

TO BEAR OR NOT TO BEAR

At the birth of each of our three children I identified with Adam's words, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh." As I held each child, I, like God, beheld our creative work and "saw that it was good!"

Our first two offspring were boys. When my wife was expecting our third child (in the pre-peeking days), I expected another son (which would have been great!). But when the nurse announced the birth of a beautiful baby girl, I flipped out, and rushed about announcing "it's a girl!"

I cannot imagine life without children. After 55 years of marriage, Frankie and I daily think about, talk about, and pray about our children. We enjoy almost daily verbal contact with our children and grandchildren. We also visit, worship, and travel together as often as the distance separating us allows. Our lives overflow with the joy of eight grandchildren, each of which is nice looking, smart, and good.

Our children know that we (and especially I) are not perfect parents. We know that our children are not perfect children. None the less, our mutual love, appreciation, and respect is immeasurable. We would not trade our family experience for anything in this world. Our children have filled our lives with meaning and purpose.! We look forward to being with them forever in heaven.

I sympathize with couples who have physical problems that preclude child-bearing. My heart goes out to singles who long for children, but never marry. How wonderful that so many of them turn to adoption, or find other ways of caring for and serving children.

Some couples who could become parents, decide not to produce children. Granted, God leaves the choice to us. However, our motivation for not having children can be a matter of interest and also of concern. In the beginning, God said couples should "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth." After the flood, God told the surviving family, "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth." Our forefathers and foremothers obeyed this teaching, otherwise we would not be here!

Some say, "yes, but then, there was a need." "Today, the planet is over populated, and more children increase problems of space, of inadequate supplies of food and water, and further contribute to disease, violence, and pollution." But, we do not have an over supply of

Christians! We do not have an over supply of workers with Christ for salvation, and to make this world a happier and safer place.

Others say, "there's too much risk!" "What if our children suffer, or cause great suffering." God's example can help us. Notwithstanding the risks involved, our "all knowing" God chose to create human life, and asked us to join in the process. In essence, He said, "take the risk, it will be worth it!"

Others say "it's too much work, too much responsibility." Actually, work and responsibility do us good! Later, we will look back with more satisfaction at a life that was lived for others....one which valued giving more than receiving, serving more than being served, and honoring more than receiving honor. Those who have this view will know the blessedness of bearing children! Go for it!

Carl Mitchell