

## Ministry Rationale

Why do we invest so much time, labor, and money on children? The following offers four significant reasons for this investment.

### 1. God's glory depends on it

The Apostle Paul, in his benediction at the end of Ephesians 3 says, "(Now) to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen." Anyone familiar with Scripture knows that God is interested in His glory being spread from generation to generation, forever and ever. If that is going to happen practically, every generation is going to have to diligently train successive generations to know and live for the God of glory. Failure to do this may well effect the intensity with which God's glory shines in future generations.

### 2. The survival and witness of the church depends on it

From our first stated reason it follows that not only God's glory depends on the faithful training of children, but also the very survival and witness of the church depends on it. It is a fact, that if one generation fails to pass on the glories of God to the next, the church could become extinct. In some countries where Christianity had once been vibrant, we now see almost no evidence of Christian faith. This is tragic because God's principle vehicle for advancing His agenda is the church, and if the church dwindles because of this kind of neglect, we hamper the work of God in that region for a generation or more.

Beyond that, if the children of the church are not embracing the faith and living it out, the witness of the church is diminished. How compelling is a faith which cannot capture the hearts and minds of the faithful's children? If the children of the church are exiting in great numbers, why should others enter in? The faithful teaching of children is vital to the survival and witness of the church.

### 3. The survival of society depends on it.

The third reason for having a vital ministry to children is because the very survival of society depends on it. In the Old Testament, when the people of God deserted their God for idols, there resulted great social decay. Increases in murder, adultery, idolatry, theft and so on resulted. God's people knew that their survival as a nation depended on their faithfulness to pass on the faith.

Martin Luther told the people of his day that they were at fault for the lack of discipline, government and peace of which they were all complaining. He told the people that as they had trained their children, so now they were reaping the consequences.

The founders of this country equally realized that failure to train the young in the tenets of the faith would result in the "ruin with which it will be overwhelmed, should vice and infidelity loosen the restraints of virtue and make our population a mass of moral pollution." They realized that the survival of the nation depended on how they instructed their children in ways of the Lord.

It must be said that much of the turmoil and moral decay we see today is a result of our desertion of God, and the subsequent lack of fear of God in our children. The training of children for God really does have far-reaching consequences.

4. The quality of life and the eternity of every child depends on it.

Finally, we must diligently teach our children because the quality of their life, even their eternal state depends on it. A child raised without knowing the Lord, is a child who does not know life. He is living death, and if God does not intervene he will spend an eternity separated from the life of God. On the other hand, a child who embraces Christ, experiences “a little bit of heaven” on earth – he really lives by the power of God’s Spirit – and has the hope of life eternal. The difference here couldn’t be any greater. Training children in the faith matters.