

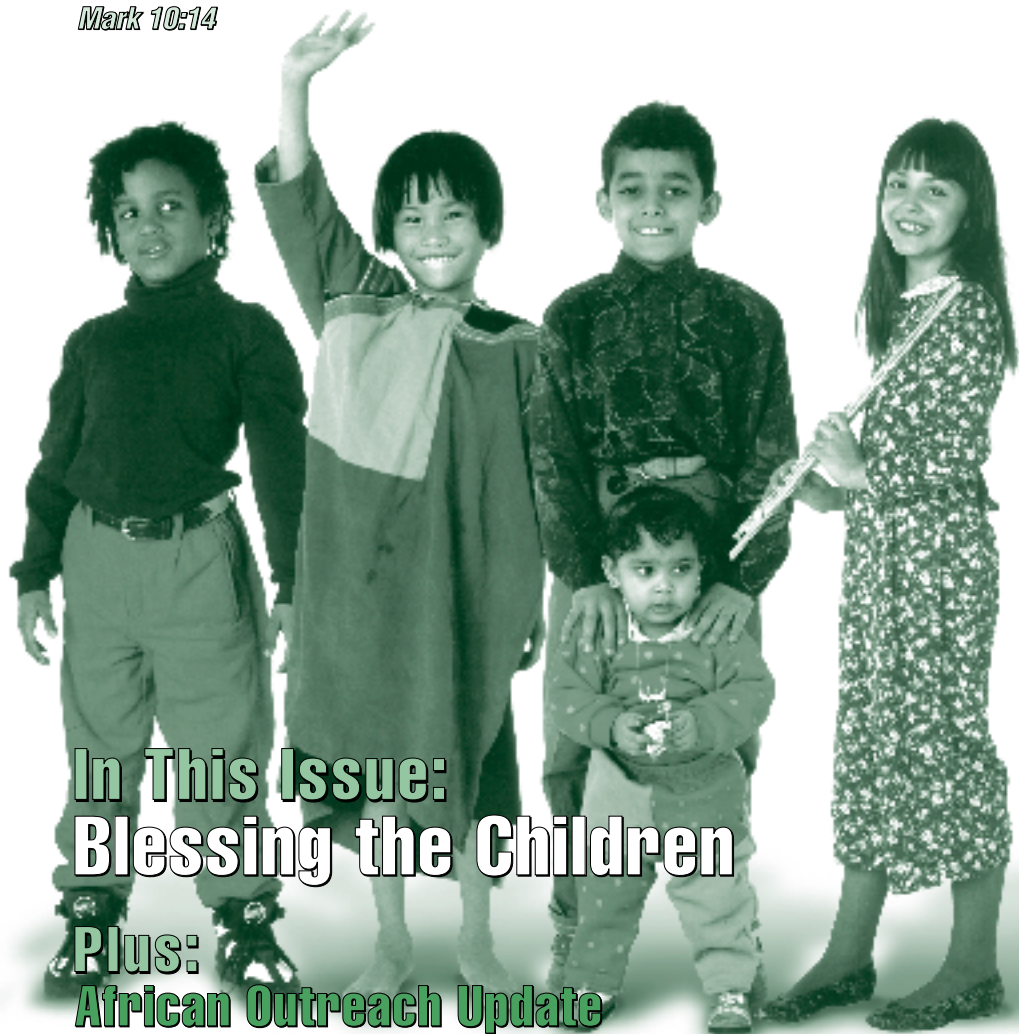
FAITH IS ACTION

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BLESS THE CHILDREN

"Suffer the little children to come unto me,
and forbid them not; for such is the Kingdom of God."

Mark 10:14



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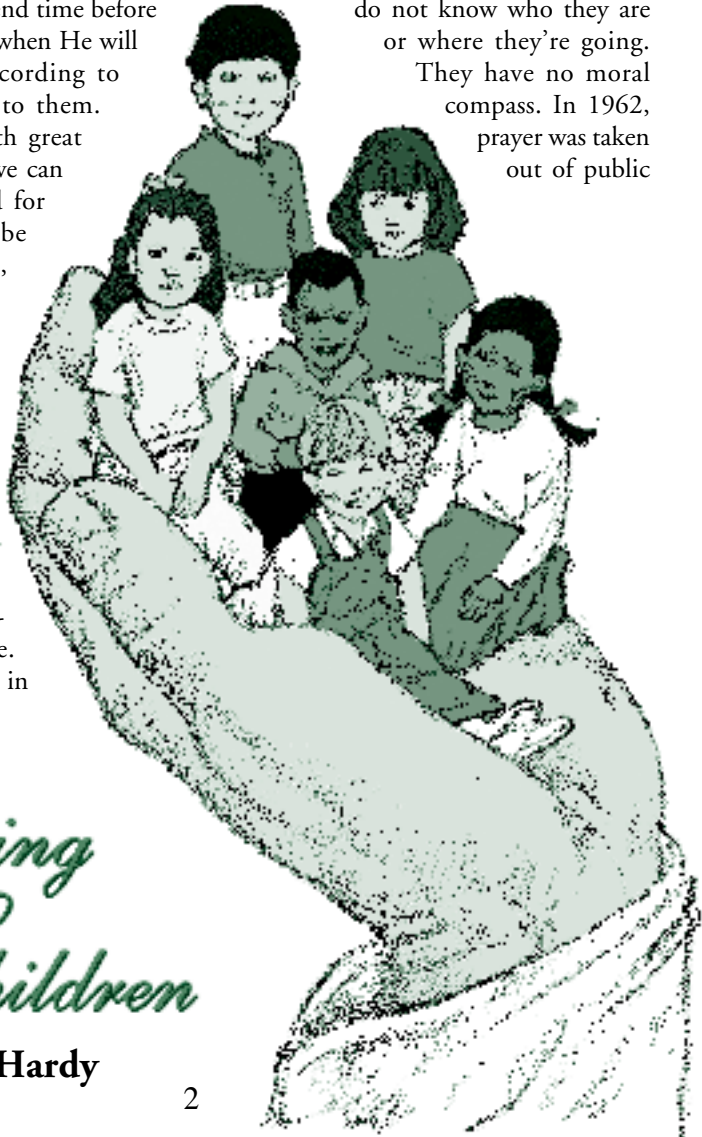
“And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse” (Malachi 4:6).

Friends, these are the final words of the Old Testament—the last recorded verse of Scripture spoken to God’s people before the 400 year period of silence that preceded the New Testament with the coming of Christ. Its prophetic words jump the gap to the very end time before the Lord’s second advent when He will restore natural Israel according to His particular promises to them. However, as we near with great rapidity this very event, we can already see the dire need for the hearts of fathers to be turned to their children, and the children’s hearts to their parents! We are, in fact, experiencing *an epidemic of fatherlessness* in our nation. As a result, the children of America are cursed children. They have experienced neglect, abuse, violence, and a lack of godly training and moral guidance. Soon enough they act out in

their adolescent and teen years the same violent and godless behavior that was perpetrated on them. They are, indeed, an un-blessed generation!

Generation X

Every generation of youth has its peculiarities that mark its passage and identity in society, but this generation has been dubbed “X”—because they do not know who they are or where they’re going. They have no moral compass. In 1962, prayer was taken out of public



Blessing the Children

By R.G. Hardy

schools. Bible reading was banned. It was no longer permissible to cite the foundational principles of goodness outlined in the Ten Commandments, or the Beatitudes, or the wise counsel of the Psalmist, such as the poetic words of comfort found in Psalm 23!

Recently, I heard the moving testimony of a man who was facing imminent death after being shot by an angry relative. He himself had lived a life of crime and immorality. As a child he had been abused by his own father and had never been taught anything about God. The only exposure he had ever had to the Bible were the brief readings of the Psalms during opening exercises at school. He had long forgotten them. But as he lay there, dying in his own pool of blood, he decided to cry out to God to help him. Somehow, he knew he couldn't die in his condition. He had no idea what to say. Then he recalled the words of Psalm 23. He earnestly prayed, "*The Lord is my Shepherd...*"

God miraculously spared his life, and he became a Christian and now ministers to others who are trapped in his former way of life. When I heard his testimony, I wept in joy for him but in sadness for all the kids since 1962 who have not been given the life-saving truth of God's Word in school.

Since 1960, statistics show:

Teen suicide has *tripled*.

Illegitimacy has *quadrupled*.

The crime rate has increased *five times*.

And after a hopeful decrease, hard drug use amongst teens and even younger children is increasing now at alarming rates.

Fatherlessness—A Curse

Presently, at least **50%** of American children live in homes *without their biolog-*

ical father—That's 23 million kids! *The primary cause will be illegitimacy—mostly teenage unwed mothers.* The secondary cause is rampant *divorce*.

One out of every three births in the U.S. is to an unwed mother, and for Blacks, the rate is at 70%! Sad to say, not long ago, my very own city of Baltimore had the highest birth rate for unwed mothers in the country! There is a high school here just for them to finish their schooling while pregnant. Now, I am certainly not implying that we should abandon these kids in need. My point is, our kids are doing these things because they've lost their way! The blessings of God are not upon them. They are the products of divorce, illegitimacy, abandonment, or churchless parents who have failed to train them in godliness.

Yes, it's true that they have been dealt a tremendous blow by the exclusion of religious training in public schools, while at the same time being taught evolution, humanism, and sex education. Make no mistake, God will and is judging our nation for these offenses against Him and our kids! Nevertheless, *it is the parents who are accountable to train their children in godliness,* and because they haven't, these children are perpetuating a generational cycle of iniquity that is becoming more destructive.

Consider these consequences: Fatherless children are *twice* as likely to become *school dropouts*. They are *twice* as likely to use *drugs*. They are *2 1/2 times* more likely to become *unwed mothers*. A whopping *70%* will become *hard-core criminals* increasing our already exploding prison population.

The hearts of the fathers have failed to give their children the love, guidance, and hope that they need to bless their future

and lead them in the right path. Proverbs 22:6 instructs **the parents:**

“Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.” **Parents are a child’s first and most important teachers.**

Our wisest president, Abraham Lincoln, stated, *“There is just one way to bring up a child in the way he should go, and that is to travel that way yourself.”*

Some parents may be so God-minded as to send their kids to Sunday School or VBS, while they stay home and tend to carnal chores. Thank God for that much exposure to Christianity, but church teaching must work in conjunction with the godly teaching and parental guidance provided in the home.

By the time a child is just *seven years old*, his/her values and personality are already molded. It is so important for Christian parents and grandparents to realize this and begin blessing their children from birth (and even before)! A reading of **Psalm 139:13-18** reveals that God knows the child while in the mother’s womb! The unborn child rejoices:

“...Thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;...my substance was not hid from thee when I was made in secret...How precious are thy thoughts also unto me, O God!” So if you are expecting a child, start **now** to speak blessings over your little one!

The Value of a Child

Parents must recognize and appreciate the value of their children. They are the result of the very first blessing God ever spoke over mankind in Genesis 1:28: *“And God blessed them, and said Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it...”*

Children are not only a great responsibility but they are our greatest gift from God! *“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD, and the fruit of the womb is his reward”* (Psalm 127:3).

We have seen the sorrowful consequences of un-blessed children. Most of these come from homes where there was no Bible training. Surprisingly, however, *many Christians are not aware of the legacy of “Blessing the Children”* that began with God’s blessing Abraham, and Abraham’s blessing Isaac, passed down to his two sons, Jacob and Esau, to the 12 sons of Jacob, *even unto this day in orthodox Jewish families!*

Someone may say, “Well I’m not Jewish. What has this “blessing ritual” have to do with Christians?”

Abraham’s Two Seeds

“And if ye be Christ’s then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29). The promise belongs to us, and the promise is: *“In blessing, I will bless you.”* If you belong to Christ, you are Abraham’s seed like Jesus is Abraham’s seed, and through Him, inherit the promises, and the promises are manifold blessings. God said to Abraham, *“Because there’s no greater, I swear by Myself, that in blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying, I will multiply thee”* (Heb. 6:13-14).

Abraham passed the blessings on to Isaac, and Isaac passed them on to Jacob, and Jacob passed them on to his 12 sons. Then God raised up Moses and Aaron and gave Israel the priesthood, and He told Moses to instruct the priesthood to put the blessings of His Name on the children of God.

One of these blessings was that “the children would be the head at the gate of the enemy.” In Bible times, the gate of

the city was where the rulers sat in judgment and ruled; so when the Bible says that they shall rule in the enemy's gate, it means they shall rule *over the enemy!* When they sold Joseph down to Egypt as a slave boy, he rose to be the ruler under Pharaoh. We also as heirs to this blessing, are going to rule at the gates and possess the gates of the enemy.

When Abraham was old God had blessed him in "all things" (Gen. 24:1), and when it was his time to go, he gave all that he had unto Isaac, the son of promise, and the blessings passed on to him and his seed. Traditionally, the blessing was to pass to the firstborn, but God knew that the firstborn, Esau, didn't have a heart for spiritual things, and prophesied before they were born that "the older would serve the younger." Jacob wanted the blessing so much that in the womb, when they were about to be born and Esau came out first, Jacob grabbed him by the heel and

tried to pull him back!

I admire Jacob, because he wanted the blessing. If you want the blessing, you go after it. That's why they called him "Jacob" which means "*conniver.*" He was trying to get the blessings by trickery. He got the natural blessing when he and his mother got together and put sheep's skin on him to imitate Esau who smelled like a man of the field. Jacob wasn't going to let the blessing of the birthright go. You see, there was power in the blessing of the parents to the children, that when they put the blessing on the child, it could not be revoked. The Church today hasn't taken advantage of that blessing. Whatever Abraham blessed Isaac with, *came to pass.* Isaac blessed Jacob when he came in with the good stew his mother made imitating Esau's deer. Isaac got prepared to bless his son. He ate that meal and felt real good. You know, when somebody comes and makes you feel real good, the blessings get better! Isaac laid his hand on Jacob, and he blessed him, and he gave him the blessings of the dew of heaven, and the blessings of the fatness of the earth. He gave him as servants all of his brethren, all of his mother's children, that people would serve him and nations would bow down to him (Gen. 27:28-29). I mean, he was to become mighty and very great.

Jacob slipped out with the blessing! Afterward, Esau came and said, "Father, I have brought your favorite venison. I'm ready for you to bless me." Isaac wanted to know who it was, and when he realized he had blessed Jacob, he trembled and shook because he had put the blessing on him. Isaac said, "*I have blessed Jacob; yea, and he shall be blessed.*" It could not be revoked, because God had said, "**I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee.**"



Esau cried and said, “Is there not a blessing for me?” Isaac said, “I have made your brother ruler over you, and it cannot be revoked.” He literally prophesied his sons’ destinies **by faith!** (Heb. 11:20).

Proverbs 18:21 says, “*Death and life are in the power of the tongue.*” You can give life by speaking blessings, or you give death by speaking cursings.

In the NT Jesus said, “*Bless them that curse you. Pray for them that despitefully use you*” (Matt. 5:44). James said that out of the same mouth proceed blessings and cursings. He said, “*My brethren, these things ought not so to be!*” (Js. 3:10) Paul said the same thing: “*...Bless and curse not:*” (Rom. 12:14). Peter also admonished:

“*...Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as a brethren, be pitiful (merciful), be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called (called to bless), that ye should inherit a blessing*” (1 Peter 3:7-9).

There should never be cursing out of your mouth to human kind; only curse the devil and demons. You need to bless mankind and pray for their redemption. You have power in your tongue, Mothers and Fathers, to either bless or curse your children!

God said to Abraham, “I’m going to bless you and your seed. They shall inherit the promise and the blessings. Every blessing that I put on you, I put on your seed after you. And your seed after you shall be as the stars above, and as the sands in the earth beneath.” These are the two seeds, the earthly seed, natural Israel, and the heavenly seed, the born-again. Abraham passed the blessings on to Isaac, because God had said, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Isaac passed it on to Jacob, and Jacob to the 12 sons. From the 12

tribes, the blessings were multiplied and dispersed to all their families and passed down to every generation. To this very day, the Orthodox Jew puts the blessing on his children at least once a week. When he comes home from the synagogue on the beginning of Sabbath, on Friday evening, the first thing the father does is pronounce the Sabbath blessing on his wife, children, and family.

It is not surprising that the Jewish people excel in the arts, sciences, finances, and every aspect of human accomplishment. There is a very high percentage of Jewish doctors, lawyers, scientists, musicians, composers, etc. compared to the general population. This is due greatly because their fathers have blessed them every Sabbath from birth! This powerful principle of the blessing has produced success and prosperity in their generations as God had promised.

The Priestly Blessing

Later God raised up Moses and established the priesthood through Aaron his brother. In Numbers 6:24 God commanded Moses to command Aaron and his brethren, the priesthood: “Put My Name on the children of God that I might bless them.” The priests had the power to put the Name of God on the children, and God said that it was just like Him speaking. He said, “I will bless them.”

This blessing continues to be pronounced by Jewish priests all over the world. It is the only continuing link to their daily Temple services since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem almost 2,000 years ago!

How does this affect the Church in the New Testament? Peter said, “**We are a royal priesthood...**” (1 Pet. 2:9). While this holy blessing can only be pronounced

in traditional Judaism by the descendants of Aaron, it can be pronounced by any believer in Christ.

Everyone of us is a priest unto God. We don't need an earthly mediator. We are all priests, and our high priest is Jesus (Heb. 3:1). We go to Jesus, our High Priest. He takes us to the Father, and we can come boldly to the throne of grace, and we shall obtain mercy and find grace in time of need. (Heb. 4:15-16). Jesus said, "I'll put My Name on you, and whatsoever you ask the Father in My Name; it's the same as My asking, He will give it to you" (Jn. 16:23-24).

As the parent, you are the priest of the family (especially the father), and it's the same as God talking when you bless your family. God said, "When you put My Name upon them, **I will bless them**" (Numbers 6:27). This is the blessing you should bless your children with daily:

"And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and unto his sons, saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them,

The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace" (Num. 6:22-26).

Now the Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*, and its true implication is not captured in the English. We define peace as the absence of conflict, but the Hebrew *shalom* means "wholeness", and includes *salvation, healing, prosperity, protection; everything both physically and spiritually that makes you a whole, blessed child of God.*

God said, "***And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them***" (vs. 27).

When you act in your calling as a

priest and put the Name of Jesus on your children, it's the same thing as God speaking, and whatever you speak in the Name of the Lord in faith on those children, God said, "I will bless and do it."

Let me help you mothers and fathers with your children: Never tell them that they are no good. *You are cursing them.* That's a reverse blessing! Instead, you can break the curse. I get letters from all over the country, and especially overseas from the islands and African nations, telling me that there's a curse on their family. Even if there is a curse, *you can break the curse!* Because if you are Christ's, *you are blessed!* You can break the curse by speaking blessings on your children.

Don't tell them, "You're no good, and you will never be any good." You're prophesying a curse on them. Maybe a kid had a bad father or someone else bad in the family, don't say, "You're just like your father," because you are perpetuating that curse. Break it by speaking good. If you have a child who is slow in learning, lay your hands on him/her and say, "I bless you with wisdom and understanding."

Before you send them out in the morning, you need to lay your hands upon your children and bless them, saying, "*The Lord bless thee and keep thee.*" You need God to keep them so that they won't become a statistic of being knifed or shot in school, or abducted, raped, or murdered. Every-day before you send them out of your house, speak this blessing on them: "*The Lord make His face shine upon you...*" This means to turn all His favor and graciousness toward you. "*The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, and give you well being.*" (That's what peace means.)

My Mother's Blessing

I attribute one of the reasons, and probably the main reason, why I'm saved and a preacher to my mother's prayers. Under adverse conditions: My father was an atheist, a wild man, demon possessed, she got the Word in me. He beat up preachers, wrecked churches, dragged my mother by the hair from the altar out of the church. He hated the very Name of Jesus, and the demons in him would go into a rage. We could not have a Bible in the house, because he would find it and tear it up. I watched him tear it up and throw it out the window and then sweep up what was left and burn it! You know what kind of spirit that is!

Under those adverse conditions, every morning before we went to school, my mother had me and my little brother down teaching us to pray, and I was full of demons. Those spirits fought in me, and didn't want her to teach me and get the Word in there. But she laid hands on me and blessed me everyday. Even when I went to Maryland Training School (for juvenile delinquents) at 10 years old, she would write me a couple of times a week and tell me, "The Lord is going to bless you. The Lord is going to make you a preacher. The Lord is going to make you a great man in Him," and you know what? **The blessings of my mother caught up with me!** At age 23, God saved me! God delivered me and is making me a preacher.

Parents, this is so important: *You need to bless your children!* You need to remove all curses out of your mouth! You need to tell them what God's Word declares in Jer. 29:11: "*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give an expected end*" (blessed future).

John declared that if just the miracles Jesus did were written, the world couldn't contain the books. So every word that He spoke in the Bible is very special, and is for our learning and our admonition. Three Gospel writers record how Jesus said, "*Suffer (or let) the children come unto Me...*" and He picked them up and laid His hands on them and *blessed them.* (Mk. 10:14). So what blessing do you think He blessed them with? The same blessing that Jewish fathers from the time of Moses spoke over their children: "*The Lord bless thee and keep thee. The Lord make His face shine upon thee. The Lord lift His countenance upon thee, and be gracious to thee, and give thee peace.*" Probably this was the same blessing that was spoken over Him by Simeon when His parents brought Him to the temple to be dedicated. (Lk. 2:22-34).

Bless & Curse Not

Do you have a learning disabled child? Speak aloud blessings over him/



her to be quickened by God's Spirit. If you have an overactive child, don't let them give him ritalin and medicines like that in school. You could be starting him on the road to drugs. You need to give him prayer and speak blessings on him. You need to say, "I bless you with peace. I bless you with self-control. I bless you with good behavior. I bless you with a sound mind."

I know people who went from prescription drugs to alcohol and hard drugs. If they want to put your child on that stuff, you refuse to do it. You may be putting them under the influence of a demon spirit. Begin to put the blessings of God on him. Lay your hands on that child and pronounce blessings on him. Your words will take hold in that child's heart, and he/she will begin to believe in the blessing! It not only *encourages* your child, but *invokes* (puts in action) the life that flows from the Name of God into his/her life. You may be able to relate yourself to having your parents tell you that you were no good and never would be. What did it do to you? It crushed you to pieces, didn't it? And then it made you obstinate, rebellious, and you said, "Okay, if I'm no good, and that's what they say I'm going to be, I might as well do it."

You need to give your kids hope! Tell them, "God wants to bless you. God wants to use you. God wants to make you a good man, and a godly woman." Paul warned in Col. 3:21, "*Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.*" This means not to be overly severe with your children or you may crush their spirits and cause them to lose heart. This can lead to despair and open the door for

the enemy to oppress them.

He further instructed in Eph. 6:4, "*And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" The Greek terms refer to providing discipline for correction with tender care. They also denote training by word – including the word of encouragement. A parent's words are so potent!

Even grandparents can bless their grandchildren. The blessing prayer was so esteemed that Joseph brought his two sons to Jacob before he died, and Jacob put his hands on them and blessed Ephraim and Manasseh with the blessings of the fathers. To this day, Jews bless their **sons**, and say, "*God make you as Ephraim; God make you as Manasseh*" (Gen. 48:20). In other words, they were to be the rulers. They were to build up the people of God.

Likewise, the Jewish parents put their hands on their **daughters** and say, "*God make you as Leah and Rachel, for they built up the house of God and the tribes of Israel*" (Ruth 4:11-12).

Begin today to speak blessings over your children. For God has promised, "*...I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and mine blessing upon thy offspring:...*" (Isaiah 44:3).

The promise of the blessing is a powerful and vital principle that the Church needs to establish, and especially Christian parents, need to practice daily!

"Ye that fear the LORD trust in the LORD... The LORD hath been mindful of us; He will bless us:... He will bless them that fear the LORD, both small great. The LORD shall increase you more and more, you and your children" (Psalm 115:11-14).