

## NOVEMBER 2021 – LET THE CHILDREN COME TO ME

***“When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. <sup>15</sup> Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” <sup>16</sup> And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.”***

Mark 10:14-16 (NIV)

Dear Friends,

In the past few days, I have been reminded in so many ways of the plight of children across the world.

I am sure most Westerners will be appalled to know that in some African countries, the brutal ritual of child sacrifice has still not been eradicated. People visit witch doctors who sacrifice children on their behalf believing that it would bring them wealth, protection, good health, or political power. Ugandan Supreme Court Justice Mike Chibita and a member of the Advocates International’s Global Council, said during his tenure as Director of Public Prosecutions: *“The connection is that these witch doctors come and tell people who want to get rich that in order to get rich you need to sacrifice human blood”*. Only recently three seven-year-old children in Zimbabwe (Tapiwa, Delan and Mellisa) were sacrificed by people believing that the purity of children makes for a more powerful outcome of the ritual.

According to the UN Refugee Agency more than half of the world’s refugees are children. Most of these children have probably witnessed or experienced violence and would be extremely vulnerable in their new environments, often without the protection of parents or family members. In recent times the world has witnessed the sad images of refugee children fleeing from countries such as Afghanistan, Venezuela, Syria, Myanmar, Somalia, and South Sudan.

It is estimated that worldwide there are 51 million girls younger than 18 who are child brides. The majority of these are in East and West Africa and in South Asia. Child brides experience a much higher incidence of domestic violence, marital abuse, and abandonment than adult brides. Girls who become pregnant under the age of 15 are five times more likely to die in childbirth than women who give birth in their 20s. In addition to these, 2 million women worldwide suffer from obstetric fistula, a debilitating complication of childbirth especially common among physically immature girls.

In 2019, our strategic partners, World Without Orphans ([www.worldwithoutorphans.org](http://www.worldwithoutorphans.org)) estimated that there were as many as 150 million children globally who had lost either one or both their parents and that there were as many as 1 billion children who experience serious abuse each year. The global Covid pandemic would no doubt have increased the number of orphans and heightened the vulnerability of children in general.

I have often wondered why there are so many genealogies in Scripture. I believe it is because God's wants to demonstrate His design for humankind - one generation should follow another. If one generation does not advance God's Kingdom agenda, His expectation is for the next generation to do so. That is why I believe that God is certainly appalled when a next generation of children, both born and unborn, are either destroyed or impaired.

Scripture leaves us with no doubt about God's heart for children and especially the fatherless. I could find at least 45 verses which refer to the fatherless often mentioned in the same breath as widows.

Amongst the most well-known are Ps 68: 5 "**A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling**". Ps 82:3 "**Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.**" Job 29:11-12 "**Whoever heard me spoke well of me, and those who saw me commended me, because I rescued the poor who cried for help, and the fatherless who had none to assist them.**" Deut 24:17 "**Do not deprive the foreigner or the fatherless of justice or take the cloak of the widow as a pledge.**" Job 22:9 "**And you sent widows away empty-handed and broke the strength of the fatherless**". Zechariah 7:10 "**Do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or the poor**"

Our generation of Christian Lawyers might not be guilty of oppressing or harming the children of the next generation, but we might very well be indifferent to their plight. Let God not say of us Isaiah 59: 15-16 *The Lord looked and was displeased that there was no justice. 16 He saw that there was no one, He was appalled that there was no one to intervene*"

Dear friends and colleagues, let us not allow the occasion pass to come alongside God and preserve for Him a next generation who will have the opportunity to come into the fullness of what God purposed for them.

Warmly in Christ



Teresa Conradie  
President and CEO, Advocates International

Donate using  
this QR-Code

PS: Don't forget that Advocates accepts **gifts of stocks** through Fidelity Investments, DTC#: 0226; AI account #: Z44881848. All financial gifts are tax deductible and greatly appreciated.