stable family unit and learn that they have responsibilities to God and to others as a normal part of family daily life.

8. Children should also have their faith built upon within the family and learn how to deal with an outside world that isn't always sympathetic or co-operative when it comes to living a life of faith.

9. Children and parents should also be an active and regular part of church or Christian community. What they are taught here and experience should re-enforce what is being taught and exemplified at home. They should also come to learn that they have responsibilities that go beyond the confines of family life and extend through church into community life in general.

10. Parents and church/Christian community have responsibilities towards each child in recognising emergent ministry and putting it to use when appropriate but otherwise guiding, supporting and encouraging.

11. Parents and church/Christian community need to realize this support is a full time commitment and isn't something to pick up or put down on a whim. This kind of foundational care relies on parents guiding and supporting the church/Christian community and the church/Christian community guiding and supporting the parents. It's all about listening to and biblically and spiritually nurturing children and preparing them to carry on building up the church/Christian community when it is our turn to hand it over to them.

12. The church/Christian community impacts on society in general at all kinds of level and benefits all. A society grounded on a real understanding of love, its application, its responsibilities and obligations is a stable and caring society that benefits all.

It's why the commandments to 'love God' and 'love one's neighbour' are prime directives and without which there would only be chaos.

One can see why society in general will find this biblically based Christian model of society so difficult to accept but that doesn't mean the Christian model of society is in any way wrong.

Almost against the odds, it is time for Christians of all denominations and communities to make a stand, but as we have a God of the impossible, the possible is never far away if we have faith.

Our children deserve better than what the world has in store for them. They deserve a future of value and worth, and I whole heartedly agree with +David when it comes to our young people. They are God's gift to us and to the world when we are departed.

+Ian

*If our duties and responsibilities do not end at home
they certainly begin there, and when a child is born into the family,
the Divine injunction is: "Train this child for Me."
Thrice happy the parents who carry out God's command.
They bless both themselves and their children by so doing. Amen.*