

Fostering: The Mark of a Church Truly Alive

Imagine a world where fear is not a factor. A world where the family environment can be described as “heaven”. Neighbourhoods are calm and safe for children to play in. The social structure is one of positive upliftment and social generosity. Marriage relationships are without self, emotional insecurities and nevermindedness. A world where the vast majority of children have the opportunity and privilege to grow up with both father and mother in a loving and caring environment. Impossible you say?

Yet, the Bible is clear that this is possible. Christ has come to give us life and that in abundance (John 10:10). According to Genesis 1:26-28 we, as man, are created and destined to rule over this earth. The idea was never to do this with our own rules and laws, but those of God, as God’s ambassadors (2 Cor.5:20). The idea was that we will be representing Heaven here on earth. Therefore, it is possible to live heaven already here on earth, this side of the grave. Not only can we live it, but we are called to do so. Recreated in the image of God the Father, we are creative and restorative in nature, bringing order into chaos.

The world of today is in chaos. Right across the globe, we find country after country in a leadership crisis. Wars are fought. Disease is rampant. People live in some of the most appalling conditions ever. Fatherlessness is out of control. Millions of children do not have the possibility to experience the love of a protective father and a caring mother. Yet, nothing is being done to diminish the statistics on parentless children. So many children are born to parents who are unable to provide the proper nurturing and care for them. These children are normally taken up in the system and provided care for by the state. If the latter fails, these vulnerable children suffer the consequences.

South Africa has 3,7 million AIDS orphans alone. Adding those that are abandoned, because they are “inconvenient” and those who are considered vulnerable, you end up with over 5 million. If you add to this the statistic of 67% of South African children that do not grow up with both their parents at home and the fact that only 25% of children, who do have both parents, are fathered properly, the mix becomes a recipe for disaster. It is these children that will be called upon, in time, to take up positions in society and that are expected to bring order and healing to the brokenness that they experienced growing up, without experiencing the healing process themselves.

Psalm 68:5 calls God “the Father of the fatherless”. James 1:27 has the following to say about orphans: “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, ...” In Isaiah 1:17 we are called upon to “defend the fatherless”. Very few of us give these scriptures the reflection they deserve on this very important issue. God adopted us, who were not part of His family, into His family, to give us a future and a hope. He taught us, and is still teaching us, what it means to belong, because He understood that “to belong” is one of the most fundamental needs of any human being. Our identity is determined by that.

The question to ask at this point is: “What can we do to bring healing to children that are the victims of a society that cannot take care of its own?” The answer is not as simple as saying that government must make it possible. I believe that if we live true and undefiled religion as the body of Christ, we will work together to “cause growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” (Eph.4:16). We, the body of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, will take up our responsibility to take care of the weak and vulnerable.

One of the ways to do this is to register yourself as a foster family. “Foster Care is when a person or married couple makes themselves available and register with their local Designated Child Protection Agency (DCPA) to open their home for the care of children for a period of two years. The social worker is responsible to support the foster parent for the duration of the placement and must also facilitate family visits throughout the period of placement, where possible.” (<http://kinculture.org/2016/08/31/kin-care-part-1/>).

Many of us have the resources and time necessary to take in a child that is in desperate need of care. You and your family can be the key that changes the direction of the life of one child, from a path of destruction to reaching his or her potential in Christ.

To this effect, we want to launch “World Foster Day” on 31 May 2018. Kin Culture, an organisation that exists especially for the cause of orphaned and vulnerable children, will help you with this process. This is their reason for being:

“Caring for the orphan and vulnerable children by recruiting families to do long-term fostering, in a self-sustainable community, equipping these parents to be trauma informed and providing medical, therapy, social and educational services, to raise these children as agents of change.”

Will you not prayerfully consider fostering a child? Will you not prayerfully consider opening up your family to this life changing opportunity? If God is speaking to you, please make contact with Kin Culture. You can reach them www.kinculture.co.za or you can call Agnes at +27 83 270 7774.