

ENRICHMENT

SPRING 1999

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Neil B. Wiseman

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A JOURNAL FOR PENTECOSTAL MINISTRY



M^{inistry Matters}

BY WAYDE I. GOODALL

R. A. Torrey wrote, “It is easiest to lead a child from 5 to 10 years to a definite acceptance of Christ. I rejoice in the work done by rescue missions, where we see the wrecks of manhood and womanhood changed into noble men and women. But this is not the work that produces the most satisfactory Christians. The younger we get a child to accept Christ and begin Christian training, the more beautiful the product. The overwhelming majority of people in our churches today were converted before 21 years of age. Whatever your church does, let it do its full duty by the children.”¹

I agree with Torrey. When my family moved to Springfield 4 years ago, we needed to find a church to attend. For over 20 years I had pastored and for the first time we needed to find a church where “Dad wouldn’t be the pastor.” Before our move I really didn’t think about how difficult it might be to find a church where my whole family could be ministered to and serve. However, when we began to look for a church, our priorities quickly came into focus.

We decided to choose what was most important to us—a church that had excellent programs for children and youth. We were more concerned that our children would be ministered to than the ministry we (as adults) would receive. I realized then, more than ever before, that most parents have the same concern. They will likely pick a church that provides quality ministry to their children.

Most parents who visit our churches will be attentive to the cleanliness of the nursery, the friendliness of the Sunday school teachers, the protection the church offers with safety concerns and

child-abuse issues, and the overall quality of care it provides to children. James Dobson said, “Children must be valued as our most priceless possession.”²

This *Enrichment* issue focuses on children’s ministry. Some of the nation’s best children’s workers and pastors offer their advice and explain programs they have developed for young people. It is important for us to understand that no matter how small or large our church, our mission field, or our evangelistic crusade we can (and should) give significant focus toward the children.

One enlightening “focus” experience I had while I served as a pastor was when the volunteer workers and pastoral staff had just been through a grueling (but rewarding) week of vacation Bible school. The last night’s activities included a spaghetti feed where parents were invited to enjoy a performance by their children and then watch them receive some type of award. Of course, most parents enjoy watching their children perform and receive recognition.

My job (as pastor) was to make some closing comments. I thanked the workers, the children, and had one opportunity to speak to the parents about their eternity and about how we as a church would welcome them. As I looked at the parents’ faces, I realized how open they were to the gospel message because the church had taken the time to create a program for their kids. Many of the parents that evening would not have heard the gospel of Jesus Christ had our church not made the effort to develop a VBS program. My closing thoughts to myself were, *The effort is worth it, and I will always keep children’s ministry as a number one priority in my ministry.*

Dorothy Knolte wrote:

Children learn what they observe.

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn and be judgmental.

If children live with hostility, they learn to be angry and fight.

If children live with ridicule, they learn to be shy and withdrawn.

If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.

If children live with tolerance, they learn to be patient.

If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.

If children live with praise, they learn to appreciate.

If children live with fairness, they learn justice.


If children live with security, they learn to have faith.

If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.

If children live with acceptance and friendship, they learn to find love in the world.

And may I add:

If children attend a church that loves and cares for them, they will likely want to attend church all of their lives.

What do you think? 

ENDNOTES

1. George Sweeting, *Great Quotes and Illustrations*, (Word: Dallas, 1985), 45.
2. Edythe Draper, *Draper’s Book of Quotations for the Christian World*, (Tyndale: Wheaton, Ill. 1992), 62.

Wayde I. Goodall, D.Min., is executive editor of *Enrichment* and coordinator of the Ministerial Enrichment Office, Springfield, Missouri.



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INTERVIEW WITH THOMAS E. TRASK

Ask the Superintendent— Consider the Children

"If I were pastoring today, children's ministry would be a top priority in my church,"

states Thomas E. Trask, general superintendent of the Assemblies of God. His words are a clarion call

reminding us of the preciousness of children and the church's responsibility to provide for their spiritual needs.

In this quarterly interview Trask "considers the children" and offers his insights into this

most important aspect of the church's ministry.



THOUGH NOT EVERY CHURCH CAN AFFORD A CHILDREN'S PASTOR, HOW CRITICAL IS IT FOR CHURCHES TO HAVE SOME TYPE OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY?

It is absolutely necessary. Someone has said that children are the church of tomorrow. That's not entirely true; they are also part of the church today. But should the Lord delay His coming, our children will be the leaders of tomorrow. By investing in its children now, the church is investing in its future.

Statistics will substantiate this—if you reach a child with the gospel before the age of 7, he has a much greater chance of accepting Christ as Savior than if you wait until he becomes an adult and then try to reach him. It is imperative, then, for churches to have some type of ministry outreach to children. What I see happening in the church today is that leaders have been awakened to the importance of ministry to children.

Whether a church can afford a full-time children's pastor is not at issue here. There are people in churches—even in small churches—who will give themselves to children's ministry. The

important key is for each church to make provision for nurturing and instructing its children.

WHAT QUALITIES ARE PASTORS LOOKING FOR IN THEIR CHILDREN'S PASTOR?

A senior pastor needs someone who has a heart for children, someone whom God has

called and who is comfortable with children. The children's pastor needs a passion to reach boys and girls and then pour himself or herself into that passion.

The same God who calls a person to youth work, evangelism, missions, or to a visitation ministry calls men and women to minister to children—there is no question about that. The most important quality is for the children's pastor to have a burden for kids. This is essential. It takes a unique person to minister to children.

IS THERE AN OPTION FOR CHURCHES WHO DON'T HAVE THE FINANCIAL MEANS TO HIRE A CHILDREN'S PASTOR?

One of the great strengths in the Assemblies of God is the laity of our church. We have people in our churches willing to be trained and develop the necessary skills to minister to children. This is a very valuable ministry. Many people can use their gifts in reaching children. It would be well for a pastor to train laypeople who can oversee the children's ministry and the volunteers who work with children.

WHAT STEPS ARE INVOLVED IN TRAINING LAYPEOPLE TO OVERSEE CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES?

You don't have to find someone with experience to lead your children's program. Sometimes the easiest and the best way is to train a person so he or she will conduct the ministry in the way you want. There are many district, regional,

What I see happening in the church today is that leaders have been awakened to the importance of ministry to children.

and national seminars children's workers can attend to receive the training they need. There are also several books and video series that would be helpful in training a children's worker.

Parents want quality programs for their children. Training your workers and having a well-run children's program will not only minister to the children in the church, but also to the chil-

Should the Lord delay His coming, our children will be the leaders of tomorrow.

dren and adults in the community. A church's children's program can be an avenue to draw families into your church.

WHERE DO CHURCHES ON LIMITED BUDGETS TURN FOR CURRICULUM AND OTHER PROGRAM MATERIALS?

There are many reasonably-priced products on the market today that people can buy. In fact, the GPH catalog has several low-cost items for children's ministry. But churches do not need to buy a whole array of products to have a successful children's ministry. Ingenuity is a marvelous tool. I've watched mothers and children's workers take some of the everyday things and use them in ministry to children.

Also, whether our churches realize this or not, *Radiant Life* produces the best Pentecostal curriculum on the market. It is also the most reasonably priced of any curricula.

Many district offices have a lending library through their Christian education department. They have ministry items that churches can borrow for their children's ministry.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY IS CERTAINLY A CRITICAL SUBJECT IN THIS DAY WHERE TELEVISION IS DOING MOST OF THE TEACHING TO OUR CHILDREN. WHY IS IT EVEN MORE CRITICAL THAT WE DEVELOP STRONG PROGRAMS FOR OUR CHILDREN?

The incidents at Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; and other cities across America are awakening the nation to some of the challenges of what's happened to young people—

boys and girls coming from broken homes, coming from settings where there's been no training and no parenting models for them. This is a day of opportunity for the church—not because we are opportunists, but because our eyes are opened to the opportunity that God presents. The church is relevant to the need of the day. And one of those areas of relevancy is in children's ministries.


I can tell you: if I were pastoring today, children's ministry would be a top priority in my church. Our executive director of the Division of Foreign Missions established a great church in Latin America through child care. Today thousands upon thousands are being ministered to as a result of that vision. In the same way, we can establish churches today through first ministering to children.

HOW CAN CHURCHES MINISTER TO THE FAMILIES OF THE CHILDREN WHO MIGHT COME TO THEIR CHURCH THROUGH A SPECIAL OUT-REACH?

With the breakdown in the family structure today, there are many single parents. It is important for the family to

By investing in its children now, the church is investing in its future.

find a church home that has ministry to children. And it is a wise church that sees an opportunity to minister to the parents as well. When you minister to someone's children, it opens the door to minister to the family.

There are many different ministries today the church can provide for families. The church was never meant to do the part of the parent, but parents are looking for help in instructing and training their children. They recognize the pulls that society is having on their children. The wise pastor and the alert church will provide this help—and it will give opportunity to minister to the moms and dads as well. 



A Wake Up Call To Save Our Children

BY H. B. LONDON, JR.,
AND NEIL B. WISEMAN

We want to thank Hillary Clinton for her book, *It Takes a Village*. We applaud her call to value children. Our most precious resource is our children. They deserve our love because they are our priceless possession for today and our hope for tomorrow. A nation cannot neglect its children without squandering its present and jeopardizing its future.

As we read her book, we felt curiosity, sometimes fascination, and often grief. Often her use of the word *village* seemed too diffused for solving such a big problem. We wondered how villages can save our children when so much that resembles a village seems to be disappearing in North America.

Let's refocus the church's mission, renew its commitment, and revitalize its impact. The church can become supernaturally empowered to nurture the moral and spiritual development of children.

THANKS FOR WARNING US

Mrs. Clinton's challenge to move children to a higher level of significance needs to be heeded. She accurately warns us, "Even though our national rhetoric proclaims that children are our most important resource, we squander these precious lives as though they do not matter."¹

We thank her for reminding us that children's problems are among the toughest issues we face. She helped us realize that children can't speak up for themselves as other special interest groups.

She is right to call us to face the fact children "are intimately connected to the very essence of who we are and who we will become."²

THANKS FOR STRETCHING OUR AWARENESS

We thank Mrs. Clinton for calling everyone to attention and action. It's so easy to think the problem belongs to someone else. We thank her for convincing us that all of us—even people without children—have a stake in seeing that children are cherished.

THANKS FOR REMINDING US CHILDREN CAN'T WAIT

Mrs. Clinton reminded us that children keep being born, keep growing up, and keep making choices that affect their lives forever. Children grow up while government, school districts, and social scientists argue whether society can afford much-needed, though costly, reforms. Boys and girls can't wait for us to show at-risk parents life skills for helping their children develop.

Mrs. Clinton reports that "one in five children in America live in poverty; 10 million children do not have private or public health care coverage; homicide and suicide kill almost 7,000 children every year; one in four of all children are born to unmarried mothers, many of whom are children themselves; and 135,000 children bring guns to school each day."³ The numbers stun us even more when we remember they represent individuals who might change the world or invent the cure for cancer or take Billy Graham's place in the next generation.

COULD THE CHURCH BE OUR BRIGHTEST HOPE?

We wished Mrs. Clinton had said a lot more about the church. More about its potential for character development. More about shaping our society.

Our most precious resource is our children. They deserve our love because they are our priceless possession for today and our hope for tomorrow.

More about every family needing a church more now than ever before to help them raise children in our fragmented society. We wanted her and others to believe the church, even with its weaknesses, is our only hope for developing and cherishing well-adjusted children. The church may be the only village that has even a remote possibility of giving children what they really need.

We appreciated Mrs. Clinton's references to the influences of the church in her life and in the life of the president. She seemed to imply that churches helped them live nice, respectable lives.

***A nation cannot
neglect its children without
squandering its present and
jeopardizing its future.***

Maybe we were too suspicious, or perhaps we missed the intent, but the discussion of the church sounded like more of the notion that the church is good, but we must be careful not to get too much of it. The popular notion is to exercise cautious moderation in relationship to Christ and His cause. The New Testament calls the people of God to become radically involved in a community of faith that transforms all who participate and salts a society with righteousness.

PLEASE EXPECT MORE OF THE CHURCH

It Takes a Village expects too little of the church. While Mrs. Clinton calls America to establish more tight-knit, trusted, nurturing relationships with children, most social agencies and entities of our society are moving away from the child.

The church must fill this vacuum. Think of the isolation children experience when they wait 2 hours every afternoon in a locked house until their parents come home. Think of the isolation children feel when neighbors do not know their names and of their fear when classmates carry guns to school.

Think what children miss when extended families live hundreds of miles away. In such an environment, the church needs to push and pull Christians into being what God made the family at church to be.

PLEASE TAKE THE CHURCH SERIOUSLY

This too-common view, as we have said, is that church probably won't harm you if you don't take it too seriously. This reasoning says the church is usually positive, but be careful not to accept everything you hear there. Like a green apple, a church might make you ill if you eat too much.

America doesn't take the church seriously enough. Nor does the church take itself seriously enough. Both of these realities have to be corrected if our children are to be placed at the top of our agendas.

PLEASE CHERISH THE CHURCH'S POTENTIAL IMPACT

God intends the church to be the family of God. The church is a 2,000-year continuance of a group of followers Jesus called His family when they did the will of God (Matthew 12:50). In family relationships, does anyone ever advise another not to get too close to her kin? Do we ever tell a child not to love his parents too much? Does anyone ever advise a young couple not to become too emotionally involved in their marriage? Cautions about the church make about as much sense.

This notion of not depending on the close relationships at church to help raise a child sounds irrational and self-defeating. We know that authentic relationships are as essential to our inner health as the air we breathe is to our physical health. All of this sounds confusing in a world that is hungry for the love of God but doesn't know what it is to experience the fulfilled life that Christ so generously promises.

LET'S TAKE THE CHURCH PUBLIC

With faxes, E-mail, phones, TVs, and

computers, we can know nearly everything without knowing anyone. Millions are lonely in a crowd and do not know what to do about it. Meanwhile, the church—a place of meaning and belonging—is ignored because so few have even considered its potential to truly become a village of faith for children and for their parents.

CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITIES

The church can be the family we don't have and a community that loves us even when we are not lovable. God intends the church to be a reservoir of acceptance, a community of courage, a source of wisdom, a group that demands accountability, a pattern of righteousness, and a stimulation for faith. What could happen if every congregation truly became a resource center where human beings find new lives for old, where they find peace, where they find forgiveness of sin, where they are provided freedom from loneliness, and where they find healing for brokenness?

LET'S DO IT

The challenge calls every Christian to remold churches into development centers that are energized by the promises of Christ and the empowerment He provides. That means putting a higher priority on children, teaching them that Christ is a genuine Friend. In this process, we will rediscover an amazing force in the community of faith to energize our adoptive family relationships. We might really get to know one another and not be afraid to trust or to give and receive love again.

Our love will strengthen the church for our boys and girls. As we nourish our children in such a community of faith, we will be made whole and holy ourselves. The caring climate of the church will be a magnet of grace and a living example of Jesus' words, "By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:35, NKJV). Thousands of such rekindled churches could transform the plight of children.

36 Ways To Improve Our Impact on Children

1. **Use God's values to counter secular values.** We can do this in our preaching, teaching, and living.
2. **Model healthy Christian families.** Invest time, effort, and money in making your family an example of what healthy families can be.
3. **Build your church into a support system.**
4. **Organize a mentoring system for children.**
5. **Look to Scripture for answers.**
6. **Practice perseverance and prevention as well as redemption.**
7. **Aid broken families, especially the children.**
8. **Cherish children on all levels of church life.**
9. **Insist on family purity among leaders.**
10. **Train yourself to view children by their potential.**
11. **Align the family of God and the human family.**
12. **Resource the home.** We must continually avoid the temptation to let the church attempt to provide all of the Christian training children receive.
13. **Maintain strong outreach contacts with unchurched families.**
14. **Avoid overscheduling.** Age-group activities at the church nurture children, but they must be balanced against the need for family time.
15. **Provide family-together activities.**
16. **Establish parenting support groups.**
17. **Inform parents about what is being taught at church.**
18. **Provide support to parents of rebellious children.**
19. **Upgrade your children's Christian education programs.** In the technological revolution that is taking place in education, children sometimes have state-of-the-art educational experiences at school and horse-and-buggy experiences at church.
20. **Intentionally build relationships with children in the community.**
21. **Implement annual prayer summits to pray for children.**
22. **Provide mandatory and effective premarital counseling.**
23. **Recruit couples for teaching and sponsoring assignments.**
24. **Avoid the fatigue of the faithful.**
25. **Develop small groups.**
26. **Experiment with intergenerational ministries.**
27. **Arrange adopt-a-kid family camping.**
28. **Conduct parenting classes.**
29. **Absorb singles into the family of God.**
30. **Customize ministry to a particular child.**
31. **Emphasize rituals.** Weddings, baptisms, Communion services, and church membership receptions are all big events in the lives of participants. Make these rituals special, especially ones that involve children.
32. **Institute or revitalize the children's sermon.**
33. **Make the church children friendly.**
34. **Provide family life skills training.**
35. **Emphasize teen abstinence.**
36. **Put on "potential" glasses.**

—Adapted from *It Takes a Church Within a Village* by H.B. London, Jr., & Neil B. Wiseman, (Nashville, Tenn.: Thomas Nelson, 1996), 210-226. Used by permission.

ADMIT SOCIETY CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT A STRENGTHENED CHURCH

Can anyone raise a child to emotional well-being and spiritual wholeness without the family of God? Though it may be possible, it is not likely.

To ignore the spiritual dimension of human development is to deny a significant part of being human. And that is what we are doing when we have second- and third-generation parents trying to raise children who have no memory of the church or no experience of God.

Can the church responsibly continue to fiddle with nonessentials while the needs of millions of children are not being met? Too often, the church is accused of being irrelevant because that's what the church has allowed itself to become. It's time for every church and every church agency to get back in the race and win.

CONSIDER ALL THE NEARBY BRANCH OFFICES

Little towns are dying; schools bus kids out of their environments; some public school teachers have become weary or overprofessionalized; and neighborhoods in Manhattan and Miami have been controlled by gangs. But the church has outposts in every community, town, and city where Mario, Mary, Tom, Fatma, and Nick can be called by their first names and where they can hear the stories of Jesus. When the church responds to such a significant need, we will all be strengthened—the children, the family, the father, the mother, the grandfather, and the grandmother. We need that. Let's refocus the church's mission, renew its commitment, and revitalize its impact. The church can become supernaturally empowered to nurture the moral and spiritual development of children.

LEARN FROM COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

In William Raspberry's editorial in the *Washington Post*, "Rediscovering the Power of the Spirit," Raspberry told about Robert Woodson's work as the founder and president of the National

Center for Neighborhood Enterprise in Washington who reported,

For 20 years people, including me, would check out the successful social programs—I'm talking about the neighborhood-based healers who manage to turn people around—and we would report on such things as size, funding, facilities or technique. Only recently has it crystallized for me that the one thing virtually all these successful programs had in common was a leader with a strong sense of spirituality.... I'm not saying that spiritually based programs always work, only that the successful programs almost always have a spiritual base.⁴

Do the children of our congregation and community think of the church as a place where they belong like a member of an extended family?

When Raspberry questioned Woodson about the implications of these insights for national social service policies, Woodson answered, "I'm not sure I know yet. But I do know that the hunger I sense in America is not a hunger for things but a search for meaning. We don't yet have scales to weigh the ability some people have to supply meaning, to provide the spiritual element I'm talking about."⁵ That spiritual element is what makes every church a potentially viable village for children.

TAKE YOUR PICK—SHIPS, REMEDIES, OR COMMUNITIES OF GRACE

Everyone benefits when the church becomes a healing village of God's grace where emotional health and spiritual wholeness can be found. The church can be the place where a child feels safe, cherished, and nurtured. Though that impact on the child may be hard to accomplish in a society where so many worship themselves, it is what our children need most and an effective way to

rejuvenate the church at the same time.

THE VILLAGE OF GOD MUST ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE

The village of God has to communicate what has been, what is, and what is to come:

1. What has been the history of God's faithfulness since creation.

2. What God is doing in us, and it is marvelous.

3. And what all of this means to the next generation, our children.

The church must nurture all children to faith, become an adoptive family for those who have no family, and empower existing families to nourish faith.

MAKE YOUR CHURCH AN EXTENDED ADOPTED FAMILY

In the book, *It Takes a Village*, the term village means a place and a relationship where many neighbors and members of an extended family feel responsible for one another and all the children. Everybody knows everybody, and everyone has everyone else's best interests at heart.

The essence of the village is a "network of values and relationships that support and affect our lives." That's a beautiful description of what the church as the family of God is. Churches must rethink their impact on children and the effectiveness of their ministries to children and their families. The church's task is to provide a network of relationships to share and shape values—values given us by the living Christ.

Do the children of our congregation and community think of the church as a place where they belong like a member of an extended family? Is the church really central to their lives? This extended family at church is not something to be added to an already busy schedule. Rather, it is the Christ-centering factor in the extended family of God that gives everything else meaning.

SHOW CHILDREN CHRIST

In smaller churches, children can be acquainted with everyone in the fellowship; in larger churches, children may be

acquainted with just as many people, but not everyone. The question is not size but strength of relationship and a sense of belonging. Ideally, the entire congregation cherishes children. The pastor greets children warmly whenever he or she meets them. Sunday school personnel know the children's names. Children should feel they are key players in the church, much as they might feel at a family reunion of their extended biological families.

RENEW THE NATION

The Christian church in every age has had congregations that thought theirs was the worst of times but decided to flood the darkness with light. Other congregations decided to merely hold on until their translation to glory while they dreamed Christ would return in their lifetimes. They did nothing but allow their country's condition to worsen, leaving a terrible situation for the next generation.

Of course, our times are frustrating. But God has providentially placed us in this generation to do what He wants done.

What has the church done to salt and

leaven society to solve problems of children in our time? The church can make a difference in children's lives when we consider the power of God, the church's personnel, and the church's mission.

The New Testament calls the people of God to become radically involved in a community of faith that transforms all who participate and salts a society with righteousness.

CONSIDER WHAT MOTIVATES US

The love of Christ constrains us. Pushes us. Drives us. Empowers us to do more for children. Helping children is in our own best interest. But the love of Christ always calls us to more than self-interest. It motivates us to give ourselves to others' interests. It instructs us to give because someone needs something we can give.

It is doubtful that the situation of today's children will be significantly changed without the motivating influence of Christ to cause millions to stop talking and start doing. Our society has already

tried more money, more social workers, more public housing, more welfare, more education. Yet the problems are still with us that we had at the start, only bigger.

THE VILLAGE OF GOD IS THE PLACE TO START

We again offer our thanks to Mrs. Clinton for opening a national forum on the subject of improving the lives of children. As we see it, the church is the only delivery system for accomplishing such a goal.

We find enormous hope in the family of faith—the redeemed people of God who genuinely know they are sons and daughters of God, joint heirs with Jesus, brothers and sisters with the redeemed of all ages. These are the ones God is giving a new vision to change the world through children.

It takes a church at the center of the human village to help a child discover God. It takes a church to lead people to become a Christian change agent for the next generation and beyond. Let's make the family of God viable and interesting and energetic for enriching the spiritual lives of children. **E**

ENDNOTES

1. Hillary Rodham Clinton, *It Takes a Village* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 16.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. William Raspberry, "Rediscovering the Power of the Spirit," as printed in the *Denver Post*, December 1992.
5. Ibid.

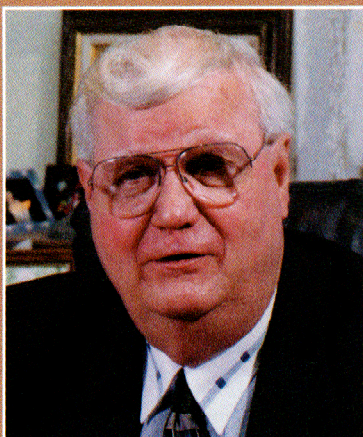
This article was adapted from H.B. London, Jr., and Neil B. Wiseman, It Takes a Church Within a Village (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 3-20. Used by permission.



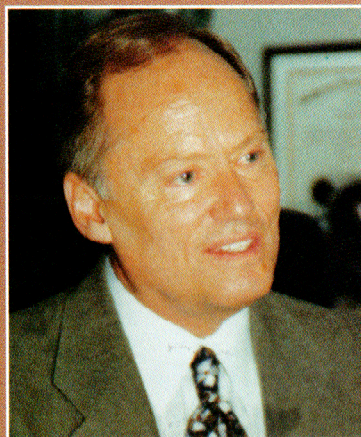
INTERVIEW WITH EARL BANNING, TOMMY BARNETT,
PETER HOHMANN, AND JAY HOSTETLER

Mobilizing a Millennial Generation

Children's ministries are vital to church growth. Ministry to children is more than entertaining kids while the adults take care of spiritual business. Involving children in ministry is a key to keeping children in the church as they grow into adulthood. Boredom drives them elsewhere, so why not teach kids to minister to other kids in the discipling process.



Earl Banning



Tommy Barnett



Peter Hohmann



Jay Hostetler

Four champions of children's ministry discuss these and other questions related to children's ministry: Earl Banning, pastor, Braeswood Assembly of God, Houston, Texas; Tommy Barnett, pastor, First Assembly of God, Phoenix, Arizona; Peter Hohmann, associate pastor of Christian education and missions, Mechanicsville Christian Center, Mechanicsville, Virginia; and Jay Hostetler, children's pastor, First Assembly of God, San Diego, California.

WAS THERE A CHILDHOOD EVENT OR RELATIONSHIP THAT INFLUENCED YOU TO ENTER THE MINISTRY?

BANNING: My father was a rancher and my mother was the pastor of a small church of about 75. I was impacted by their role model, worship, my Sunday school teachers, and the Word these people proclaimed. I came to know Jesus Christ at age 7. My call to the ministry came later.

BARNETT: Someone gave my dad an old bus that he used to take several of the boys from our church and me on Saturdays to knock on doors and leave a handbill. The burden for ministry resulted from this outreach. My Sunday school teacher led me to the baptism in the Holy Spirit in my class. I learned most about the Bible in Sunday school.

HOHMANN: I was raised Catholic and attended a parochial school when I was in first grade. The priest visited our classroom and interacted with the kids. He knew our names even though thousands were in that parish. We could tell he loved us. A seed was sown in my heart to be a priest like him, but God redirected my path. I still follow that priest's example, though I'm an Assemblies of God pastor. Each Sunday I try to acknowledge all the kids and communicate that I love them. I've heard that one of the real test factors in determining a child's future involvement in a church is, "The pastor knew my name."

HOSTETLER: I had no experience in the church until I was 11. I attended a small house church in western Pennsylvania where I met a Sunday school teacher who took me in. My home situation was not good, and this teacher developed a relationship with me. He took me to baseball games, played tennis with me, and

through his guidance I felt tied into the church. As he talked to me and worked with me, I felt I would be involved in the ministry someday. His interaction in my life did it for me.

HOW SHOULD THE STATISTIC THAT SAYS 85 PERCENT OF THOSE WHO BECOME CHRISTIANS DO SO BETWEEN THE AGES OF 4 AND 14 IMPACT MINISTRY TO CHILDREN AND A CHURCH'S BUDGET AND PROMOTION?

HOSTETLER: In most churches an inversion of money, personnel, and facilities is dedicated to the people in the 15 percent bracket and not as much to the 85 percent bracket. Churches should put more energy into the 85 percent age bracket in every way possible.

BARNETT: Our number one priority in children's ministry is soul winning. As soon as children begin coming to church, we tell them they must have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We give altar calls in each Sunday school class, Royal Rangers meeting, and Missionettes meeting. We also teach children how to witness to their friends.

Concerning the church budget, most of it should be spent on children. That's why we run buses and feel the children's pastor is one of the first staff members we should get. If children's ministry is the most important, we must have a children's church high-tech auditorium. Right now we're building three such auditoriums with video equipment and other things that can compete with television and do it better.

BANNING: Our priority begins in the nursery and goes through the youth department, with special attention to the elementary grades. We want the best and do what we need to do to obtain that, whether it is working with volunteers or paid staff.

Budget wise, if any sacrifice is to be made in the church, it will be in the adult department. We will provide the best for our children, for they are the most precious resource we have presently and for the future.

Worship services are piped into the nursery so newborn and preschool children know the sound of church and are introduced to the body of Christ. We also developed a children-friendly board who has the same heart I have for our children. Our board has exposure to our nursery and children's department through assignments or to investigate

We will provide the best for our children, for they are the most precious resource we have presently and for the future.

—Earl Banning

The children's pastor is one of the first staff members we should get. We have to put our dollars where the kids are.

—Tommy Barnett

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—Jay Hostetler

certain activities or functions. This has made a tremendous impact on our budget.

HOHMANN: The greatest unreached congregation probably lies in the preschool children's church and Sunday school, not in the general congregation. But what about the other statistic that 85 percent of our attitude—how we feel about God and the church—is formed by age 6? Some pastors still see children's ministries as a place to shuffle kids while the adults get on with spiritual business. Children's ministries deserve our best workers and resources, and that's what new families look for in a church home.

HOW DO YOU INTEGRATE CHILDREN INTO THE BODY OF YOUR CHURCH?

BARNETT: Church kids need to come with their parents to one of the services, such as Sunday night, instead of being placed in the nursery or children's church. To integrate, I use something that relates to children and their understanding such as illustrated sermons. I keep sermons short because kids must go to school the next day.

Children are integrated into our church's special drama productions and my illustrated sermons. A children's choir and a children's day give kids opportunity to participate, including bus kids who may do a rap with the choir. We are constantly concerned about how to keep kids' interest.

BANNING: If children only attend the children's service, when they reach the age when they can make a choice, they will not be in church because they have not been a part of it. Total integration is the key.

We hold a children's musical each quarter in the sanctuary as well as a periodic drama. Children, including preschoolers, are featured in Sunday night services. Frequently, we have an all-church VBS in the evening.

Children are baptized in water in the same service as adults. They participate in Junior Bible Quiz by memorizing Scriptures. Quiz-offs in the church service integrate them into the congregation. Children participate in worship or whatever is going on.

HOHMANN: A great way to accomplish integration is by providing kids with opportunities to minister to others through their spiritual gifts. One way we do this is in our preschool children's church; preteens and early teens staff most of the 25 learning centers. The younger children are mentored by the older children. The public schools usually follow the opposite model and segregate or isolate children by age groups, which prevents younger children from benefiting from older children's experience. Unfortunately, most churches adopt this same model.

If children only attend the children's service, when they reach the age when they can make a choice, they will not be in church because they have not been a part of it. Total integration is the key.

—Earl Banning



HOSTETLER: Participation, not entertainment, is the key. Children should be alongside other ministries that are ongoing. They actually participate so we're not looking at the church as ministry that's always focused toward children, but the children are involved in the body of Christ in such a way they're

participating in the ministry of the church.

THE CHURCH'S ATTENTION NEEDS TO BE ON HELPING PARENTS TRAIN MORALLY AND SPIRITUALLY RESPONSIBLE CHILDREN. HOW CAN THE CHURCH WORK WITH PARENTS IN THIS WAY?

HOSTETLER: The church needs to view families, parents, and children's ministries as a partnership in the decision-making process of nurturing children spiritually. This may take the form of focus groups or idea exchanges where parents give input. Basically, two things must be considered: (1) the institutional approach—providing education through seminars, guest speakers, etc.; and (2) the organic approach—bringing parents together to talk about childhood issues and what the church expects of kids in their life development. For example, caring for others, which is modeled in our church. We can train children in areas such as socialization skills, discipline issues, self-discipline, and how to develop priorities in spiritual growth.

HOHMANN: Several hundred parents in our church have gone through Christian parenting classes that cover every stage of development from prenatal through adolescence. It's not uncommon to see entire families ministering together in children's church or other ministries. God advances His kingdom through the local church, but the church is composed of families. We started an intergenerational outreach team composed of children and adults to encourage families to stay together. We feel it is important to have at least one place in the church where entire families can minister together without being divided into age-specific grouping.

BANNING: In teaching, training, disciplining children, make sure they have a strong self-image, self-confidence, or self-reliance. Many children from broken homes have torn self-images. Strengthen these children and make sure they understand they are can-do believers by

faith. Feed them the full gospel of Christ. By the time the children in our church reach fifth grade, nearly all have received the Baptism and speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance. We expect, teach, and anticipate this. For children we also have doctrinal classes that teach the fundamental truths of our faith.

In the adult division, we have classes to help unhealthy families, divorce recovery, parenting, premarital counseling, and doctrine.

We introduce our children to service wherever the need arises as well as support groups of all kinds for both adults and children. Body ministry is introduced in children's church where children pray for children; lead other children into the baptism in the Holy Spirit, etc.

Churches differ in size and formation, so programs must differ as well. Much attention is given to build children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

BARNETT: We have a Family Enrichment Month, beginning on Mother's Day and ending on Father's Day, where we focus on equipping the family in the art of parenting. My sermons address the family, and I use illustrated sermons. Specialists come in and teach parenting, which includes single and unwed parents. During this month we conduct our kids camps and seminars.

Equipping the family to raise children and be examples is the most important part. As a pastor I must also be the example of that and show the congregation that even though I'm busy, I have priorities—to the Lord first, then to the family, and to the church. Preach it, mirror it, live it.

TO WHAT DEGREE DOES CHILDREN'S MINISTRY IMPACT CHURCH GROWTH?

BARNETT: People will come to a church they don't even like if there is a great children's/youth program there. If you can win the kids, you have a good chance at the parents. Many people in our church came because their kids first rode the bus, and we went to the home and developed a relationship with the parents. We have one thing in common: We both love their children.

Children's ministry is not just taking care of the parents' children when they come to church. It's not baby-sitting. To win the kids to the Lord Jesus Christ is the greatest evangelistic tool we have.

BANNING: If you touch a child, you touch the parents, and you minister to them in a positive sense with positive response. And if you have happy children, you'll have happy parents. If we can bring children in, excite them in Christ, and bring them to a living knowl-

As a pastor I must also be the example...and show the congregation that even though I'm busy, I have priorities—to the Lord first, then to the family, and to the church. Preach it, mirror it, live it.

—Tommy Barnett



edge of Jesus Christ, they're going to take it home with them, and it will impact their parents as well.

Without a children's program, you're going to miss parents with families coming to your church. Parents look for the best. We should do the best we can with what we have through creative programs that minister to children in a spiritual, vital way.

We give the best part of our building and facilities to the children—space-wise as well as appropriateness in design. Parents are looking for answers to their children's futures, and the church is the answer. We're building Kingdom people and must get this principle into parents' hearts and heads, which is often done through the children.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR SENIOR PASTORS TO UNDERSTAND THE MINISTRY OF THEIR CHILDREN'S PASTORS?

BANNING: It's very important for senior pastors to understand the children's pastor's role, not only in terms of program and curriculum but personally—to know him,* have fellowship with him, and talk with him. Find out where his heart is, what he's thinking, his frustrations, his joys, and his blessings. It's important for the pastor to be a part of that and share the frustration of the social and spiritual pressure under which he performs. Let him know you are there to help him succeed in his ministry.

A team is being developed at our church with 10 full-time ministers on staff. We want the staff to understand the Kingdom principle: Not my kingdom, but God's; not my department, but the church's, the body of Christ. The pastor has a large role to play in the team atmosphere. Spend time with your children's pastor personally as well as in group activity, not just in the formal staffing situations. Most of the best work is done interacting with your staff in casual discussion. Lift the burden of the 24-hour caring and nurturing they go through and create a team spirit. I want my children's pastor to know me and that I care. I'm a servant working alongside the team to help them do the best job.

We want them to be a visible and vocal part of what's happening. The pastor must provide a role model to the congregation. I want the board, the elders, and the entire church to know we are a team.

BARNETT: We need to communicate several things to the children's pastor:

1. He's the most important pastor on the staff.

2. Build a sense of equality. He can go to the board and address his needs anytime.

3. Include him in everything. I am always talking about the children, which is part of bringing him into the loop—part of keeping kids interested.

4. Try to make the children's pastor the kids' hero, a role model—God's person to them. He loves them; he loves God, and he's a mirror of what Jesus Christ is like. The pastor's duty is to create an image of the children's pastor to the children and to the parents—that he is God's gift to the

church. When we give the children's pastor that sense of self-esteem, he is going to run through walls and leap over them at the same time.

BANNING: One more thing. In our program evaluations, we found we were not feeding workers into the children's department—preschool, and elementary grades—as we should. In these areas more workers per capita are needed than in any other department.

Our adult department began assigning their teachers the responsibility to disciple and provide a tithe of members from their

classes into the children's programs. When they are ready to send out these volunteers, the class lays hands on them and prays for them, brings them before the entire congregation, lays hands on them again, and commissions them to work in the children's department. We make a big issue of it so the whole church sees that this is a Kingdom process, not a departmental program. This provides ready workers for the children's department.

Furthermore, some of the children's workers have been on duty for years, and we're going to give them a sabbatical of 6 months to 1 year to go to any class they

Children Are #3

Real estate professionals explain that three factors determine the sales value of a piece of property: location, location, and location. When it comes to choosing churches, the old "top three" were location, pastor, and denomination. In some situations the list was even simpler: pastor, pastor, pastor. Besides the top three, there was a long list of other desirables including doctrine, music, friendliness, size, youth ministry, children's programs, reputation, and facilities. During the 1990s, the list significantly changed. The top three today are location, pastor, and children's ministry. Location stays high because most people choose a church within a 20-minute drive of their homes. Pastors are a factor because many are attracted by a pastor's preaching and leadership style. Denomination has slipped from the top because of decreased denominational loyalty and the growing attractiveness of churches where needs are met regardless of the label. Children's ministry has rocketed near the top for a variety of reasons:

Many parents are having fewer children and having them later in life. They are much more careful about where their children go to school, church, and day care.

In the past, parents picked the church and children had to go. Increasingly today, children pick the church and the parents go where their children are happiest.

Fear is also a factor—parents are concerned about safety. They appreciate churches that carefully screen teachers and Christian education workers, keep sick children at home, and require claim tags before an adult can take a child. Parents are more likely to leave a church where children don't seem important or where leaders are unresponsive to questions and suggestions about children's ministries.

In the 1950s, the fastest-growing church staff position was youth pastor. Today the fastest-growing new staff position is children's pastor, as more and more churches respond to their biggest outreach and growth opportunity.

In a competitive market, children's pastors are often paid more than youth pastors because of the laws of supply and demand. Also, many of the issues that used to challenge youth during junior high and high school (questions about faith, drugs, sexuality, and rebellion) are increasingly showing up among fifth and sixth graders. Today's children's programs are starting to look like yesterday's youth programs.

New churches are starting with multiple staff positions even if some positions are part time. These typically include a preaching pastor, musician, children's minister, and an administrative assistant. Church planters realize that families are unlikely to stay unless there is a major focus on children.

Established churches are spending more money on children's facilities and programs. It is probably a better investment to build first-class classrooms than a first-class worship center.

More than ever, the words of Jesus are a priority: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these" (Matthew 19:14, NIV).

—*Leith Anderson, D.Min., author of Dying for a Change, A Church for the 21st Century, and Winning the Values War in a Changing Culture, is senior pastor of Wooddale Church, Eden Prairie, Minnesota.*

Some pastors still see children's ministries as a place to shuffle kids while the adults get on with spiritual business.

—Peter Hohmann



want and be refreshed, and then go back to the children if they wish.

HOSTETLER: Senior pastors can help children's pastors best by listening to them, spending time with them, getting an idea where their ministry is headed. When a senior pastor links arms with the children's pastor, things go a lot smoother in such things as budgeting and facility use. If the children's pastor and youth pastor are on the same stage as the senior pastor regarding purpose and mission, that helps. Sometimes children's pastors fail to give senior pastors the information they need to help them in decision making. It's a two-way street, but senior pastors can help by publicly recognizing the children's ministry, not just the fact children are in another building or out of the adults' hair.

I'm starting to see a slippage of focus and to hear terminology such as baby-sitting kids or doing child care as opposed to ministry to kids. Senior pastors can help keep that mind-set at bay.

HOHMANN: Affirmation is important. I

believe 85 percent of mentoring is simply affirmation. Many children's pastors feel the senior pastor doesn't know or appreciate what they do. An affirming word goes a long way toward preventing staff burnout. Whenever possible the senior pastor should attend the children's program. An occasional visit will do wonders for the children's workers' attitudes also.

WHAT SPIRITUALLY PROMISING TRENDS HAVE YOU OBSERVED IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES?

HOSTETLER: Three things: (1) Children's ministry is heading toward relational-based ministry as opposed to programmatic ministry. We deal with so many kids who are deprived that to have ministry based on relationship building is a promising spiritual trend. Jesus accomplished great things through relationships. (2) I see support aids in curriculum now available for kids—a shift in focus such as Scripture memorization and knowledge. (3) I've seen real growth in small groups, which will be significant as we head into a new millennium. Kids are dealing with more and more isolation from adults. They need opportunities as a church to talk with someone. So much of our program is based on large groups, even Sunday school classes.

HOHMANN: (1) I see small groups being utilized to a greater extent in children's ministries. These groups enable kids to process and apply lessons taught in a large group setting. We have action groups, which are composed of about five kids and provide a time for the kids to pray for one another.

(2) I see a trend toward discipleship of children in the context of outreach missions as the senior pastor such as nursing homes and inner-city housing projects. They're doing it through the performing arts and practical service project support.

(3) I also see a greater recognition of children's spiritual capacity. Kids can hear God and obey Him, intercede for people and nations, and minister to others. We used to say to kids, "When you grow up,

you can be used by God or anointed or be a missionary." Now they are shouting back, "Why not now?"

EQUIPPING AND RELEASING CHILDREN IN MINISTRY IS IMPORTANT. HOW IS THIS DONE?

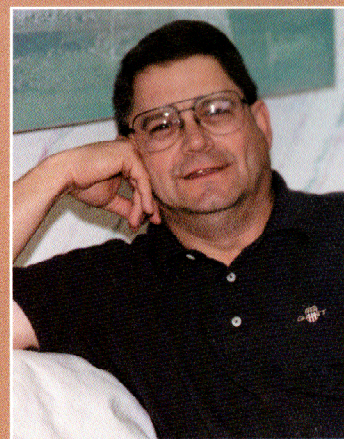
HOHMANN: One way is through children's evangelistic outreaches. We develop teams to disciple children for involvement in missions outreaches.

At Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida, children's pastor Van Lane conducts his children's church this way: He has a worship team of children ages 8 to 15. A 12-year-old runs the sound system. Greeters are all kids. The 16 puppeteers are third and fourth graders. Kids decide who deserves the prize for good behavior. Seventy-five children on the prayer team rotate weekly and are trained to pray for other kids' needs in corporate prayer.

What this involves is change in leadership style. Instead of adults directing all the ministry, they need to become facilitators. Equipping and releasing kids to

The church needs to view families, parents, and children's ministries as a partnership in the decision-making process of nurturing children spiritually.

—Jay Hostetler



ministry should be our goal, but most adults love center stage and are reluctant to give that up. If you don't equip preteens to minister to others, they often become bored with Christianity. They can link the generation between adults, teens, and younger children.

HOSTETLER: One of the key issues is to provide many different opportunities for kids to serve. These kids are willing. Church leaders must lead the way in training and using kids through mentoring, training, and actually participat-

ing in ministry. We also need to train children in the context of their regular attendance at church and create some training modules within our programming for ministry in other arenas.

WHAT ABOUT CHURCHES THAT ARE LARGE ENOUGH TO HAVE A CHILDREN'S PASTOR BUT DON'T HAVE ONE?

HOHMANN: They should view children as needing a pastor of their own, and it should be a high priority. Often the children's pastor might be the fifth, sixth, or seventh staff member added to the list—so

many things come before them. Yet we're talking about a large group of people.

HOSTETLER: That comes in the area of strategy: Where does the senior pastor want to take the church? The staff development plan should expand to include family-type ministry.

ANY FINAL REMARKS?

HOHMANN: I do many things as a pastor, but nothing is as strategic as my ministry to children. What could possibly be more strategic than mobilizing a millennial generation that could turn the world to Jesus Christ? Kids living today will actually bring closure to the Great Commission. What greater task could there be than preparing them for this task?

HOSTETLER: This is a great day for ministry to children. We have the best technology available to reach this generation. People who are involved in children's ministry are anxious to continue to grow, be effective, and develop partnerships with senior/executive pastors and other staff. Many children's ministry leaders feel isolated. Affirmation from the senior pastor can turn a program around. We need to work together and see what God will do. ■

**Although the above discussion uses the male gender form in reference to the children's pastor's role, the discussion is equally valid for females serving as children's pastors.*

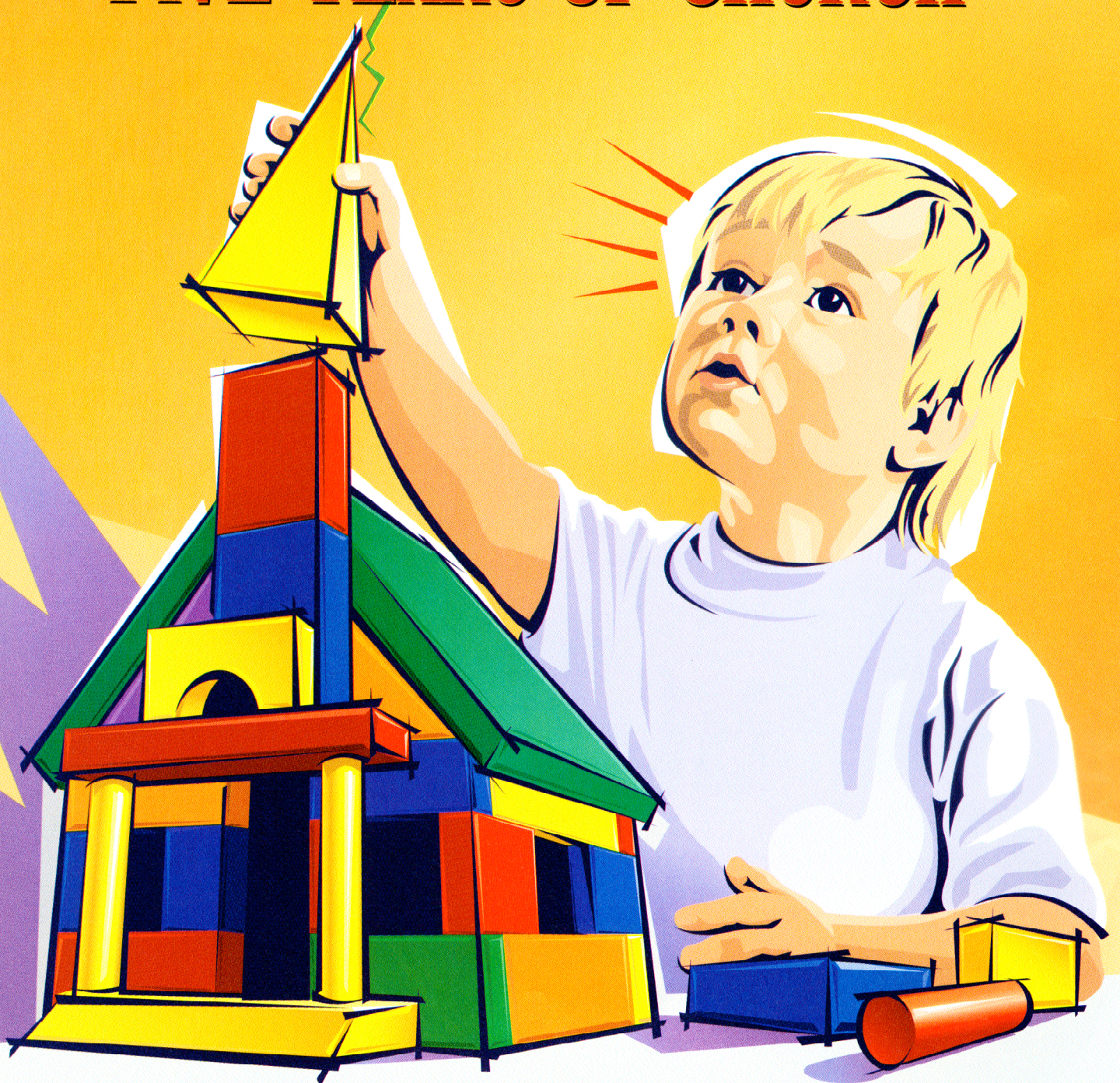
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Jay Hostetler is children's pastor, First Assembly of God, San Diego, California.

THRIVING IN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF CHURCH



Don't worry Mommy. When Jesus heals me, I'm going to eat all the ice cream I want."

Fridays! I'd come to dread them. Friday was ice-cream day at the day care where Michele was enrolled for a half day. Since she couldn't have ice cream, every Friday I packed a Popsicle® in a Thermos® of ice chips, put on a fake smile, and told Michele how special she was because she could have a Popsicle® while the other boys and girls had to eat ice cream. Unfortunately, my feelings were very different from my words.

Her words pierced like an arrow. My faith was almost gone. Michele had been hospitalized several times during the past 2 years with various problems associated with allergies—milk products

ripened avocado and is wrinkled like a walnut. The human brain weighs approximately 3 pounds (2 percent of a person's body weight), yet it uses 20 percent of the body's energy. It generates enough power to illuminate a 25-watt light bulb. Messages are transmitted within the brain through connections at speeds up to 250 miles per hour. Several billion bits of information pass through the brain every second of a person's life. As we learn more about the brain and its development, we realize we are indeed "wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14).

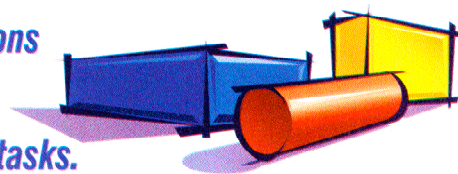
At birth, the areas of the brain are independent units devoted to basic physical functions such as eating, sleeping, breathing, and controlling body temperature. As an infant grows and is stimulated with positive interactions with his/her environment, brain cells begin making new connections

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH

When we consider recent scientific information about the impact early experiences have in a child's development, the admonition of Proverbs 22:6 takes on an even greater urgency. This new research supports what the church has always believed: positive family interactions, unconditional love, godly adult examples, and a strong value system produce men and women who are stable, contributing members of society. For example, a child in an environment that fosters faith and belief in Christian principles will learn to think and act differently from a child in an environment that promotes complete and total self-reliance. Children imitate the behaviors and responses of adults, whether or not they are appropriate examples.

Since the brain is most receptive to certain kinds of information at certain

As an infant grows and is stimulated with positive interactions with his/her environment, brain cells begin making new connections with other cells, taking on a greater variety of tasks.



were among the prime culprits. Not only had I almost given up hope, her words brought afresh the guilt I suffered because of my lack of faith. How can a 3-year-old believe so absolutely? It appears the answer, in part, can be attributed to the experiences she had during the first 5 years of her life.

THE BRAIN AND THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

Until recently, scientists believed the structure of the brain was genetically predetermined before birth. Current research, however, supports the theory that experiences—good or bad—during the first 5 years of life actually influence how the brain is physically wired, dramatically impacting how a person thinks, responds, and behaves throughout life.

Consider some facts about this small part of the body that controls how we behave. The brain feels similar to a

with other cells, taking on a greater variety of tasks.

Because of the brain's rapid growth, infants can learn and acquire an incredible amount of knowledge in a short span of time. In fact, the most profound learning in a person's life takes place between birth and age 5. This is often referred to as the "window of opportunity"—a time when the greatest influence can be made in a child's life. Yet it is often in this period when the least attention is given to the development of children.

Children learn by interacting with their environment. Their exposure to and interaction with others influence what children learn and how they develop. For young children, learning revolves around their daily lives. Simple activities like talking, singing, playing music, showing pictures, reading, and playing with them promote development.

ages, it is extremely important for the church to foster all areas of a child's development during a child's early years. Many churches have a framework in place to accomplish this goal; the challenge is to build on the framework. The senior pastor is often the most influential person in shaping the role and attitude of the church toward children. The importance of nurturing faith in young children must be conveyed and modeled by the pastor. New, expensive programs aren't necessary; recognizing and promoting children is the key.

For example, the senior pastor can promote a family-oriented philosophy by including a story time, puppet skit, an object lesson, or a short reading during the adult service. Adults also enjoy these vignettes, and the illustrations can help them build Christian attitudes and principles.

The role of the church should begin before a child is conceived. Young

married couples need guidance in and exposure to effective parenting methods. This will help them understand the importance of establishing a family unit built on godly principles. Include child development topics in the young marrieds classes. Encourage young couples to become involved with children's programs—especially at the birth to age 5 levels.

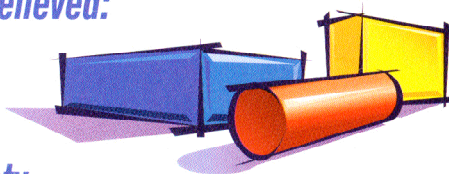
Pastors, prospective parents, and children's workers will benefit from

Pastors can encourage parents to model godly principles and practices before their children. The parents in your congregation need to be encouraged to become involved in ministry through family projects such as volunteering in a soup kitchen, participating in church clean-up days, providing food for a family, and visiting the elderly or shut-ins. These family activities make lasting impressions with children. Fun family outings are also

skills, develop language skills, and learn to communicate with others.

Curriculum should focus on children's basic needs and support the individual and cultural differences of each child. A child's development is holistic; development in one area influences development in other areas. For that reason a child's spiritual, social, physical, emotional, and intellectual development are always interrelated. Children need multiple experiences in a

This new research supports what the church has always believed: positive family interactions, unconditional love, godly adult examples, and a strong value system produce men and women who are stable, contributing members of society.



elective Sunday school classes and seminars that teach the importance of becoming involved with their children's spiritual experiences—especially during the first 5 years of life. Other educational ways are newsletters listing practical ways of creating positive experiences for children and a lending library that provides books, videos, and periodicals on parenting and on child development.

essential for children to develop and build relationships.

Other ways the church can ensure children will thrive in their formative years are through education and curriculum, attending to the physical environment of children, and promoting play. Play is important in the life of every child. When play is used as a strategy for providing learning experiences, children can learn organizational

variety of settings for growth and development.

Children are not passive receivers of knowledge; they are active participants in their learning. It is important that curriculum presents God's principles in ways that keep children motivated and eager to learn. A child must be actively involved in learning. When children are primarily expected to sit and listen, all the joy in learning will be lost.

Just as adults expect and enjoy pleasant and comfortable surroundings, so do children. They need and deserve an age-appropriate environment. The furniture in children's rooms must be of appropriate size and flexible in its use so it can be arranged to meet changing classroom needs. While it is rare that children will need to be seated at the tables all the time, every child does need a space for his/her own things. Rooms should be inviting, sanitary, and free from hazardous toys. Many discipline problems can be prevented with adequate materials and space. Equipping children's areas is as important as furnishing the main sanctuary.

Twenty-three years have passed since Michele's Popsicle®-packing days. Her words of faith stand as a testimony to God's love for children. Today Michele can indeed eat all the ice



Your Children's Facilities:



Are Kids Attracted or Distracted?

was in Argentina traveling on an overcrowded bus. I stood wedged between an older woman with strong body odor and a younger man whose clothing stuck to his body. I had a strong desire to get off of the bus as soon as possible.

Even though I needed to travel several miles, I convinced myself it would be good for me to walk.

The bus driver suddenly threw on his brakes. We were thrown to the floor like rag dolls. I was sandwiched between the odoriferous woman and the sticky-

bodied man. How I wished I had gotten off at the last stop.

We sometimes place children in uncomfortable situations. Then we are surprised when children want to get off. A child's experience at church is just as important as an adult's—perhaps even more important when you consider the long-term impact early impressions have on a youngster's understanding of God and the church. When children receive "leftovers" from the facility banquet table, their experience may not be much more than a ride on an overcrowded, stinky bus. What can we do to make the "ride" more comfortable for children?

Listed below are several suggestions that can make for a smoother ride.

SPACE

In Argentina people pack into buses like sardines. Space between people is nonexistent. The smells and sounds can be overbearing and produce anxiety. But children respond to a lack of space even more dramatically than adults do. Some children become overactive and destructive; others become reclusive and quiet; a few simply refuse to return. The need for adequate space for children is of the utmost importance if we are going to draw and keep children and their parents in our churches.

Looking Through His Eyes

One day as Jesus was teaching, He was interrupted by special guests. These guests immediately became the focus of His attention. Others did not see the importance of these guests, but Christ allowed them to stay and He illustrated a truth through their lives: Unless we become like a child, we will not see heaven (Luke 18:15–17). This message is the foundation for ministry to children.

Recent tragic events in America's schools should challenge the church to redouble its efforts to minister to children. Children are under attack. They are at risk, and we must see them through Christ's eyes. Children are not an interruption; they need help finding a sense of purpose only Christ can give.

Not only must we see children through Christ's eyes, but our church facilities must also welcome them. Do your Sunday school facilities say, "Welcome"? Children are attracted to bright colors. Also wall prints, posters, and bulletin boards need to be placed on their viewing level. Other child-friendly options include drinking fountains, chairs, and tables at appropriate heights.

Christ included children with adults, so should we. Look for opportunities to incorporate children into your worship services. Have a children's choir or ensemble sing. Let children give their testimonies. This gives children an opportunity to make a public statement of their faith.

We use a "Children's Ministry Month" to show the importance of our children. We develop a theme either for the month or one we can use throughout the year. Themes we have used are: "Bear Fruit That Will Last—John 15:16," and "Who Cares About Children?...We Care—Luke 9:48." During this month children participate in various church services. Each week we highlight a different age group of children.

To launch this special month, we placed pictures of each child in our church on the altar. During the Sunday morning service we asked people to take a picture and pray for that child throughout the year. This involves the whole church in ministry to children.

On the second Sunday, we focused on the cradle roll. We produced a video of the nursery and early childhood staff teaching, playing, and caring for the children. We used Ray Boltz's "Another Child To Hold" as background music to the video. During the offertory our preschool choir sang.

For the third Sunday we created a multimedia slide presentation of the entire children's ministry. We showed slides of our staff teaching and communicating with the children, along with various slides of our children. We played "Children of the World" by Amy Grant and "Arrows" by Diane and Chris Machen as background music during this presentation.

On the fourth Sunday we presented a children's musical during the morning service. Afterwards we had a spaghetti fundraising dinner so the congregation could spend time with the children.

Throughout the month we presented various opportunities to work in the children's ministry. Brief testimonies from children's workers encouraged others to join the team.

If we are going to successfully minister to children, we must see them through Christ's eyes. Children are a blessing, not an interruption. Children are the church of the future, but they are also a vital part of the church of today.

—Pam Houghton is children's pastor, Capital Christian Center, Sacramento, California.

SPACE CONSIDERATIONS

. Minimum squareFootage

In most states, the minimum space requirement for schools and child-care centers is 35 square feet per child. Violations of this minimum can cause classroom difficulties.

I visited a church that had run out of space for their Sunday school classes and had created a classroom for children in a closet. The children had approximately 10 square feet per child. In some churches, there is no other option. But in this church, the adults had a large sanctuary. Yet their children were crammed into small, undesirable spaces.

Adults who are capable of dealing with space restrictions are often given larger spaces. Children less able to control their responses to limited space are given smaller spaces. I am not advocating that the adults of any church be crammed into a tiny classroom. But when churches are faced with space limitations, the children's need for adequate space must be considered.

. CreativeSpace Usage

What do you do when there is simply not enough square footage per child?

You get creative! We faced this problem when our early childhood program had outgrown its facility. Because we live in southern California, the weather is nice most of the year. We decided playgrounds for the children would give us the additional space we needed and enhance our program. We built two small playgrounds for our toddlers and preschoolers. During our fullest hours,

A child's experience at church is just as important as an adult's—perhaps even more important when you consider the long-term impact early impressions have on a youngster's understanding of God and the church.

we divide each class into two groups. One group plays on the playground while the other remains in the classroom for the lesson. We have virtually doubled our classroom space. And the children have a playground—a plus to any children's program.

There are many ways to create additional space without building a new

building; it just takes some brainstorming and the support of the pastor. Some churches build lofts on which children can read while others play underneath; develop outside areas adjacent to the classrooms; partition fellowship halls to accommodate children's classes; reconfigure patios to fit the needs of kids; and convert office spaces into classrooms. The key is to assess your current and future need for space and begin to dream. As you do, uninviting space can become useful space for children.

NATURAL LIGHT

Many churches are creating areas of natural light in their children's facilities because natural light has a calming effect on children. Young children can become irritated and unhappy when there is inadequate natural light.

Children's classes are often in the church basement. To the visiting child and his/her parents, this may communicate a message—our children are not valued.

Our elementary-aged children are on our basement level. Fortunately, we have a patio on one side that opens to the light. We have converted the patio into a small amphitheater for our "ConstructionZone" (our version of children's church). Currently some of our Sunday school classrooms have large windows that look out into the amphitheater. We want to open up the entire level by taking down the walls and exposing all of the classrooms to the light. This would make natural light available to every area. We would then use moveable partitions to divide the space into classrooms.

COLOR

I recently visited one of our boys in the hospital. Walking the halls, I realized how unfriendly and uninviting this was to a child. Then I entered the pediatric ward. It was as though I had walked right into a world of imagination. The walls were painted with fun, colorful scenes from storybooks. The cold, sterile



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"Are you sure God didn't ask him to take off his Air Jordans?"

environment had suddenly become warm and inviting.

In some churches, children are placed in rooms lined with stacks of chairs, tables, or someone's junk. No wonder children are not attracted to these rooms. I have yet to walk into a sanctuary lined with chairs or with old sheets of plywood leaning up against the walls.

Children's space needs to be filled with color, not junk. Even in a small church, walls can be painted with colorful

The need for adequate space for children is of the utmost importance if we are going to draw and keep children and their parents in our churches.

murals of Bible scenes. With a little paint, a blank wall can be transformed into a pathway to adventure.

Each of our early childhood rooms has

painted on its walls a bright, colorful mural depicting a Bible theme. Our outside "Construction Zone" amphitheater is painted bright blue with a speckling of other bright colors. The bleachers are bright orange, yellow, green, and mustard. The other "construction zone" items that hang from the walls are painted in bright pinks, purples, and greens. The physical environment is compelling to the children. We believe this is partly responsible for the dramatic

Ministering to Children with Disabilities

The Americans With Disabilities Act defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits walking, speaking, seeing, or other major life activities. Approximately 49 million Americans are considered disabled by this definition, yet children's ministry participants often do not reflect this percentage.¹

Jesus modeled compassionate and purposeful ministry to individuals with disabilities. Based on His ministry to a blind man in John 9, here are six suggestions for effective ministry to children with disabilities:

Focus on the child, not the disability. From His busy schedule, Jesus paused to speak and minister to the man who was born blind. Using people-first descriptors shows children with disabilities you care about them. They will appreciate the effort you are making to see them as people.

Offer training for staff and volunteers. Jesus used this opportunity to train His disciples for effective ministry. During a church worker training session, define different disabilities and suggest ways to accommodate children with these disabilities. *All God's Children* by Gene Newman and Joni Eareckson Tada offers helpful insights for church workers on this topic. In public schools many children with disabilities are mainstreamed into regular education classes. Recruit volunteers to help in classes that have children with disabilities. Just having an extra adult worker makes mainstreaming children with disabilities possible.

Welcome children with physical disabilities through facility preparation. Unlike Jesus' day, today's laws govern building accessibility. How accessible is your church? Park your car in the handicap space and enter the building just as a person with disabilities would. (Better yet, use a wheelchair.) How much of your church can children with disabilities independently access? Ask ushers to accompany visitors with disabilities to their classes and note areas of concern. Consider relocating classes or making other accommodations so children with disabilities can enjoy full participation in children's ministry opportunities.

Remember families of children with disabilities have needs too. Reassuring the blind man's parents of their innocence, Jesus ministered to them. Children with disabilities and their families often grieve about the loss associated with a disability. But unlike the traditional grief process, this developmental grief indicates the family may suffer reoccurring losses as their child grows.² Offering caring concern and counseling if necessary will help families work through their grief.

Allow children with disabilities to use their talents for God. Following his healing the blind man proclaimed Jesus' testimony. Don't wait for healing to allow those who are disabled to serve in ministry. "Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable" (1 Corinthians 12:22, NIV). Focus on what they can do and release them to serve.

Recognize God has a purpose for children with disabilities. Jesus acknowledged the man in John 9 was blind so the work of God could be displayed in his life. What a great way to view children with disabilities! Your children's ministries program can prepare children with disabilities to fulfill God's purpose for their lives.

1. Joni Eareckson Tada and Steve Jansen, *Barrier-Free Friendships* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 48.

2. John R. Ball, "Pastoral Help for Families of Handicapped Children," in *The Exceptional Child: A Guidebook for Churches and Community Agencies*, ed. James L. Paul (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1983), 135.

— Julie Horner has a B.S. in education and lives in Springfield, Missouri.

increase in children bringing their friends to church.

KID-FRIENDLY FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

When I was a new children's ministries director, I held meetings in the children's classrooms and the teachers sat in the preschoolers' chairs. One day a teacher brought in her own chair. I realized I had inadvertently placed this teacher in an awkward position. She had been distracted for entire meetings by her discomfort. She finally decided to bring her own chair. I was somewhat embarrassed, but discovered an important principle: People are more comfortable in furniture that is suited to their size.

Children need furniture and equipment that encourages independence as well as comfort. We recently purchased very small tables and chairs for our 1-year-old classes. The toddlers freely move on and off the chairs and around the tables. They are delighted at their ability to move independently of the adults.

Children's classes are often in the church basement. To the visiting child and his/her parents, this may communicate a message-our children are not valued.

CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

Children are drawn to bigger-than-life characters. These characters embody a child's imaginative power. At our church we have several different characters the children have come to love. One is our big "pussy cat" of a lion named Clayton--our theme character. Between services he mingles with the children and adults, shaking hands and nodding enthusiastically.

Another favorite character is Scriptureman-a Superman look-a-like. He uses Scripture to show that his true strength lies in knowing and serving God.

You can enhance your environment by having your staff dress in costumes that fit your theme. (Toddlers and young

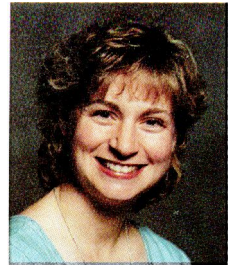
preschoolers are more receptive to characters and costumes from a distance.) When a child approaches the classroom, his or her first impression is of a room filled with the possibility of fantasy and adventure.

CONCLUSION

Many children's workers face challenging space issues. They must use their creativity to transform seemingly unusable space into rooms children will enjoy visiting.

A quality children's environment begins with adults who trust and value each other. Once that relationship is nurtured, the creative juices can begin to flow and then... watch the kids--children's ministries never looked this good. 111

Sharon Noble is director of early childhood and elementary children's ministries at Newport-Mesa Christian Center, Costa Mesa, California.

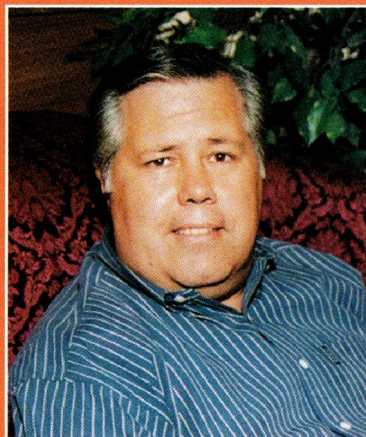


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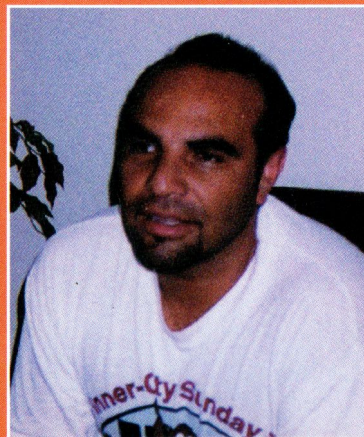
INTERVIEW WITH JIM LOVENDUSKI, JULIAN TORIZ, AND FRED FAY

Impacting Children Through Outreach Ministry

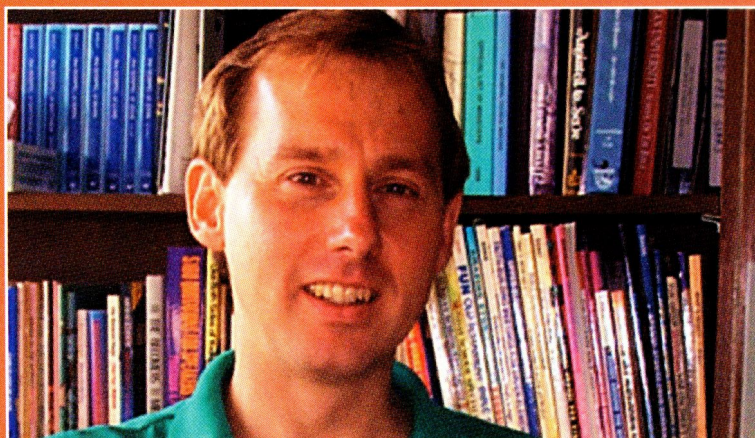
A church that neglects children is a church destined for a short future. Foundational to building strong communities of faith are churches with strong outreach contacts with unchurched children and their families. Leaders from three child-sensitive churches spoke with Enrichment about what they are doing to help their churches become islands of faith within the larger community.



Jim Lovenduski



Julian Toriz



Fred Fay

interviewees are: Jim Lovenduski, children's pastor, Christian Life Center, Bensalem, Pennsylvania; Julian Toriz, Los Angeles International Church, Los Angeles, California; and Fred Fgy, director of children's ministries, First Assembly if God Life Center, Tacoma, Washington.

WHAT MOTIVATED OUTREACHES INTO YOUR COMMUNITIES?

FAY: Our church saw the violence, the drugs, and the volatile atmosphere in what we call our hilltop or inner-city area and wanted to do something. Life Center is very big on evangelism, so we came up with a way to reach young people who probably wouldn't come to our church.

LOVENDUSKI: Jesus commanded us to go into the highways and hedges and compel people to come in. I think a lot of people have forgotten how easy it is to affect the lives of children. Jesus said the harvest field is ripe. We go to a street, turn up some music, and in 10 or 15 minutes we can have 200 children who will listen intently as we tell them about Jesus. Many of them will respond to an altar call. Another wonderful result is the fact many adults also hear the gospel. These adults are not threatened; they think they're just at a children's program.

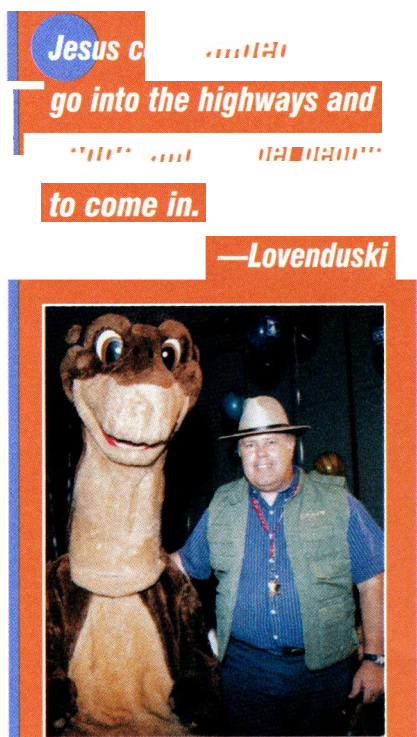
TORIZ: We meet people who wouldn't normally go to church. It gives us an opportunity to make new contacts in our community. I think people are wanting to know if the church really cares about them, what they're going through, and what they're dealing with. And I think it's vital that we are out there. We don't need to have all the answers, but we need to be out there.

WHAT CAN AN OFF-SITE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY ACCOMPLISH THAT IS NOT POSSIBLE IN THE NORMAL SUNDAY SCHOOL, SUNDAY MORNING, OR WEDNESDAY NIGHT SETTING?

LOVENDUSKI: When we go into their turf, adults feel we are doing something for their kids—as opposed to trying to change them, or trying to make them

change their religion or the way they think. So they let their guard down. They're open when we do things for children. We are not trying to hammer the adults with the gospel or knock on the doors trying to witness for Christ. This way the adults come to see the puppets and the fun, and, of course, we give out food and other things. It's really an effective way to reach them with the gospel.

TORIZ: Being outdoors gives people the feeling that they can go to this; it's going to be fun. In a relaxed atmosphere people



are disarmed. People who would never open their hearts will let us minister to them in that setting. We can even go into neighborhoods and set up in a dirt lot with apartments or drug users around. In this setting people are not intimidated by Christians praying or preaching the gospel. They will come and listen.

FAY: In the past we have had the idea that here is the church, let's bring them in. In fact, we have tried to encourage people to come on their own to different events, and they tell us they don't have transportation. Besides, they are not

going to get up early on a Saturday morning and haul their kids across town to come to our ministry. But now we are taking the church outside our doors. Most of these kids will not sit still in a classroom let alone a church. We had to devise a whole different kind of program—one they would enjoy. But going out to them is really the key.

DESCRIBE SOME OF THE METHODS YOU USE IN YOUR OUTREACHES.

LOVENDUSKI: Everything we do is visual. We have a converted van we use in our ministry. We go into a neighborhood, set up a stage, play music, and dress in large animal character costumes. Kids come in by the hundreds. If we are in an apartment area, people will hang out of windows or stand at their doorsteps. Adults enjoy the music and laughing. It isn't an irritation to them. I can go into an apartment complex, and after sharing the gospel have 50 to 100 kids in an altar call. It's unbelievable.

We also have a program called Friday Night Live in which we bus kids to church. Our attendance shot through the roof when we did it on Friday. With more volunteers, we could get an average of 50 to 75 kids every Friday night.

TORIZ: We conduct a sidewalk Sunday school. We have a truck that we cut the side out of and made it into a stage, complete with a sound system. This is our church on wheels. And that's where the sidewalk Sunday school name evolved.

Many adults brought their kids to these sidewalk Sunday schools and stayed. We had up to 100 parents at one of our sites. We decided to get them together and teach them basic things from the Bible—stories and parables that Jesus taught—and pray with them while the children's programs were going on. If they are sick, we lay hands on them. If they want to accept Christ, we give them the opportunity. We have over 500 adults in these Bible studies.

We also give each family a sack of food. They know we really care about them. That is when people start becoming interested

in our church. When we take buses back to these neighborhoods, the people don't even hesitate to come to church.

FAY: We do it in two ways. We are in the middle of the inner city. We even started creating ministries right next to the church. We had crack houses across the street from our church at one time. Every Saturday during the school year we send out about 11 buses, pack them full of children, and bring them to our gymnasium where we put on a big Jesus rally. During the summer, instead of busing them to church, we take a Super Club truck to the different parks in the neighborhood. We use street drama and music. We do these programs in about 14 different parks.

WHAT MAKES OFF-SITE MINISTRY EFFECTIVE?

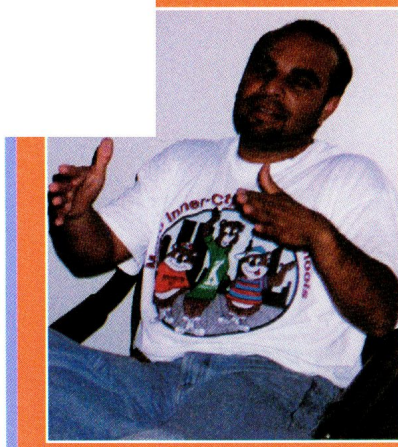
TORIZ: I think number one is consistency. We return to the same area the same time every week.

The number two factor is visitation. We go back on a separate day and visit every kid who came to the program that week. A lot of people wonder how we can visit over 4,000 children a week. We take about a minute at each home. One home might have four or five kids. We use a roster so we know each child's name, age, and parents' names. Many of the children come from single-parent homes. Usually it is the mom who is at home and asks how her children are doing. We become accountable for the kids by becoming a key part of each home.

We need to have a fun and exciting program, but our workers are out there building relationships, and that is what it's all about. These children are not Christians; they are not coming to our church because we are Christians and this is a nice thing to do. Adults and teenagers alike are looking for somebody to be with them. So workers are a key part in making our outreach successful. Having an outreach is great, but getting them plugged into the church makes it effective.

I think people are wanting to know if the church really cares about them, what they're going through, and what they're dealing with.

—Toriz



LOVENDUSKI: The kids need to feel love. We provide an environment where the children are complimented. We tell them we are proud of them and use positive discipline by rewarding them with stickers. Soon they realize this is a fun place. They feel good about being here and are more open to the gospel when the altar call is given.

Today's parents want their children to be happy. They want to take them where they will get good spiritual training. I have had parents say, "We came to visit your church, and we were going to go to another church, but my child wanted to stay her. So, here we are." Our outreach has helped our church grow.

HOW DO YOU TIE OFF-SITE EVANGELISM INTO ON-SITE DISCIPLESHIP?

FAY: That is the biggest struggle. We have tried to encourage other churches to get involved in discipleship. There is a church in town that buses kids to their church, and some of the kids from our outreaches go there. Other kids only get what we do on Saturday: that's it.

We are not equipped to bus in all 500 kids, but we do bus in some on Sunday morning. Some of our bus workers pick up kids and bring them to church. We have taken some of the kids through a discipleship program to teach them the basics of Christianity. Also, a few of the children from our Super Club have been baptized.

LOVENDUSKI: We bus in kids for our Friday Night Live. When we had the program on Saturday morning, we bused them to church on Sunday morning. Then the kids begged us to let them come on Wednesday night. Eventually we had way more on Wednesday night than Sunday morning.

We found the kids were so hungry for love and fellowship. By providing a second opportunity for them to come, we could disciple them. We treat them like the kids who regularly come to our church. We are also trying to get the kids involved in our church camp program and specialized ministries like Royal Rangers and Missionettes.

Without question, discipleship has to be a goal, a mind-set, a conviction, and a passion.

TORIZ: At issue for me is the relationship between the children's pastor, youth pastor, and Christian education director. They must all be working together in discipling children. Each pastor needs to know what spiritual investments have been made in the life of each child. They must work together to ensure that each child grows in Christ as he or she transitions between age groups.

WHAT ARE SOME WAYS YOU RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS FOR OFF-SITE MINISTRIES?

FAY: We had a large campaign years ago when we started this ministry and introduced it to the congregation. That is where we got our biggest group of workers.

Once or twice a year I have another emphasis where I talk about the inner-city kids and what we are doing. The people in the church see the problems in the

neighborhoods and want to get involved solving them.

The people who help with Super Club are not necessarily our Sunday school teachers. We were concerned this ministry might draw some teachers away from our Sunday school staff. But that was not the case.

Some people help by giving large financial gifts-others are involved each Saturday. Some workers stay for years-others for 8 weeks. Part of our worker recruitment is making small packages of time available for those who can't make long-term commitments.

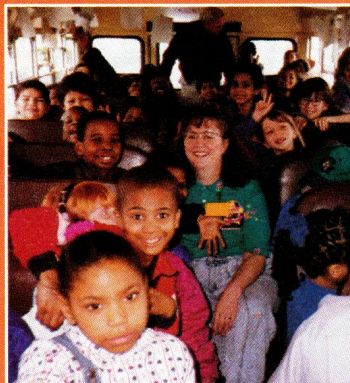
I also go to the middle school, senior high school, and college campus groups and recruit workers for special events.

LOVENDUSKI:As children's pastor, I am always looking for more workers. But one of the most effective ways to find workers is to have the senior pastor believe in the ministry and promote it from the pulpit.

Another way is to allow people to experience success in ministry. A lady in our church was scared to do visitation, but she went out and visited homes anyway. The first house she visited she handed a lady a flyer. The next week this lady and her whole family came to church and have been coming ever since. When people see that what they are doing changes lives, they get excited about ministry.

Our church saw the violence, the drugs, and the volatile atmosphere in what we call our hilltop or inner-city area and wanted to do something.

—Fay



When we choose staff, we train them to minister effectively and be sensitive to the move of God. We make sure they understand that part of our ministry is to have fun. We don't want children to sit in a straight line and be yelled at all day.

TORIZ: We get older children or adults to work in this ministry. Many of them are

new Christians and have come from the streets themselves. Since they have come from the streets, they identify with the kids we are trying to reach.

Church people without a lot of experience only need to be willing to get out and knock on doors.

HOW DOES A CHURCH GO ABOUT DEVELOPING AN OFF-SITE CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES?

FAY:The best beginning for a church is research-finding out what other people are doing. We have had children's ministers come to our church and want to know how to develop an outreach ministry. You shouldn't just duplicate what another church is doing. The culture of every community is different. We went with what works for our community.

One lady became involved in our group just to observe. Then she developed a bus ministry in her own church. Another man saw what we did with our Super Club stage truck. He's not using a truck, but he is taking young people from his church to community centers and presenting programs there.

Second, discover your resources. Go to your congregation and get their response. Dream big and decide what you can do. The possibilities are endless. You can start by having your young

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"I don't know, Miss McClary, maybe our standards are unreasonably high."

people conduct a mission project in your own city.

LOVENDUSKI: Work with the people God has given you. The pastor needs to find those in the church who have a call, a burden for ministry, and a love for kids. Then send these people to a church that has a viable outreach ministry to see what can be done through a children's outreach. After they've gotten the vision, train them, and let the Holy Spirit tug at their hearts. If God's not in it, it's not going to work anyway.

The most successful children's workers are never the ones I would pick. They are the most unlikely, the most humble; they simply love kids. That is all it takes.

TORIZ: You don't have to start with a big children's program. You can use a park close to your church. Go to the elementary schools and hand out flyers that explain your program. Be excited about it. The way you present it and talk about the games and the great time they will have will draw kids. After your first pro-

gram, evaluate what you could have done better.

A church can start by conducting an outreach for the summer. They may want to try a program on four Saturdays for a month. At the end of the month, they can evaluate their effectiveness and future commitment. If they still feel good about their outreach, then expand it another month. If a church doesn't think they can conduct an outreach every week, they can conduct a program on one Saturday each month. This will give their church visibility in the neighborhood. They will meet children, teenagers, and adults whom they would have never met and who might know nothing about their church.

An outreach into the community is a great public relations tool for your church. A big part of the success of a church is its kids program.

We haven't created a new program—just a new way to do it. We've taken kids church to the street, and we have given it a fun name—something that attracts children.

IS THE COMMUNITY SUPPORTING YOUR EFFORTS?

LOVENDUSKI: The great thing about children's ministry is that when we do these things for the kids, the community has a good impression of our church. They don't understand at first that we are trying to win them to the Lord. They simply know there is a place in town that does neat things for children.

FAY: When we first started this ministry, we weren't sure about community support. We went around to all the other inner-city churches trying to get them involved. We went to some of the boys and girls clubs and talked with them about what we were doing. They were very supportive. We talked to parents. Some of these parents are prostitutes and drug dealers; some are just nice people. When we talk about doing something for their kids, they're very open. Community response has been overwhelming. The first time we did something we were surprised at how many kids showed up. People are always thanking us for what we do. ~

THE DALLAS BUSINESS JOURNAL



Iastor Whataguy had just invited the kids to come down front for a children's sermon. He swallowed as they rushed toward the altar area in a flood of smiling, eager faces. They wiggled against each other in anticipation. He really wasn't known for being a "kids-kind-of-guy." He had always been more "steady-as-she-goes," and in some ways feared losing that handle. But his fear of appearing the fool in front of the adults was pushed aside by the sheer enthusiasm and energy of the kids.

Besides, he thought, *there are more important issues at stake here than appearances.* He had finally agreed to make this bold move to address an issue that had been stirring in his heart: *I must become a better example of pro-kid and pro-family values in my church.*

Pastor Whataguy is looking forward to the day when the church he pastors is like the church in the Book of Acts. But right now it seems the church resembles American culture more than biblical culture with its programs, departments, and specialists. And here he is initiating another program—a kids' sermon. He shuddered. He had dreaded doing the children's sermon when he was an intern.

As the kids settled on the floor, he thought back to the meeting with the children's workers that had led to this sermon. He could still hear the words of one of the more dedicated workers: "Families come to church together and they leave together, but they don't do anything together. Parents leave this place week after week with no inspiration, equipment,

The workers decided on one about peeling a banana and talking about

"what's inside that counts." He would then tie the object lesson to the story of Saul and David.

material, or ideas for what they can do with their own kids. We must do a better job equipping parents for their own ministry at home."

"OK, what do you propose we do?" Pastor Whataguy asked. Several hours of discussion produced a consensus:

1. He and the children's pastor would try to coordinate sermon topics. Of course the adult

content would be far more mature, but the essence would be the same. The arts, crafts, and handouts the kids take home will give the family something to do and talk about during the week.

2. They decided to have a book table to provide parents with tapes, books, and videos that would reinforce the sermons and songs heard in children's church and the adult service. That way families would be equipped with music and stories they could use in the car or at home. And when the kids come to church, they would already know the songs and stories. The workers also decided to take all profits from the book table and use them to buy materials for struggling single parents in their church and community.

3. The adult choir director was a proud new grandmother and suggested that the choir include a kids' song every Sunday. Pastor Whataguy tried to imagine the choir doing songs with hand motions and smiled.

4. The team suggested that when pastor leads in prayer, perhaps his wife join him during the petition part of his prayer. This might encourage couples to pray at home. That made sense. But now the hard part. Would he, the senior pastor, consider presenting a children's sermon?

"Why not use a kids' specialist?" he asked.

"Because the men in the church look up to you," came the reply.

The children's workers were persuasive. They even used one of his favorite Scriptures—Malachi 4:6—where God would "turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers." But a kids' sermon?

"What do I do in front of all of those kids?" he asked.

"Here's a book of object lessons," came the reply. "It'll get you started."

The workers decided on one about peeling a banana and talking about "what's inside that counts." He would then tie the object lesson to the story of Saul and David. Saul looked great on the outside, but had no heart for God. David was small on the outside, but had a heart that loved God. He thought he could handle that. He was impressed with the content. Kids' presentations that had annoyed him in the past usually had weak content.

The adults could use this too, he thought to



He had finally agreed to make this bold move to address an issue that had been stirring in his heart: I must become a better example of pro-kid and pro-family values in my church.

himself. But that brought up another issue.

"What will the adults think of all of this playfulness in church? Will they regard it as showing disrespect for God?" he asked.

Someone had a suggestion: Write an insert for the church bulletin and call it, "Why Did the Pastor Eat an Unpeeled Banana in Church Today?" It would explain this new approach to the more conservative members of the congregation. The pastor is modeling pro-kid, pro-family values from the pulpit. Nice ring to it. Great idea. End of meeting.

And now he was looking down at all of these smiling young faces. The atmosphere was more pleasant than he had anticipated.

He felt like a playful, young dad again as he held up the banana and said, "I'm hungry. I didn't have breakfast yet today." He then proceeded to take a bite out of the top of the unpeeled banana. He chewed with exaggeration. It was quite bitter.

He then began his children's sermon with his mouth full of banana. He had their attention and made the most of it.

"Yuck," he said, "it tastes bitter. I don't think this is the right way to eat a banana."

The kids were shocked. Some laughed. He hoped that at least one child would speak up. One finally did.

"You should peel it before you eat it," a little helpful future administrator cried out.

"I should? Oh! Thank you very much for telling me. I'll try it." Pastor Whataguy peeled the banana, took a bite, chewed thoughtfully, and said, "Yes, that is much better."

He then began his children's sermon with his mouth full of banana. He had their attention and made the most of it. He talked about Saul and how handsome he was. He held up the banana peel and said, "Saul looked good on the

outside, but he was bitter to God, because he did not obey God."

Then he talked about David. "David was just a little boy who didn't look like much on the outside, but on the inside-in his heart-he loved God more than anything."

Most of the kids were getting the message. He could tell some of the smaller ones were a bit lost, perhaps wondering if David was a banana.

"So next time you eat a banana, don't forget to peel it first. And when you get to the inside, I want you to think about David, who had a heart that made God happy, because of his great love for God. Do you love God?"

The kids shouted, "Yes."

"Good, you may go back to your seats."

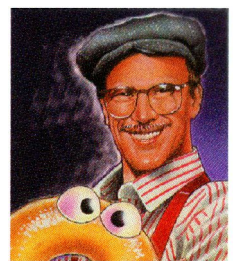
As the kids went back to their seats, the choir sang 's David Did," a song about David. The choir rippled with hand motions and tambourines. The kids listened with rapt attention: this was a song they could understand and enjoy.

The morning was a triumph. The bulletin announcement worked well. The conservative members were pleased. Even the tape table was swamped with requests for the tape with the song about David on it. The new "Family Resources" column in the bulletin was obviously doing its job.

With kids hanging on him afterwards, much like a human jungle gym, Pastor Whataguy looked forward to getting back to that book on object lessons. Then he paused and thought, *I wonder if there's anything in it that deals with pizza? ~*

Rob Evans, better known as the Donutman on the popular Donutman video series for children, has produced 15 Donutman videos and 20 audiocassettes. He and his

wife, Shelley, live in Nashville, Tennessee, with their six children.



At 11:25 a.m. Sunday, June 30, Pastor Smedes discovers that he has been neglecting his youngest daughter.

INTERVIEW WITH KERRY CLARENSAU AND KEN HUNT

Missionettes and Royal Rangers-An Anatomy of Change

In view of major changes in Missionettes and Royal Rangers, Enrichment managing editor Rick Knoth met with leaders from these departments for updates on ministry projections, changes, and growth.

Kerry Clarensau is Missionettes coordinator. Ken Hunt is Royal Rangers national commander.



Kerry Clarensau



Ken Hunt

Our goal is to see more Royal Rangers boys called into missions, called to be pastors, and called into church leadership roles because they were taught leadership.

PROVIDE A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE MISSIONETTES AND ROYALRANGERS PROGRAMS.

CLARENSAU: Missionettes is the auxiliary program of the Women's Ministries Department whose purpose is to train, keep, and care for girls age 3 through high school. The first Missionettes club was officially chartered in January 1956 in response to the need for preparing girls for future involvement in Women's Ministries and establishing a plan for older women to train the younger women (Titus 2:3,4).

Several revisions have been made through the years to bring the program to its ultimate purpose-winning girls to Jesus Christ and teaching them to live victoriously.

HUNT: In the 1950s our churches were losing young people to other interests. About this time family night activities were launched in many churches, with an emphasis on nurturing all ages. In 1962, Royal Rangers was developed as a program to involve and train boys. Using the outdoor adventure, Royal Rangers seeks to develop boys spiritually, physically, and socially.

HOW DO THESE PROGRAMS STRENGTHEN THE LOCAL CHURCH?

CLARENSAU: The fivefold purpose of Missionettes is (1) to win girls to Jesus Christ through love and acceptance, teaching them to obey everything Jesus commanded; (2) to develop girls spiritually and mentally; (3) to provide encouragement, support, and accountability through lasting Christian relationships; (4) to provide an environment where girls can develop their gifts and abilities; and (5) to acquaint girls with the Great Commission of Jesus Christ.

Missionettes is an integral part of the total church program and should not be considered an extra activity but an outreach program to the community.

HUNT: Royal Rangers is a part of HonorBound: Men of Promise and provides a ministry for men to boys. Our

men become Christian role models. The curriculum is exciting and as our men get excited about helping boys, their excitement attracts kids.

In addition to the total development of boys, Royal Rangers provides an avenue for evangelism-for each boy to know Jesus as His Savior and experience the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Outpost reports indicate approximately 7,500 boys receive the Baptism each year.

National events for boys help excite and keep boys involved in Royal Rangers ministry. In July 1998, for instance, we conducted the national Camporama, which drew over 5,000 boys and men from around the world.

WHAT ARE THE MAJOR REVISIONS TO YOUR RESPECTIVE PROGRAMS?

HUNT: The first thing we did was rewrite our leaders manuals in 1990. Within a 10-year period all curriculum will be completely rewritten. We began by rewriting the Pioneers and Trailblazers, grades 4 through 9. We've just finished revamping the Challengers program, which was formerly the Air-Sea-Trail Rangers program. We are now working on our younger program, Straight Arrows and Buckaroos.

CLARENSAU: The purpose of Missionettes has not changed, but some leaders have had struggles using the former curriculum: namely, how to assimilate visitors into the club. Each badge may take 3 to 6 months to earn. A girl joining at midyear would be 3 to 6 months behind the other girls.

We want Missionettes to be evangelistic, and to be evangelistic it must be visitor friendly-welcoming visitors and immediately assimilating them into the club. The former scheduling also made it necessary for girls to be there every week to achieve their advancements. That was sometimes difficult when a church sponsored a kids camp or other activities, and Missionettes was canceled for a week. When a girl was absent, it was necessary for her to make up the work she

missed. The new curriculum, which came out in August 1998, is more flexible.

The former age groupings also made it difficult for churches to have small groups. For example, the Stars program was for fourth through eighth grades. It was difficult to minister effectively to a fourth grader and an eighth grader at the same time. Since it's important to present the gospel at each child's level of understanding, the new age groupings help leaders minister more effectively to the children.

Missionettes is an integral part of the total church program and should not be considered an extra activity but an outreach program to the community.

—Kerry Clarensau



HOW WILL THESE CHANGES MEET THE CURRENT NEEDS OF BOYS AND GIRLS?

HUNT: Royal Rangers uses an incentive-based program-boys are rewarded when they learn. By preparing more and better curriculum, we have increased the Advancement Trail with more opportunities to reward those who have done a good job.

The Challengers provides a wider circle for those who have gone through

Royal Rangers and offers educational, vocational, and biblical studies,

CLARENSAU: The greatest strength to the Missionettes revision is the I-month units, which means that no matter when a girl joins, it takes no more than a week or two to catch up with everyone else. These girls can start a new unit with the other girls, which helps visitors to fit right in. This gives the sponsor flexibility.

The girls' pages are in four colors, which is an improvement. New music—a song for every memory verse and every essential truth—helps children memorize. Each unit has two songs to help teach that unit. A variety of teaching helps is included such as puppets, paper dolls, discovery boxes for object lessons, four-color pages, and memory contests. These help the church to reach girls more effectively and then disciple them.

HOW HAVE THE AGE GROUPS CHANGED FOR MISSIONETTES?

CLARENSAU: The former age groupings were: Rainbows, ages 3 and 4; Daisies, first and second grades; Prims, second and third grades; Stars, fourth through eighth grades; Ys, high school ages. In the new age grouping, Rainbows

remains the same. Daisies is a kindergarten club with curriculum designed for kindergarten girls. Prims is for first and second grades: their approach to life is similar, and they work well together. Stars is for third, fourth, and fifth grades, which allows children to become a part of the youth group.

Most public schools have middle schools now, which involves children in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. So girls can stay with the girls they attend school and Sunday school with, we have a new program for sixth, seventh, and eighth grade girls called Friends. A new curriculum for high school-age girls is called Girls Only.

ARE THERE CONCERNS A PASTOR, CHRISTIAN EDUCATION DIRECTOR, OR MISSIONETTES SPONSOR MIGHT HAVE IN REGARD TO THE PROGRAM CHANGES?

CLARENSAU: They may feel that past achievements possibly are not accepted any longer, but that's not the case. Everything that has been earned under the old program is recognized in the new curriculum. A new award, called the Medal of Honor, is given to girls who have completed multiple programs of

the curriculum. These come in bronze, silver, and gold. The transition between programs can be made at the church's discretion and on its own time frame.

The new curriculum is actually more cost effective. The greatest expense in making the transition from old curriculum to new is the *Sponsor Guide*, a one-time cost. All have *Sponsors Handbooks*, so they wouldn't necessarily have to buy those every year. The girls materials are actually less expensive than before. Transition time is easy if the church approaches it with a positive attitude and with the sponsors' excitement.

SO THIS WOULD BE THE IDEAL TIME FOR CHURCHES THAT DON'T HAVE A MISSIONETTES PROGRAM TO START?

CLARENSAU: Absolutely! It is our hope that many churches that don't have Missionettes groups will find the new curriculum to be much more adaptable. The flexibility that is built into it will add the necessary element to make the program adaptable to any church situation—large or small, big budget or low budget.

We anticipate great things. Our prayer is that many girls will come to know Jesus Christ because of the loving acceptance they will find in Missionettes. Missionettes is not about badges, awards ceremonies, or uniforms; it's about offering little girls hope, introducing them to Jesus, who can change their lives: teaching them how to live for Him; and giving them the support they need to grow, mature, and learn that God loves them.

WHAT IS THE FIRST THING CHURCH LEADERSHIP SHOULD DO WHEN IMPLEMENTING THE NEW PROGRAM MATERIAL?

CLARENSAU: The first thing is to get every sponsor trained. District WM leaders along with many sectional reps participated in a seminar in August 1998 where I introduced the new leadership training course. We also encourage district leaders to offer leadership training in their respective districts.



"May I just say that padded pews are under consideration."

Second, we provide all the information the local church needs to make the change. It would be helpful for every sponsor to take the leadership training course and receive instruction on the changes without having to figure them out on her own.

DISCUSS THE NEW VENUES OF MINISTRY ROYAL RANGERS HAS ACQUIRED IN RECENT YEARS.

HUNT: In the last few years, we have emphasized home missions and inner-city ministry, world missions, and evangelism. The inner city became an immediate target. National Urban Leadership Conferences, comprised of Royal Rangers in the inner city, have enhanced the ministry through training for ministry in the inner city. Harvest Task Force—a prayer team of men who will go into the inner cities, pray, and fast—works with church leaders and home missionaries.

We've also reached out through the Gideon plan from the Convoy of Hope. In this plan Royal Rangers can procure food in their local areas for Convoy of Hope distribution.

Two strong areas of mission have developed: (1) Pathfinders and (2) the Light-for-the-Lost Junior Councilman. Pathfinders is a MAPS-coordinated effort. Through this program men go to remote areas around the world to construct church facilities. The Light-for-the-Lost Junior Councilman program is simply a cooperative effort between Light-for-the-Lost and Royal Rangers to educate young people to become missions-minded. As boys grow older they will want to become laypersons with Light-for-the-Lost or some other missions education program through the Assemblies of God.

We've also partnered with Teen Challenge International USA in educating Teen Challenge students and training them to be Royal Rangers commanders in inner-city ministry. The objective is to place Teen Challenge graduates in leadership roles. In addition to those outreaches mentioned, we have

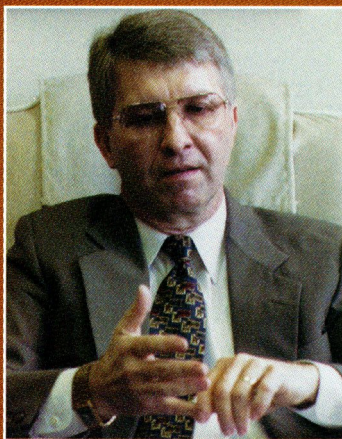
partnered with Ambassadors in Mission and Speed-the-Light.

WHAT IS THE KEY TO IMPLEMENTING OR STRENGTHENING THE ROYAL RANGERS PROGRAM IN THE CHURCH?

HUNT: Find a man who wants to make a difference in a boy's life, train him, and help him to find others who are called for such ministry. Go forward with leadership training courses, available through correspondence or the district. National training camps, emphasis on

We have a saying in Royal Rangers that a man never stands as tall as when he stoops to help a boy. That boy may become a Billy Graham or one who will affect the next generation for Jesus Christ.

—Ken Hunt



intense training, commitment, and the time and investment it takes will help a man make a real difference by winning young people to the Lord Jesus Christ. Royal Rangers can be the greatest evangelistic thrust in the church.

We have a saying in Royal Rangers that a man never stands as tall as when he stoops to help a boy. That boy may become a Billy Graham or one who will

affect the next generation for Jesus Christ. Our goal is to see more Royal Rangers boys called into missions, called to be pastors, and called into church leadership roles because they were taught leadership. As laymen or pastors, they will be key role models.

HOW CAN MISSIONETTES AND ROYAL RANGERS BE COORDINATED WITH OTHER MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH, LIKE YOUTH GROUP?

CLARENSAU: In Girls Only, girls should be encouraged to be active in their youth group. They need that. Girls Only can meet Saturday morning twice a month or on Sunday afternoon-weekly, once a month, or whatever the church wants. It is very flexible.

HUNT: Youth and children's pastors are pastors of Royal Rangers, Missionettes, as well as the other young people in the church. These pastors realize that ministry should be cooperative, not competitive. And if a conflict in scheduling of Royal Rangers and other programs cannot be resolved, I suggest they let each boy choose whether he wants to continue in Royal Rangers.

If a boy has started on the Advancement Trail, has moved beyond age 12 or 13, and has set his goals on achieving the Gold Medal of Achievement, don't cut him off—encourage him. Allow him to go forward in the program. We can help the church know what options are available in working with these ministries to help improve coordination. ~

Kerry Clarensau is Missionettes coordinator, Springfield, Missouri.

Ken Hunt is Royal Rangers national commander, Springfield, Missouri.

Trends in Children's



MINISTRIES

B Y ole K G RUB E R

What are the trends in children's ministries today? They're so many different approaches to children's church, Sunday school, and mid-week clubs. I have friends who have swung the pendulum of ministry emphasis from outreach to simple maintenance and back again. Some seems to have trouble finding a place in the center.

A trend can serve to guide your children's ministry or it can drive it into the ground. I like to look at positive trends rather than negative. What trends today are driving the church ahead in a positive way?

Imagine what would happen in your church when children begin praying in the back rooms of your facility

I cannot write about trends until I first discuss fads in children's ministries. Let me briefly mention some fads that have come, gone, and come again. Then I will discuss some major trends in children's work today. These hold true in America, but I've also observed them in my recent travels to Canada and Australia.

FADS

Fads come and go. When I was a boy, yo-yos, trolls, and pet rocks were the things to own. Now, skateboards have made a mainstream comeback. Nintendo 64 has become a substitute child-care giver in our society. Once again, my 10-year-old needs a yo-yo.

Fads are as real in church work as they are in the world. Remember when everyone

wanted a Plexiglas® pulpit? How about trading in hymnals for the overhead projector?

In 1975, when I became a Christian, bus ministry was the rage. It had worked in a few isolated, yet high profile cases. Suddenly everyone had to have a bus ministry. Reaching lower income children and their families seemed to be the meal ticket for aspiring pastors. Churches that had no direction from God ventured into this labor-intensive ministry.

You couldn't just bring them in on buses and let them run wild in the sanctuary. Now you had to have a "super church" service to keep them occupied. So bus ministries and super church services sprang up around the country. The trouble with fads is this: Without God's direction, they are short lived.

Many churches now own one or more almost useless busses. Also, in closets somewhere are several thousand dollars worth of curriculum, magic tricks, and puppets. The fad arrived and departed leaving in its wake wondering children with a one-time taste of Christianity.

Over the years, I have watched as children's workers have almost drowned in a sea of fads. These have included Saturday action rallies, puppet teams, spiritual warfare, wacky summer Wednesdays, CM websites, and more. Fads of methodology seem to constantly tug at the budgets of medium to larger churches. What church doesn't have a large flannel graph set, a closet filled with old slide shows, or a complete set of choir bells with accompanying curriculum?

I visited a church which had a closet filled with the most beautiful and expensive puppets. When asked why this equipment was sitting dormant, the current leaders replied, "Years ago our church hosted a puppet training seminar. The church invested in all of these puppets. For about a year, we had a great

I have friends who have swung the pendulum of ministry emphasis from outreach to simple maintenance and back again.

puppet team. Then the director moved to another city. We don't have anyone to direct a team anymore." This story is all too familiar to anyone involved in or paying for children's ministries.

For a time, many of my friends had a children's church bank and variety store. The name and decoration varied, but the idea was the same. Bribe the kids by giving them play money and let them save and spend this in the store. I know of half a dozen churches that still have a treasure chest full of penny toy items sitting in a storeroom or behind a puppet theater.

In the late 80s, I talked to many workers who had begun to fill time in their classrooms with games and snacks. These times may not have anything to do with God or the lesson of the day: they were simply time fillers. This fad of entertaining the children for the sake of entertainment has quickly declined.

Fads come and go. Are they bad? Not necessarily. Waking a sleeping congregation to the need to reach children is

good. Motivating^I children to bring friends, Bibles, and offerings does have a higher purpose. But we must move beyond fads. Our approach to children's ministry, as the 21st century looms, cannot be dictated by the latest vegetable video.

Adult believers around the world are beginning to recognize the ministry gifts in young believers and are helping them develop their gifts in ministry.

Many senior pastors have adopted Rick Warren's battle cry in *The Purpose Driven Church*. I believe this kind of vision-oriented management must also be applied to children's ministries. God-directed trends have purposes that transcend current technology and hype.

Here are some trends I have observed in our churches. These seem to be universal in nature. If you do not see these

in your church yet, don't worry. Trends sweep from place to place as pastors are made aware of specific felt needs.

PRAYER

Prayer has become a priority. What an awesome trend this is. Children are becoming prayer warriors. Adult congregation members are beginning to pray for individual children. Children's workers are praying that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers.

Sunday school classes, children's churches, and club meetings are ending with altar calls. Pastors and children's leaders across our land are discovering this simple truth: Children love to pray.

One Royal Rangers commander recently had every boy in his Pioneer group write down a sin or two on file cards. They took the cards out to the churchyard and buried them. As they knelt in prayer around the grave for sin, two boys gave their lives to Jesus for the first time.

A group of 10- and 11-year-old girls ran up to me on Sunday morning to tell me about last week's Missionettes retreat. They stayed up in their cabin praying until 2:30 in the morning. Two in the group received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

These are not isolated incidents. Children love to pray. Adults need to pray for children's ministries. A local children's ministry undergirded with prayer is the wave of the future. This trend is directly linked to the next.

THE MOVE OF THE SPIRIT

God's Spirit is moving in the lives of boys and girls around the world. Take the story of four girls by the swimming pool at the Illinois District campground. One girl slipped, twisting her ankle. The other three gathered around and prayed for her. As she was healed, all four girls were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Last month we had an altar service in our children's church during which nine boys and girls, ages 6 through 11, were baptized in the Holy Spirit. This happened as we directed children to pray for

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"You know Doug, we could use you in our youth group choir. Changing into a choir robe shouldn't be much of a transition."

Discipling Those Who Will Shape the 21st Century

Baby Boomers and Baby Busters have shaped culture in the last half of the 20th century. Busters along with the next generation—sometimes called Millennial Kids—will influence the first part of the 21st century. The oldest Millennial Kids are 17. If their generation continues to develop as projected, their adult attitudes and behavior will differ markedly from that of Baby Busters. The following table compares Busters and Millennials—their potential impact on our culture, and how the church can effectively evangelize and disciple the generations that will begin to shape the 21st century.

TRAIT/STRATEGY	BABY BUSTERS	MILLENNIAL KIDS
Other names	Generation X; Slackers	Generation Y; Millennials
Birth Years*	1961-82	1982-2003
Age range in 1999	18 to 37 years old	17 years old and younger
Formative influences	transition to two career-families; parents' divorce; day care; latchkey; technology boom; video games; AIDS; abortion; relativism; media	devoted, and protective parents; child advocacy trends; crime and violence in schools as well as in culture; drug abuse; AIDS; access to Internet
Frequently described as...	hopeless; resentful; unmotivated; slow to start careers; alienated	hopeful; caring; idealistic; team players; family centered; volunteers
How they see themselves	as pragmatic, wanting to solve immediate, practical problems; skilled in interpersonal negotiations; damaged by previous generation	ready and able to help improve their world; team players; proactive; reasonable
View of religion	marginal impact on everyday life; 70 percent believe all truth is personal and relative	90 percent believe in God; 75 percent believe in life after death; somewhat uncertain about absolute truth of Bible.
How they see the church	lacking in warmth, acceptance, and grace; limited in thinking; conforming; cliquish; too political	as a vehicle for making improvements in Jesus' name; as a guide to truth
Motivated by...	media messages; authenticity; hope for emotional healing	cooperative efforts; financial security; technology; reasoned presentations
Want from church	emphasis on relationships rather than on programs or numbers; "surrogate parenting"; walking the talk	honesty and integrity; compassion ministries; long-term relationships; peer prayer and ministry in small groups
Attention-Getters	media, especially videos that focus on a reason to listen to a sermon or lesson	witnessing and discipling resources in print, on Internet, or on video
Analysis of sermons	Will be asking, "Am I interested in listening? How does this relate to life as I know it?"	Will listen closely to reasoned sermons illustrated with narratives of God's work in real lives.
Evangelistic windows/strategies	the birth of a child; parenting seminars; recovery ministries; personal crises	ministry trips; media presentations; websites; help in responding to current events (e.g., school shootings)
Evangelism strategies	Contemporary Sermons —While suspicious of "professional" services and religious jargon, they will respond to biblical truth presented in unchurched provocative sermons on current issues. Emphasize people more than programs —They respond better to friends who model authentic Christian living than to evangelism events. Children's ministries —Gen X parents want churches to disciple children.	Reasoned Discipling —This generation needs biblical training that equips them to share absolutes with pluralistic peers. Equip for Ministry —They want to be trained for ministry that begins now. Involve in Ministry —They want to participate in ministry events that allow them to make a difference. Intergenerational Events —This generation enjoys interacting and working with adults.
Websites**	http://www.epbc.edu/burttf94.html http://www.tagnet.org/dvm/ABCs.html	http://www.northwesternmutual.com/2001 ***

*Years vary slightly from source to source concerning when each generation begins and ends.

**Websites change frequently. Listing does not infer recommendation or affirmation of all content.

***More information on Millennial Kids can be found by searching for the word "Millennial" on the Internet.

—Compiled by Sharon Ellard, early childhood consultant for the Assemblies of God Sunday School Promotion and Training Department, Springfield, Missouri



THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE CHILDREN'S PASTOR

It has been my privilege to serve as a full-time children's pastor for over 20 years. During this time, ministry to children in the local church has grown into a specialty field embracing hundreds of faithful servants. In the early 1980s, a new national interest in children led many institutions, including the church, to study its approach to this special group. This led to discoveries that now guide the local church in many of its fundamental ministry applications for serving kids.

As we reach the end of this decade, changes in children's ministry are linked to our culture, church psychographics, educational methodologies, and the ever-changing world of the child. The level of effectiveness of many programs is associated with the leader, the children's pastor.

The following discussion defines the changing components in the role of the children's pastor. This will provide information for senior pastors who might hire a children's pastor and to help those involved in children's ministry to understand the present and future dynamics associated with this field.

ROLE CHANGE #1

Children's pastors portfolios including more ministry to the whole family.

This paradigm shift has been in process for about 5 years. Greater partnering with parents to facilitate the spiritual growth of kids is needed. The need for this new teamwork is driving children's pastors to be involved with parents in focus groups, special events, training, and other forums.

ROLE CHANGE #2

Children's pastors are becoming more people managers and less program managers.

Managing people requires a different set of skills than managing a program. In recent years, I have attended seminars like: "Effective Team-building," "Managing Volunteers," and "Developing Your People Skills." This role change is one of the most difficult for children's pastors because they sense their drive in ministry is to kids, not spending a lot of time with adults.

ROLE CHANGE #3

More administration, less time with kids.

For several years I have moderated a think tank for children's pastors sponsored by Leadership Network (Dallas, Texas). Each year we discuss our allocation of time for ministry. We discuss the increasing amount of time spent on budgeting, long-term planning, facility management, and less time to

see little league games and recitals.

Many children's pastor's church contact with their kids is decreasing because they are racing around on Sunday morning dealing with a plethora of details.

ROLE CHANGE #4

Children's pastors are becoming counselors.

Spiritual counseling has always existed as a wonderful facet of the children's ministry portfolio. The new edge of counseling includes helping children understand their fractured family and difficulties at school and in the neighborhood.

This role change is having a significant affect as many children's pastors are playing catch up to find education resources to help them become good counselors.

ROLE CHANGE #5

Children's pastors need to be "pharmacists."

Prozac is now being prescribed for preadolescent children suffering from depression. Ritalin is used for kids with Attention Deficit Disorder. Ministry to children with special needs is growing and this requires the children's pastor to understand techniques and approaches best suited for them.

ROLE CHANGE #6

Children's pastors need to be "lawyers."

This includes proper screening of volunteers to the filing of parental permission slips for field trips. Today's children's pastor needs to understand the liabilities associated with ongoing ministry.

ROLE CHANGE #7

Children's pastors need to be developmental theorists.

Working with kids today requires a depth of knowledge of issues relative to learning styles, environmental stimuli, curriculum block building, audiovisual productions, etc.

As we head into a new millennium, children's ministry will continue to change. These changes should not be viewed as problematic, but rather as opportunities for the Holy Spirit to create in us new dreams and new approaches to positively influence kids. Alvin Toffler, an American futurist, states "It is not our moral responsibility to stop the future, but to shape it."

—Jay Hostettler is children's pastor,
First Assembly of God, San Diego, California.

children. God's Spirit is moving in the hearts and lives of children and children's workers.

Consider the children's church leader who told me, "I couldn't believe it. I gave an altar call and over 20 kids responded. I've never seen a response like this."

In Denver a children's pastor has trained boys and girls as altar workers. Children pray and anoint those in need with oil. Boys and girls have been saved, healed, and baptized in the Holy Spirit as these prayer team members committed their requests to the Lord.

Across our country the Spirit of God is moving in Sunday and midweek services and other meetings. We are truly experiencing a divine outpouring of the Spirit in these last days.

CHILDREN IN MINISTRY

Another exciting trend is the growing number of children directly involved in ministry. I have witnessed children serving as ushers, greeters, sound technicians, and worship team members. Children who have been empowered by the Holy Spirit are no longer content to sit and watch; they want to experience Christianity. Children are being allowed to minister in the mainstream in our churches. This is exciting because adult believers around the world are beginning to recognize the ministry gifts in young believers and are helping them develop their gifts in ministry.

On a recent trip to the Assemblies of God churches in Australia, I met a 12-year-old girl named Alicia. Alicia plays the piano and sings as part of a worship team in her church. She leads in worship in the main sanctuary with great effectiveness.

God directed two sisters from our church to evangelize their neighbors. The girls took a Who Cares? outreach video across the street and showed it to an unchurched family. (Who Cares? was produced by Boys and Girls Missionary Crusade in cooperation with Gospel Publishing House. It is a 7-minute reproducible video tract for children.) The family—mom, dad, and four children—

prayed with the 11-year-old and 8-year-old sisters that morning.

When God begins to move by His Spirit in your children's ministries, there will be an increase in children actively participating in ministry. This trend of children ministering to other children and adults is growing rapidly. At first I thought it to be a fad, but I am hearing more and more stories of children serving in their churches.

In Latin America, Missionary Don Triplet has trained children to lead others to the Lord and to pray for them to be baptized in the Spirit. Many children and teens are coming to Jesus and being filled with the Spirit as young people trained by Don and his workers pray.

ALTAR CALLS IN THE CLASSROOM AND CHURCH

More and more teachers and leaders across our nation are experiencing the move of God in their classes and children's churches. Why is this trend becoming the norm? Because more and more leaders are redeeming the time, they are setting aside time for altar calls.

The Assemblies of God is a movement that has a great tradition around the altars. I am thrilled to see that tradition being resurrected by our teachers and leaders. The altar call is alive and power-filled in the Sunday school rooms and children's sanctuaries of America.

Leaders are taking seriously the possibility of spiritual response in their classrooms. Classes that at one time ended with a quick prayer and a take-home paper are now extending into the church time as children receive a new touch from God.

This is a trend that you, the pastor, should embrace and promote. Imagine what would happen in your church when children begin praying in the back rooms of your facility. This attitude of true ministry is quickly replacing the last remnants of the game and snack fad of the last decade. Teachers are replacing the need to fill time with spiritual

happenings that go into overtime. This is a divine move of God.

CONCLUSION

How do these trends play out in light of the history being made by today's church? The emphasis on prayer, the move of the Spirit, children in ministry, and altar time is continuing evidence of the revival winds of our day. These revival winds know no prejudice—age, race, or culture. And the children who are a part of today's church are being caught up in this end-time wind of God's Spirit.

Are there negatives? There always will be. Do children understand the implications of all God is doing in their lives? I don't think so. To tell the truth, I don't understand them all, either. But this I know, God is doing a mighty work in the hearts and lives of children and those who serve them.

When I see the tear-stained faces of boys and girls who have spent time in the presence of God, I know we are on the right track. As the church moves into the 21st century, we will witness a revival of incredible proportions—a revival that will, in many cases, begin in the Sunday school room and children's church. We must not discourage this, but rather embrace the evident outpouring of God's power on the children of our Movement.

I am excited about the generation of believers who are growing up today. They personally know the Lord and the works He can do in and through their lives. Trends of the world will try to destroy them at every turn. But our God is bigger than the world. The trends instituted by Him are far-reaching and eternal. Boys and girls are growing in wisdom and stature, in favor with God and with man. Blessed be the Lord! **E**

Dick Gruber is children's pastor at Bloomington Assembly of God, Bloomington, Minnesota.



INTERVIEW WITH JOHN BUENO

Touching the World's Children With God's Love

Assemblies of God Foreign Missions has been ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of the world's children for years. Through localized ministries of compassion hundreds of thousands of the world's neediest children are receiving "food" for both soul and body. John Bueno, executive director of the Division of Foreign Missions, talked with Enrichment on how missionaries and national believers are touching the world's children with God's love.



The Assemblies of God Foreign Missions has developed localized ministries of compassion that respond to the needs of children as the Spirit of God burdens the heart of missionaries for those needs.



WHAT PROGRAMS DOES THE ASSEMBLIES OF GOD HAVE TO HELP FEED AND CARE FOR THE WORLD'S POOR AND SUFFERING CHILDREN?

Each of the five foreign mission fields has established outreaches to needy children: Africa's Children, Asia's Little Ones, Eurasia's Future, Save Europe's Children, Latin America ChildCare, and Children of Brazil Outreach.

WHY DO WE NOT HAVE A CENTRALIZED CHILD-CARE AGENCY?

A centralized agency generally develops programs and then looks for places to implement them. Rather than creating this type of centralized agency, the Assemblies of God Foreign Missions has developed localized ministries of compassion that respond to the needs of children as the Spirit of God burdens the heart of missionaries for those needs.

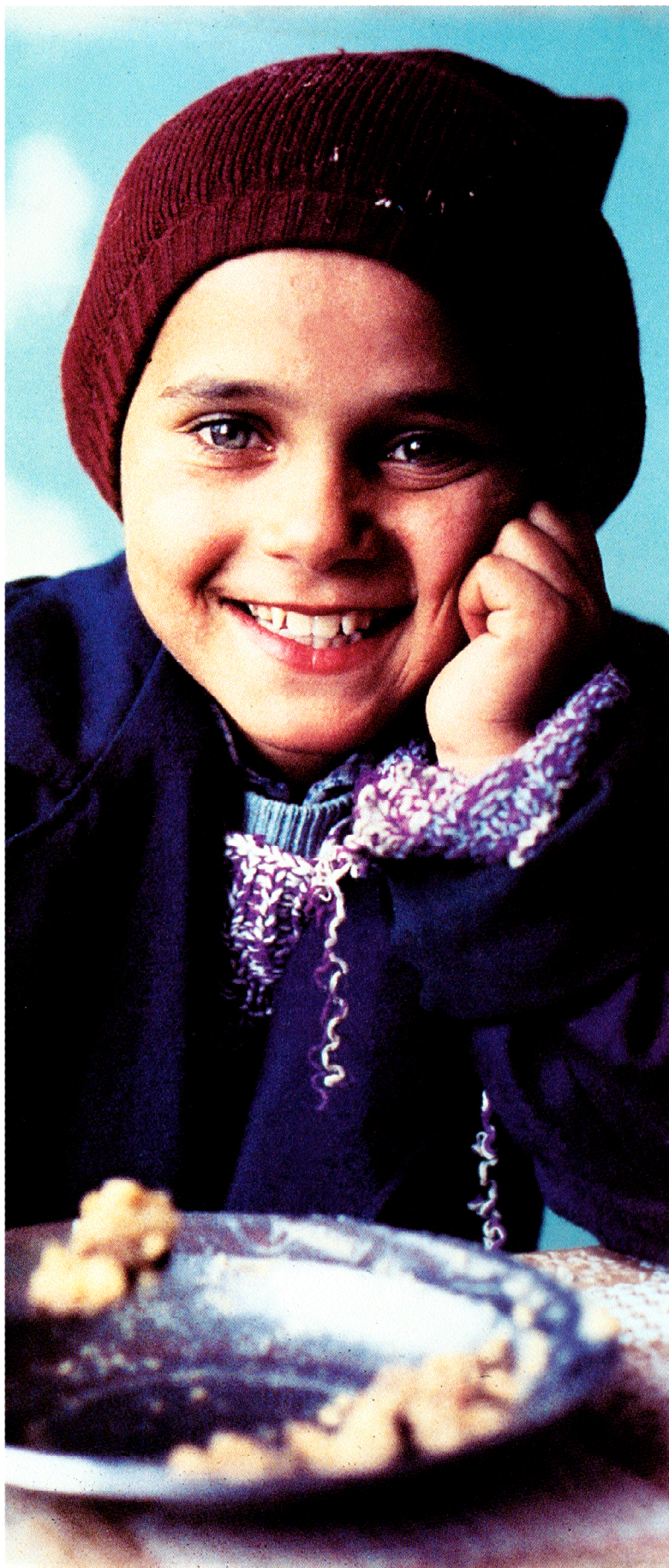
WHEN WAS THE FIRST CHILD-CARE PROGRAM ESTABLISHED?

Some Assemblies of God child-care ministries have been operating and ministering to the physical and spiritual needs of children for many years. The oldest child-care institution in the Assemblies of God is in Eurasia—the Lillian Trasher Orphanage in Assiout, Egypt—opened in 1911. Since that time it has touched many thousands of orphans and widows with God's love. Currently, the orphanage is home to 650 residents.

Latin America ChildCare began in El Salvador in 1963. My wife Lois and I were missionary pastors at the Evangelistic Center in San Salvador at that time and started this outreach to help needy boys and girls who were roaming the streets, hungry, and uneducated.

Our first priority was to introduce them to Jesus Christ, and then establish them in the local church. We also started a school to provide them with an education in a Christian setting. This gave us an opportunity to communicate Jesus' love to them on a daily basis.

To help reach more children, the Latin America ChildCare sponsorship program was created. Today, U.S. sponsors help many of the 80,000 children in 300 schools in 20 Latin American countries to receive a hot nutritious meal each day, a school uniform, an education,



medical and dental care, and an introduction to Jesus Christ.

WHY MEET THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN? WHY EVANGELIZE THEM?

First and foremost, Jesus instructed us to do so. In Matthew 18, Jesus declared that children are greatest in the kingdom of heaven. In Matthew 19:14, He commanded the people to let the little children come to Him. God's Word also instructs us to look after orphans (James 1:27).

Second, children represent nearly half the world's population. They are a vital part of the worldwide harvest.

When we pastored Evangelistic Center, we set aside one Sunday a month for baby dedications. We sometimes dedicated 45 to 50 babies in one service. Every month I told the congregation, "If we can care for and keep in the church every child we dedicate to Christ, those children will be our greatest source of church growth."

In a similar way, child-care ministries add believers to the church. Children introduced to Christ often lead their parents and/or other family members to Christ. Some nations previously closed to the gospel have opened their doors to missionaries because we demonstrated humanitarian efforts through child-care ministries.

All Assemblies of God child-care ministries have the same primary focus: to meet children's most desperate needs while introducing them to Jesus Christ. Through the efforts of missionaries and national believers who administer loving care, we are touching thousands of children throughout the world with the compassion of Christ and giving them life, for today and for eternity.

Many national church leaders in a number of foreign countries today were introduced to Christ and nurtured in His love through Assemblies of God child-care ministries. They are testimonies to the long-term effects.

HOW CAN INDIVIDUALS AND CHURCHES PARTICIPATE IN THESE CHILD-CARE MINISTRIES?

The Division of Foreign Missions oversees all funds and audits their use.

People can send gifts to Assemblies of God Foreign Missions, and we will forward these gifts to the designated child-care ministry. We direct 95 cents out of every dollar to the designated ministry. This compares to other organizations that often use 25 to 40 percent of their finances for overhead expenses. People can contact us for a brochure that provides additional information about each child-care ministry sponsored by the Division of Foreign Missions.

ASSEMBLIES OF GOD CHILD-CARE MINISTRIES

AFRICA

Africa's Children

Sub-Saharan Africa has 300 million children under the age of 15. Many of these children are at risk from war, disease, and poverty. Launched in 1989, Africa's Children is committed to touching the lives of as many of these needy children as possible. Offerings from donors, called Life Guards, provide for children's basic needs such as food, vitamins for the undernourished, and shelter for young refugees fleeing from war zones. Funds also support educational programs and orphanages.

EURASIA

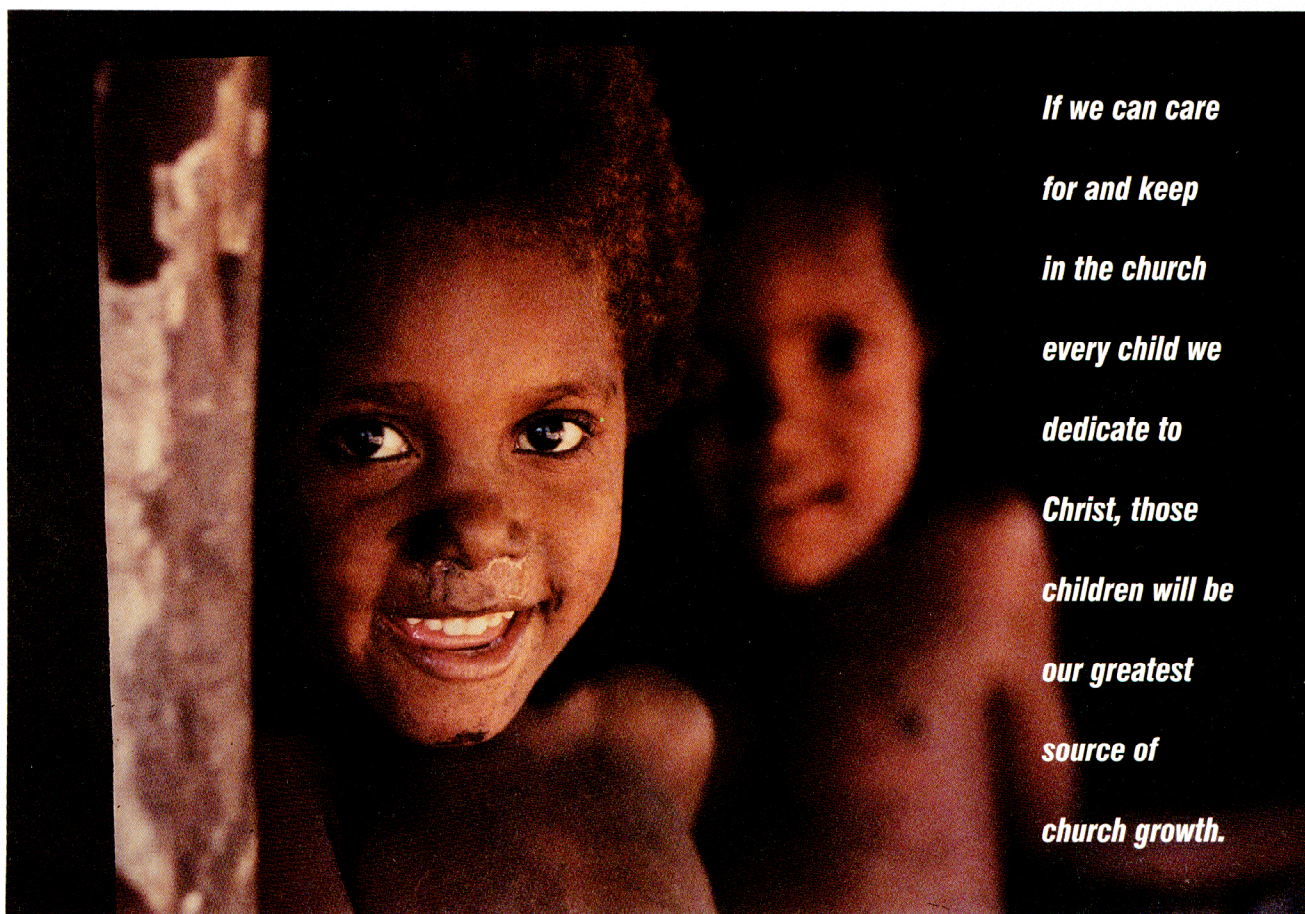
Eurasia's Future

Southern Asia—the CIS, the Central Asian Republics, the Middle East, and North Africa—are home to hundreds of thousands of children less than 15 years old. Eurasia's Future funds orphanages, relief efforts, medical care, feeding programs, schools, technical training, and evangelism efforts to reach these children with the gospel.

EUROPE

Save Europe's Children

Thirty-five countries make up Central, Eastern, Northern, Southern, and Western Europe. Thousands of children have been left homeless by war and



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economic difficulties—particularly in Central Europe and the Balkan States, located in Eastern Europe. Save Europe's Children is reaching out to these desperately needy children with physical and spiritual help.

ASIA PACIFIC

Asia's Little Ones

Across the vast expanse of the Pacific Rim nations, Asia's Little Ones is combating starvation, disease, and the brokenness left by war. Missions workers are reaching out to children through feeding stations, orphanages, medical clinics, drug rehabilitation centers, and educational opportunities.

LATIN AMERICA

Latin America ChildCare

Established in 1963, Latin America ChildCare provides needy children an education in a Christian atmosphere. Through a child-sponsorship program, donors support specific children on a monthly basis.

Children of Brazil Outreach (COBO)

Children in the public school system of Brazil are the primary target of this ministry. Christian teachers minister to the students through classroom courses and literature. Currently, 70,000 Brazilian

schoolchildren are receiving a Bible education through this ministry. COBO has built 12 Christian schools and daycare centers for underprivileged children throughout the country, with more construction projects under way. **E**

Pentecost-A New Empowerment





for Witness and Ministry

BY JAMES K. BRIDGES

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Acts records the first Pentecostal sermon preached by Peter. He preached to a multitude of Jews from all over the world who had gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost. Those gathered observed 120 Galilean Jews speaking clearly in the languages of their fellow Jews who had come to Jerusalem from more than 15 countries to attend this feast.

This crowd wanted to know: "What does this mean?" (Acts 2:12, NIV). Some claimed these 120 were drunk. But Peter reminded

This marvelous outpouring of the Holy Spirit was an assurance that Jesus had arrived in heaven and had kept His promise to send His church another Comforter, the Spirit of truth (John 14:16; 15:26).

them of the time of day. Besides, have you ever seen a drunken person who could speak his own language fluently, much less speak a language he did not know?

Peter then began to speak under the anointing of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:14). Beginning with Joel 2:28–32, Peter proclaimed the

meaning of Pentecost. His message elicited another question from the audience: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37).

Because of the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit in these last days, these two questions are still being asked. It is important for everyone to know what the coming of the Holy Spirit means to the Church and what each believer must do to receive the precious gift of the Spirit.

PENTECOST MEANS A NEW ERA OF REALITY FOR THE CHURCH

Peter began his explanation by pointing to the fulfillment of prophecy (Acts 2:16,17). After Pentecost, we no longer live in the typology of the Old Testament; we live in the reality and fulfillment of the New Testament. We no longer live in the shadows, but in the substance.

Our Passover is no longer a feast, but a Person—Christ is our Passover (1 Corinthians 5:7). Our Pentecost is no longer a festival; the Holy Spirit is our Pentecost. Acts 6:7 states, "A great many of the priests were obedient to the faith." Can you imagine the joy those whose previous ministry had been to sacrifice animals experienced when they entered into the reality of ministry in Christ who "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:26)?

The Day of Pentecost had fully come. The One whom the Feast of Pentecost prefigured had come. This Feast was different from all those before, for on this day the promised Spirit was given, the promised Comforter had come. The reality is here. We no longer serve God in ritual and ceremony, but in Spirit and in truth.

PENTECOST MEANS A NEW EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Peter explained that what was happening was evidence that something had happened in

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heaven (Acts 2:33). Jesus' followers had not seen or heard from Him since He had ascended into heaven some 10 days earlier (Acts 1:9). This marvelous outpouring of the Holy Spirit was an assurance that Jesus had arrived in heaven and had kept His promise to send His church another Comforter, the Spirit of truth (John 14:16; 15:26). Jesus is alive and He is the Head of the Church. He guides, protects, edifies, and empowers His body through the Holy Spirit. Everytime a believer receives the baptism in the Holy Spirit, it is a sign that our resurrected Lord has fulfilled His ministry to His church from His heavenly throne.

PENTECOST MEANS A NEW EXPERIENCE OF FULLNESS

It is obvious from Joel's prophecy that this outpouring of the Spirit of God was to be generous and abundant. Also, it was to be shared with young and old, with men and women, with bond and free. And this outpouring would create an overflow from which all believers were to live and minister (Acts 2:17,18).

The Book of Acts is a book of fullness (Acts 2:4). Luke characterized the individuals in his history of the Early Church as people who were either full of indignation, envy, fear, amazement, anger, and Satan, or full of faith,

love, wisdom, power, joy, good works, the Word, and the Holy Spirit.

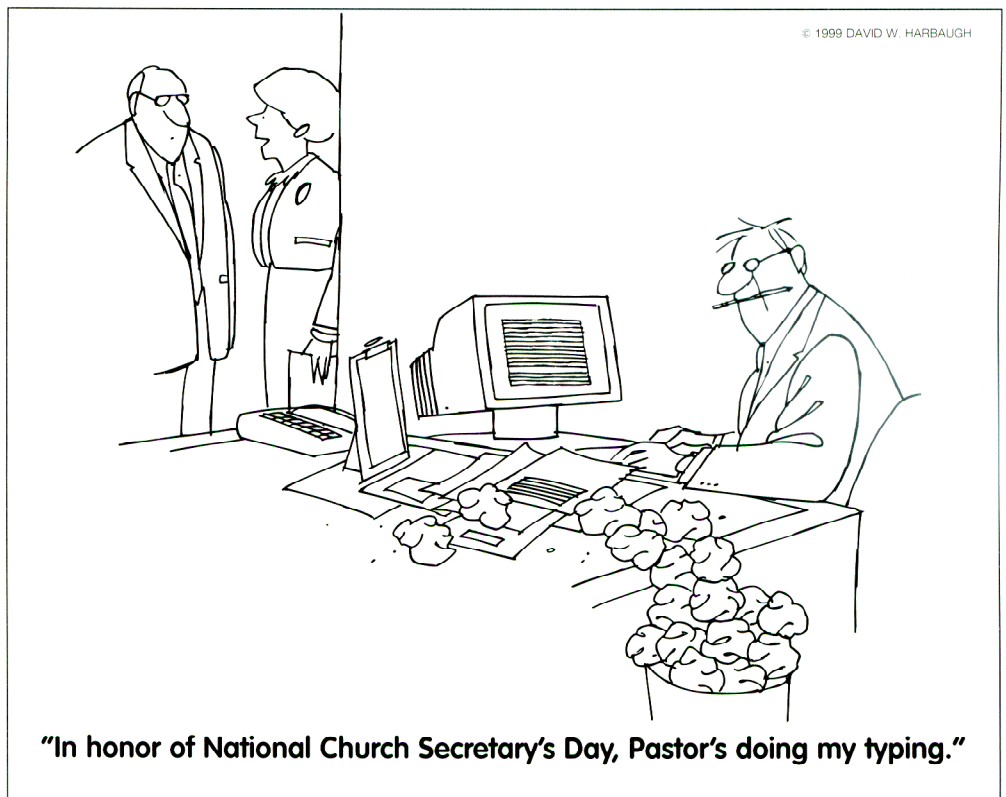
Everybody is full of something, and we determine what we will be filled with—either the good or the bad. But the Lord's purpose for us is to be filled with the Holy Spirit and all the fruits and gifts God has for us. The mean-

The revival in the earth today is a Pentecostal revival being proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit by those who have allowed the Lord Jesus to "baptize them with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5).

ing of Pentecost is to live out of the overflow of the Spirit-filled life. To live off the dregs of a carnal life is a terrible waste when the Lord has so much more for us. So, "be not drunk with wine...but be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18).

PENTECOST MEANS A NEW EXPRESSION OF THE PERSON OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN AND THROUGH THE BELIEVER

Luke, by inspiration of the Spirit, gave us a



valuable model for the baptism in the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:4. This is to be a pattern for the Church because it was the standard by which the Gentile baptism was measured (Acts 11:15).

Some who question Acts 2:4 as a model for the baptism in the Holy Spirit think this verse requires wind and fire to be present each time a believer is baptized. Such thinking fails to take into account that the wind and fire were symbols of the Holy Spirit heralding the fulfillment on the Day of Pentecost. We no longer celebrate the Day or the Feast; we celebrate the coming of the Holy Spirit. Speaking in tongues is not a symbol, but the evidence and expression of the Person of the Holy Spirit. We

no longer need the symbols, but we will always need the sign of the Spirit—speaking in other tongues—the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

“They were all filled...and they began to speak”—that is the pattern. The compound predicate indicates that, upon the infilling with the Person of the Holy Spirit, the 120 began to speak with other tongues—not by themselves—but as the Spirit enabled them by using their tongues and vocal cords with the language He gave them.

The Holy Spirit is not muted. He is a speaking Spirit because He is a Person. He is not some influence or force; He is the Third Person of the Godhead. It is unthinkable that

Can you imagine the joy those whose previous ministry had been to sacrifice animals experienced when they entered into the reality of ministry in Christ who “put away sin by the sacrifice of himself” (Hebrews 9:26)?

MINISTERING THE BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

In leading to a response for the altar call, I anticipate a desire that is created by the Holy Spirit. I speak faith and hope to those who respond and try to get them to relax and overcome any obstacles or nervousness they may have. Here are some ideas I present that can achieve results:

Creating Desire and Building Faith

Paul wrote “desire spiritual gifts” (1 Corinthians 14:1). Jesus said, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst...they shall be filled.” (Matthew 5:6, NIV). I tell people, “You are going to ask to be filled, and you are going to receive the real thing.” This is crucial for the skeptic and long-time seeker. The devil deals in doubt. He did it in the Garden and with Jesus in the desert, and he will do it to believers. Satan will do anything to keep believers from seeking this gift from God.

In Luke 11:13 Jesus said, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a good gift. Here is a wonderful truth: When you ask for the real thing, that is exactly what you get—the real thing.

How do you receive? By asking by faith. Some ask, “How can I speak in a new language when I don’t know what to say?” If they knew what to say, it wouldn’t take any faith. Emphasize that those who are seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit are participants, not spectators. “And they...began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:4).

Overcoming Obstacles

Some people say, “I am not good enough; I am not worthy.” People will never be worthy. But Jesus is worthy. The baptism in the Holy Spirit is a gift (Acts 2:38,39; 10:45). Like salvation, we can accept or reject it, but we certainly cannot earn it. Believers need to receive this gift with childlike faith.

Others say, “Today is not the day. Some other time.” “It is not real.” “It may be for some, but not for me.” “What will people think?” But today is the day; now is the time. Tomorrow is the devil’s favorite word. And it doesn’t matter what people think. If they think anything, they will think you are hungry and thirsty for more of Jesus.

Speaking in tongues as the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is the real thing; it is not gibberish. Also, never judge a language by its sound. Those who have traveled overseas or lived in an international area have heard languages that didn’t sound like languages.

Some are afraid they are making up a language or have been accused of copying someone. But people cannot make up a language. But even if you could, Jesus wouldn’t let you. If you ask for bread from Jesus, you get bread. And that is what people are going to receive because Jesus is waiting, willing, and able to baptize them in the Holy Spirit. Besides, when we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, we are not copying anyone—we are speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives us utterance.

—Jim Ripley, Olympia, Washington

EXPERIENCE OF FULLNESS

It is obvious from Joel's prophecy that this outpouring of the Spirit of God was to be generous and abundant. Also, it was to be shared with young and old, with men and women, with bond and free. And this outpouring would create an overflow from which all believers were to live and minister (Acts 2:17,18).

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Everybody is full of something, and we determine what we will be filled with—either the good or the bad. But the Lord's purpose for us is to be filled with the Holy Spirit and all the fruits and gifts God has for us. The meaning of Pentecost is to live out of the overflow of the Spirit-filled life. To live off the dregs

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Holy Spirit during His earthly ministry, has now become the Baptizer in the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16). The same Holy Spirit who anointed Jesus, and who infilled the apostles, is still superintending the Word of God in the earth today. This is true apostolic succession—the passing of the mighty anointing of the Holy Spirit to believers in each succeeding generation, empowering them to witness to a lost world and carry out Jesus' ministry in His Spirit.

Those who wish to diminish the importance of speaking in tongues as evidence of the Spirit's infilling refer to being empowered by the Spirit for missionary service as the major sign of the Spirit's infilling. This puts tongues and empowerment in competition with each other. But the same Person who gives evidence of His presence through speaking in tongues is the same Person who empowers the baptized believer to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19). Without the empowerment of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (with the initial physical evidence), the Church is unprepared to

demonstrate the sign of evangelism and go into all the world and preach the gospel (Mark 16:15). Jesus instructed His disciples not to even think of doing His work until they were endued with power from on high (Luke 24:49).

The revival in the earth today is a Pentecostal revival being proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit by those who have allowed the Lord Jesus to "baptize them with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 1:5). This Baptism is the "promise of the Father" (1:4), which is the "same gift" (11:17) He gave to the Jews and the Gentiles as described by Luke in the Book of Acts.

PENTECOST MEANS A NEW ENTRUSTMENT OF RESPONSIBILITY ON EACH GENERATION TO PERPETUATE THE PROMISE

The baptism in the Holy Spirit is not only available to all believers, but it is the responsibility of the Church to see that this vital truth is perpetuated to each generation. In response to the question,

We no longer need the symbols, but we will always need the sign of the Spirit—speaking in other tongues—the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

"What shall we do?" Peter urged repentance, baptism, and reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:39).

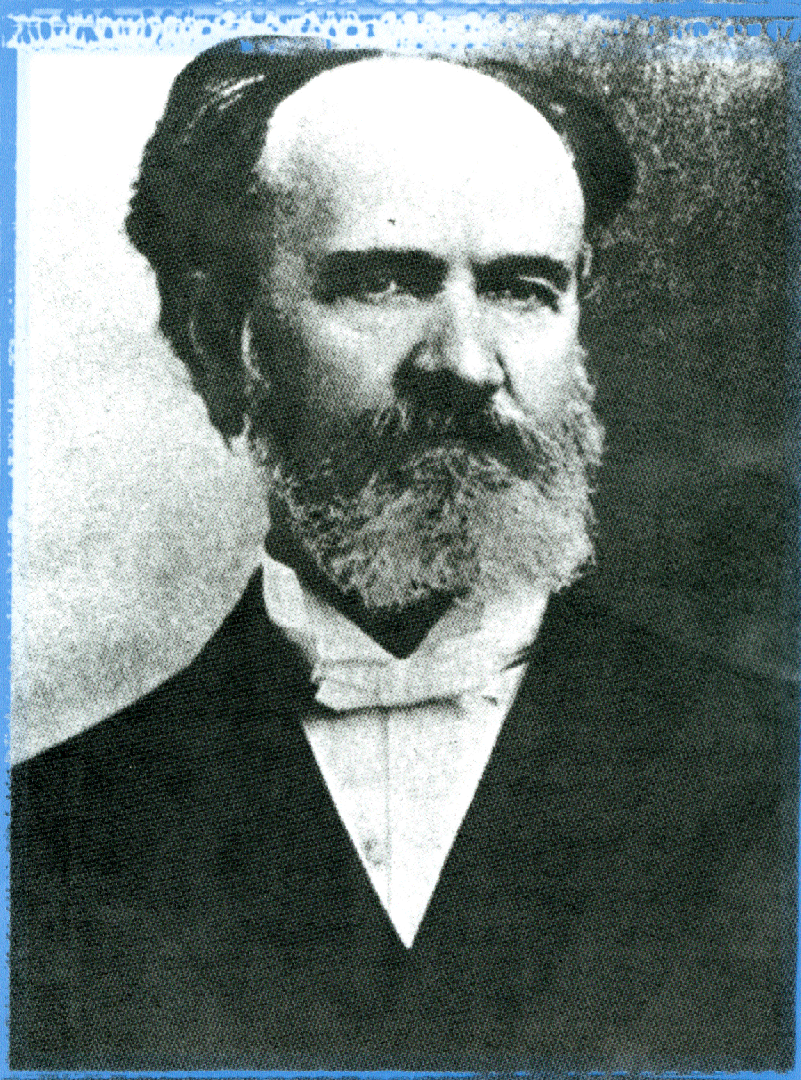
It is important that all believers understand the importance of Spirit baptism and seek to lead their children into their Pentecostal heritage. Isaiah 44:3 is a Pentecostal prophecy that is incumbent on all believers to claim for their families. Let's keep the fire burning on the altar and keep Pentecost alive in our hearts and in our churches. **E**



James K. Bridges is the Assemblies of God general treasurer, Springfield, Missouri.

ALL FOR JESUS: The Revival Legacy of A. B. Simpson

TO EVANGELIZE NORTH AMERICA AND OVERSEAS,
SIMPSON FOUNDED SEVERAL INSTITUTIONS, AMONG THEM THE
EVANGELICAL MISSIONARY ALLIANCE AND THE CHRISTIAN ALLIANCE.



A. B. SIMPSON IN 1890

Gold-for-iron for Jesus!" In the mid-1890s, a call went out to members of the Christian and Missionary Alliance to donate their gold watches, rings, and other gold possessions for foreign missions. In turn, a gold ring would be replaced by an iron ring, a gold watchcase for one of gunmetal. The burden of evangelism weighed so intensely on the hearts of the faithful that thousands of dollars were raised in this fashion. Who and what could inspire people to surrender such precious items to win lost souls for Christ?

In the study of Christianity, scholars attempt to identify key leaders whose commanding presence shaped new movements. Lutherans look back to Martin Luther, Reformed to John Calvin, Methodists to John Wesley, and the Salvation Army to William and Catherine Booth. In the late 19th century, among those who promoted divine healing and missionary evangelism, few rivaled A. B. Simpson, the founder of the Alliance.

Pastor, missions executive and strategist, prolific author, editor, hymnwriter, teacher, and spiritual master, A.B. Simpson wore many hats. He challenged his followers to seek for the "higher life" in Christ and climb over their denominational walls to join other Christians in evangelizing the world in the last days.

A DREAMER

Born into a devout Presbyterian home on Prince Edward Island, Canada, in 1843, Albert Benjamin Simpson was converted as a teenager in 1858. Sometime afterward, he felt called to the ministry and enrolled at Knox College in Toronto. Graduating in 1865, he was ordained and became pastor of Knox Church in Hamilton, Ontario, the second largest Presbyterian congregation in Canada, where he served until 1873.

After he entered his second pastorate at the prestigious Chestnut Street Presbyterian Church in Louisville,

Kentucky, Simpson gained inspiration from the ministries of the popular evangelists Dwight L. Moody, Major D. W. Whittle, and Philip F. Bliss. He also received news about conferences in England on "the higher Christian life," later known as the Keswick movement. Longing for a closer relationship with Christ, he read William E. Boardman's *Higher Christian Life* (1858). Boardman's classic introduced Simpson to the Reformed wing of the holiness movement that taught an instantaneous experience of sanctification following conversion. This experience empow-

"The Regions Beyond," he penned:

To the hardest of places He calls me
to go,
Not thinking of comfort or ease;
The world may pronounce me a
dreamer, a fool,
Enough if the Master I please.

Simpson's struggle grew after the Chestnut Street congregation decided to construct a new building. Simpson proposed a plain and functional building that could serve as an evangelistic center. The church board, however, saw things differently and forged ahead with erecting an



The Simpson homestead in Chatham, Ontario.

ered believers for evangelism. Seeking and receiving this "baptism in the Holy Spirit" led to his spiritual transformation. "Never," wrote Simpson, "has my heart known...such a thrill of joy."

Although Simpson had refused to support a citywide evangelistic campaign in Hamilton, his attitude changed and he helped organize a similar effort in Louisville. Impressed by its success, he planned other such endeavors. Simpson became so enthusiastic about evangelism that the restraints of pastoring a socially affluent church troubled him. In his estimation, one had to move beyond parish confines to those waiting to hear the gospel for the first time. In the second verse of his famous missionary hymn,

elaborate structure, one that also left the church with a \$50,000 debt. Believing the money had been misspent, Simpson refused to dedicate it until the debt was paid in full.

When Simpson resigned in 1879, the church was still in debt and remained undedicated. He would not compromise the proper use of the Lord's money for social and ecclesiastical aggrandizement. With his wife Margaret and their children, he left for the more promising harvest field of New York City and the Thirteenth Street Presbyterian Church. His vision for reaching the masses soon proved greater than that of his congregation.

Simpson's spiritual search reached a climax in 1881 that dramatically changed

the direction of his life: Having suffered from frail health for many years, he testified to the healing of a serious heart ailment at the Old Orchard Beach campground in Maine. He also asked to be baptized by immersion in a Baptist church, resigned his pastorate and the Presbyterian ministry, and began

THE FOURFOLD GOSPEL

Simpson longed for the restoration of the purity and vitality of the New Testament church to energize the church of his day. Beginning with the Protestant Reformation and Luther's discovery of justification by faith, he pointed to Wesley's teaching on the sanctified life,

of Jesus as Savior, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King. But whether one uses the terms "full gospel," "whole gospel," or the later "foursquare gospel," they all teach that following conversion, there are other gospel truths that should be integral to living the deeper/higher life in Christ.



Albert Benjamin Simpson at age 17 when attending Knox College.

evangelizing the poor and unchurched in New York City. He then founded an independent congregation later known as the Gospel Tabernacle.

To evangelize North America and overseas, Simpson founded several institutions, among them the Evangelical Missionary Alliance and the Christian Alliance. In 1897, these merged to become the Christian and Missionary Alliance. In its early years, it served as a parachurch association of members from various denominations. He also established the Missionary Training Institute (present-day Nyack College)—the first Bible institute of its kind in America. Students called it "Simpson's matchbox," indicating his passion for their being set on fire for the Lord's work.

the rediscovery of divine healing by faith, and at the end of human history the widespread anticipation of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Just as first-century Christians had received the "early rain," so 19 centuries later the "latter rain" (Joel 2:23,28) would bring the power and gifts of the Spirit.

*The burden of evangelism
weighed so intensely on the
hearts of the faithful that
thousands of dollars were
raised in this fashion.*

To highlight the key elements of his theology, Simpson coined the expression "Fourfold Gospel." Its four "folds" speak

Jesus as Savior

Christ's redemptive work for the salvation of humankind inspired Simpson's all-consuming burden to preach the gospel to unreached peoples. Without hearing and accepting the good news, they faced an eternity separated from the light of God's presence. This theme appears in his hymn, "A Missionary Cry," which pulsates with the rhythm of a ticking clock:

A hundred thousand souls a day,
Are passing one by one away,
In Christless guilt and gloom.
Without one ray of hope or light,
With future dark as endless night,
They're passing to their doom,
They're passing to their doom.

Jesus as Sanctifier

In regard to holiness, Simpson believed that sanctification was an experience of full consecration separate from conversion. It meant "the putting off, the laying aside of evil," an experience that "set [the believer's] affections on things above" (Colossians 3:2). Proof of this came in part from the pattern of Spirit baptisms found in Acts 2,8,10, and 19.

To him, the Spirit-filled life in Christ sparks the missionary impetus: "No soul can receive this deep, divine overflowing life and remain henceforth unto himself." "The baptism of the Holy Ghost," he added, "is not worth anything if it does not fire your soul with a love like [that of Christ], a love that forgets your own spiritual need in pouring out your life like Him for others."

Jesus as Healer

Due to his own physical healing and study of the Scriptures, Simpson identified with the late 19th-century evangelical healing movement. The doctrine of

instantaneous sanctification fit well with the concept of immediate healing by faith. Christ is both the “sin-bearer” and “sickness-bearer” (Isaiah 53:4,5). His atoning work at Calvary makes possible spiritual reconciliation between God and humankind; through faith it can then reverse the physical impairments caused by the fall (Genesis 3).

Simpson dismissed the notion of praying “if it be His will.” Since the “Lord Jesus has purchased [healing] for us in His redemption, it must be God’s will for us to have it, for Christ’s whole redeeming work was simply the executing of the Father’s will.” Once believers had been sanctified and entered the “higher life,” they could, through the exercise of faith, promptly receive healing from every disease (Exodus 15:26).

Jesus as Coming King

Like other evangelicals at the time, Simpson was influenced by dispensational premillennialism that taught believers were living in the “last days” (Acts 2:17). This deeply impacted his concept of missionary evangelism. In view of Matthew 24:14 (“this gospel...shall be preached in all the world...then shall the end come”), he announced: “We are preaching the gospel not for the conversion of the world, but for a witness unto all nations, and when we shall have accomplished this, [Christ] will come.” Thus, the message had to get out regardless of the number converted. In 1892, then, he sent missionaries to China hoping they could enter Tibet—considered by many to be the “uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8)—with the gospel.

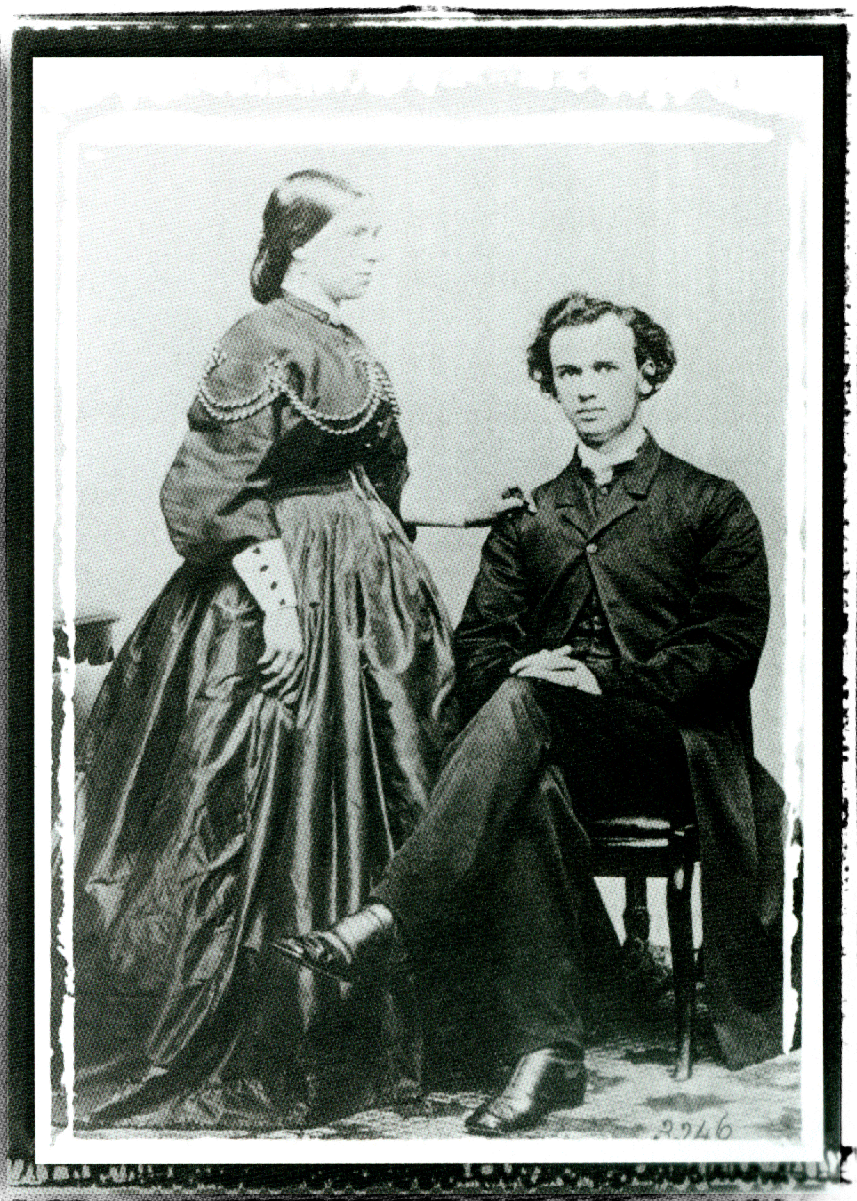
Simpson argued that the Great Commission had to be completed before Christ could return. He based this on the words of Jesus in Matthew 24:14 and Peter’s admonition in 2 Peter 3:11,12.

MISSION STRATEGIST

The interest among contemporary Pentecostals, charismatics, and “third wavers” in “power evangelism” can be

traced back to Simpson, the Alliance, and other radical evangelicals a century ago. Simpson recognized that prayer for the sick would gain the attention of nonbelievers by allowing them to see the power of God. It represents an integral part of apostolic ministry in “signs and wonders” (Acts 5:12): “The plan of the Lord [is] to pour out His Spirit not only in the

brought mixed results. For example, John Condit, one of the first Alliance missionaries to the Belgian Congo (present-day Republic of Congo), died from a fever in 1885 shortly after his arrival. Yet Grace Agar, an Alliance (and later Assemblies of God) missionary to China, rejoiced that the Lord had kept her in strength and health for 38 years and “protected [her]



Reverend and Mrs. A.B. Simpson at the time of their Hamilton pastorate.

ordinary, but also in the extraordinary gifts and operations of His power...as His people press forward to claim the evangelization of the entire world.”

Nevertheless, the actual application of what I have called the “radical strategy”—the expectation of miracles in mission—

from all harm, from accidents on ice, slippery roads, from robbers, wild beasts, and from epidemics so common in China.”

But the urgent priority of gospel proclamation faced a formidable obstacle: Formal language study might take from 1 to 4 years for a missionary to gain the



One of the earliest graduating classes of the Missionary Training College in New York.

needed proficiency to preach. Hence, the delay prevented zealous “end-times” missionaries from immediately evangelizing once they arrived on their fields.

Even though he struggled to understand how tongues on the Day of Pentecost related to Paul’s instructions about the gifts of tongues and interpretation in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14, Simpson considered it possible that the Spirit might confer known human languages (i.e., speaking in tongues). After all, Jesus had promised in Mark 16:17, “And these signs shall follow them that believe...they shall speak with new tongues.” This could potentially eliminate the nuisance of language school and expedite preaching to every tribe and nation. He noted that “instances are not wanting now of its apparent restoration in missionary labors both in India and Africa.”

Expectant faith could achieve the seemingly impossible. Thus, in 1892, Alliance missionaries William W. Simpson and William Christie arrived in China intent on evangelizing Tibet. They

anticipated that God would miraculously bestow on them the Mandarin and Tibetan languages in fulfillment of Mark 16:17. Before long, however, they engaged in formal language study.

In response to a flurry of interest in “missionary tongues” (c.1889–92), and wishing to avoid the “danger of Irvingism” (controversial teachings of early-19th-century Scottish preacher

Simpson became so enthusiastic about evangelism that the restraints of pastoring a socially affluent church troubled him.

Edward Irving on the gifts of the Spirit), the Alliance convention in October 1892 issued an urgent call: Delegates asked the faithful to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit in connection with the acquiring of foreign languages and to enable missionaries to withstand the climates in Africa, India, and China. Interest in “missionary tongues” continued into the 20th

century and contributed to the rise of the Pentecostal movement.

Simpson also knew the dangers inherent to the quest for spiritual power. Too easily the desire for power can move ahead of the higher priority of seeking Christlike character. Words of caution appear in another of his songs, “Himself”:

Once it was the blessing, Now it is the Lord;
Once it was the feeling, Now it is His Word;
Once His gift I wanted, Now, the Giver own;
Once I sought for healing, Now himself alone.
Once it was my working, His it hence shall be;
Once I tried to use Him, Now He uses me;
Once the pow’r I wanted, Now the Mighty One;
Once for self I labored, Now for Him alone.

To promote world evangelism, Simpson began conducting missions

conventions in 1884 and soon crisscrossed the country speaking at such conferences in local “branches” of the Alliance. The popularity of these conventions attracted the attention of other mission leaders and did much to raise the missions consciousness of believers. The Christian and Missionary Alliance eventually became a denomination and developed one of the foremost evangelical mission enterprises.

THE SEEKER

To conclude that the source of Simpson's revivalist legacy lies in the institutions he founded or the activities he sponsored would misjudge him. Always longing to “know [Christ], and the power of his resurrection” (Philippians 3:10), his sermons and publications reveal the richness of his prayer life and profound theological reflection.

He learned the blessings of “stillness” in prayer. As he first sought to hear the “still, small voice of God,” “a pandemonium of voices reached my ears, a thousand clamoring notes from without and within, until I could hear nothing but their noise and din. Some of them were my own voice, some of them were my

own questions, and some of them were my own cares, and some of them were my very prayers.” But God had said, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

In shutting out “noisy acclamations” and “unspeakable unrest,” he began to hear deep within his consciousness a small voice that spoke with “an inexpressible tenderness, power and comfort. As I listened, it became to me the voice of prayer, and the voice of wisdom, and the voice of duty. I did not need to think so hard, or pray so hard, or trust so hard, but that ‘still, small voice’ of the Holy Spirit in my heart was God's prayer in my secret soul, was God's answer to all my questions, was God's life and strength for soul and body, and became the substance of all knowledge, and all prayer, and all blessing; for it was the living God himself as my Life and my All.”

Activity could never substitute for prayer: “We cannot go through life strong and fresh on express trains, with 10 minutes for lunch. We must have quiet hours, secret places of the Most High, times of waiting upon the Lord, when we renew our strength and learn to mount up on wings as eagles, and then come back, to run and not be weary, and

to walk and not faint.... The best thing about this stillness is that it gives God a chance to work.”

Simpson's poem, “All for Jesus,” reflects the depth of his personal devotion:

How can my heart the world refuse,
Content my earthly all to lose,
That I the better part may choose?
I do it all for Jesus.
How can I meekly suffer wrong,
With patience sweet, and courage
strong,
Repeating still my happy song?
I do it all for Jesus.
How can I seek and save the lost,
The souls forlorn and tempest-tossed,
Regarding not the hardest cost?
I do it all for Jesus.

PENTECOSTAL FORERUNNER

In 1906–07, nearly 20 years after members of the Alliance first raised the possibility of speaking in tongues for missionary preaching, the Pentecostal movement swept through the ranks. As the “branches” sent in reports describing revivals with some marked by tongues, Simpson faced an old issue once again. Before long, a sizable number of the faithful became Pentecostals, with many later joining the



The 1975 inaugural meeting of the Alliance World Fellowship in Nyack, New York.



Dr. and Mrs. Albert B. Simpson in the midyears of their ministry.

General Council of the Assemblies of God which organized in 1914.

While Simpson did not become a Pentecostal himself, his modeling of the "higher life" in Christ, burden for missions, prayer for the sick, and anticipation of "signs and wonders" in ministry blazed the way for many who became Pentecostals. With other former Alliance members, Daniel W. Kerr, J. Roswell and Alice Reynolds Flower, Carrie Judd Montgomery, Noel Perkin, John W. Welch, Frank M. Boyd, and W. I. Evans profoundly affected the early course of the Council. Not surprisingly, the "Fourfold Gospel" and other Alliance doctrines reappear in the Assemblies' "Statement of Fundamental Truths" with some modifications.

Simpson's Missionary Training Institute served as the model for Assemblies of God schools such as Glad Tidings Bible Institute (Bethany College), Central Bible Institute (Central Bible College), and Southern California Bible School (Southern California College). Among the earliest Council missionaries who attended Bible institutes, the largest number were trained at Simpson's Institute in Nyack, New York.

Waiting for the moment when the fulfillment of Bible prophecies would begin, Simpson suffered a paralyzing stroke in 1918 after hearing that General Edmund Allenby, British commander in Palestine,

had captured Jerusalem from the Ottoman Turks. Having "lived his life in the light of eternity," he died a year later, mourned alike by evangelicals and Pentecostals.

ALL FOR JESUS—WHAT DOES IT COST?

Decades after his death, the ministry of A. B. Simpson still inspires believers to experience the truths of the fourfold gospel and sacrificially devote their time and treasures to God. With the overwhelming number of unreached peoples in the world today and the ever-lengthening shadow of evil in human cultures, proclaiming the good news in word and compassion remains at the heart of the Church's mission.

Yet, because Christians have frequently absorbed the materialism of the prevailing culture—the endless quest for prosperity and comfort—how firmly will they commit themselves to the biblical demands of discipleship? In the second verse of "A Missionary Cry," Simpson passionately prays that God will inspire them to examine their priorities in light of the gospel:

O Holy Ghost, Thy people move,
Baptize their hearts with faith and love,
And consecrate their gold.
At Jesus' feet their millions pour,
And all their ranks unite once more....

"Gold-for-iron for Jesus"? What are we laying at the Master's feet? **E**

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Train a Child

BY STANLEY M.
HORTON

Proverbs 22:6 is talking about something even more important than discipline; it is talking about vital spiritual education that brings a child into definite, real, spiritual experience.

Does “train a child” mean “discipline a child?” Does Proverbs 22:6, “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it”^{*} mean discipline will keep children from turning away from God and His ways?

According to Hebrews 12:7–10, that kind of “child-training” is necessary and important. The God who loves us and who is our Heavenly Father does discipline us even when we are old. However, Proverbs 22:6 is talking about something even more important than discipline; it is talking about vital spiritual education that brings a child into definite, real, spiritual experience.

The Hebrew word *chanokh*, translated “train,” is used as a verb in only three other passages in the Bible. Deuteronomy 20:5 uses it of dedicating a new house. After a person built a new house, the Law excused him from service in the army. The soldier was to stay home and dedicate his house because he might die in battle and someone else would dedicate it.

The Law also excused a man from the army who had planted a vineyard that had not yet produced fruit. He was excused from military duty until the fruit of his vineyard was ripe and he could enjoy it.

Based on these uses of *chanokh*, it seems that training a child involves dedicating a child to the Lord and raising that child in such a way that the child will enjoy the house of God and the things of God. Later Hebrew used this same concept concerning encouraging a child to cultivate a taste for the things of God.

Making prayer, family altars, Sunday school, and church something enjoyable is the task of both parents and the church. My parents did this; they never marred our enjoy-

ment by saying a critical word in our presence against any preacher or church member. Instead, they told us about miracles such as the time the Lord told my father to leave San Francisco the day before the 1906 earthquake. The place where he was staying was destroyed and he would have been killed if he had not obeyed. They also told us about healings, the Azusa Street revival, and many answers to prayer. And they encouraged us to expect answers to prayer. When God answered our prayers, they had us kneel wherever we were and join them in praising and thanking God.

My grandparents also let us know how much they enjoyed serving the Lord. Grandma Fisher corresponded with people all over the country. She encouraged so many, people began calling her Doctor Sunshine. When I went to the University of California in Berkeley, she sent me little things to remind me that what's done for Christ will last.

Based on these uses of chanokh, it seems that training a child involves dedicating a child to the Lord and raising that child in such a way that the child will enjoy the house of God and the things of God.

When we were around Grandma Horton's bed as she was dying, she suddenly rose up and said, “Don't you hear them? The angels are singing. They are coming for me.” She then fell back on the pillow and died. Children don't forget things like that.

First Kings 8:63 and 2 Chronicles 7:5 use the word *chanokh* of dedicating the temple of the Lord. Part of this dedication included offering

fellowship offerings and consecrating the middle part of the courtyard in front of the temple.

Encouraging dedication and consecration is something that needs to be repeated again and again. Dedicating the temple was done in the presence of the Lord and all the people. In a similar way, keeping a child in a church where both the Lord and others encourage their consecration has eternal effects. I might never have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit if it had not been for the scriptural teaching, encouragement, prayers, and patience of older saints.

In a similar way, keeping a child in a church where both the Lord and others encourage their consecration has eternal effects.

The dedication in Proverbs 22:6 is to the way (Hebrew *derek*) the child should go. *Derek* is often used of God's way, or the behavior that pleases God.

The Bible encourages people to walk or live in "His ways." First Kings 2:3 states, "Walk in His ways...so that you may prosper in all you do and wherever you go." Psalm 139:23,24 states, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

God commended Abraham and said, "I have chosen him, so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just, so that the Lord will bring about for Abraham what he has promised him" (Genesis 18:19). God's promise of blessing for all the families and nations of the earth is repeated five times in the Book of Genesis. Training children involves reminding them not only of what is right, just, and fair, but reminding them of the many promises of God.

Jared (Genesis 5:18), whose name means "one prostrating himself in prayer," set an example by naming his

son Enoch (Hebrew *Chanokh*, derived from the same verb used in Proverbs 22:6). Enoch's name means "trained one" or "dedicated one." The fact he walked with God shows he was truly well-trained and never lost his dedication. He set an example for us by walking in the closest possible fellowship with the Lord, so close that God took him to heaven without dying (Genesis 5:21,24; Hebrews 11:5).

Enoch was no doubt an example for Methuselah (whose name probably means "man sent" or "messenger"). Methuselah was a witness for the Lord and an example to Noah who also walked with God (Genesis 6:9). Noah showed his training and dedication by obeying God and building the ark to save his family and the animals during the flood. He also became a preacher of righteousness (2 Peter 2:5).

I am thankful for my parents who introduced me early to the blessings and power of God. They gave me a taste for spiritual things. Again and again God by

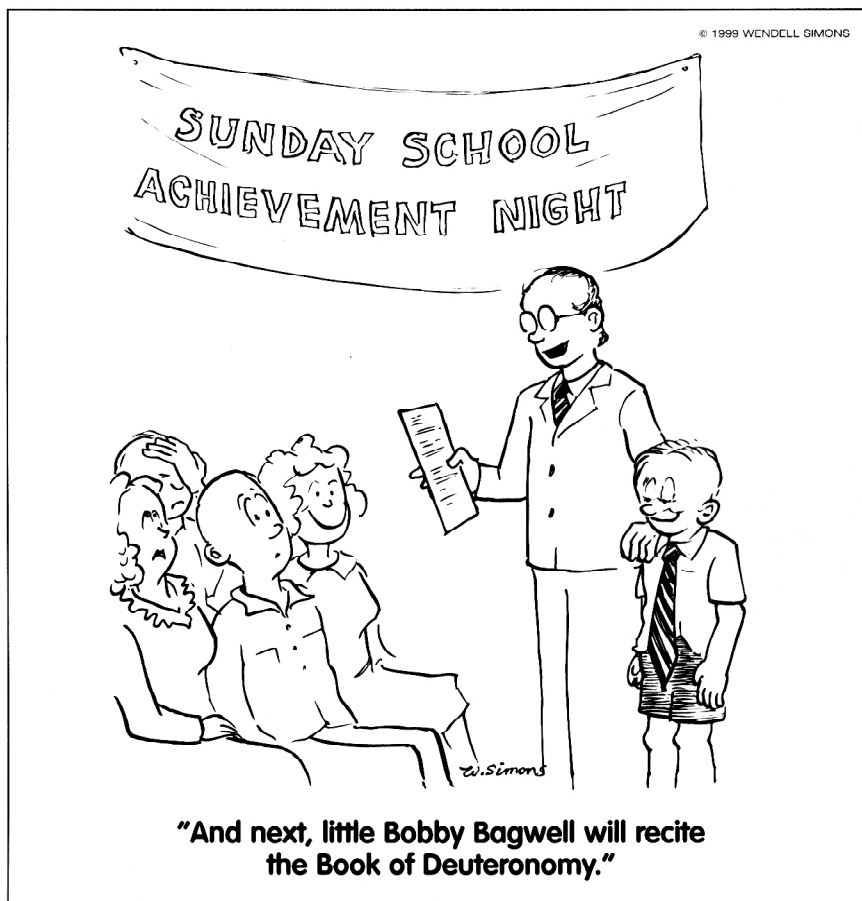
His Holy Spirit has renewed in my spirit the training given to me and how my godly father and mother along with other believers encouraged me to dedicate my life to the Lord.

I'll never forget how one mother came to me after the Lord baptized me in the Holy Spirit and said, "Stanley, the Lord has given you a wonderful gift. Don't let a day go by without getting down before Him and letting Him recreate that language as you worship Him."

Thank God, my own children and their spouses have received the same kind of training and encouragement as I received. They have had their ups and downs. But today, now that they are older, they are all saved, baptized in the Spirit, and serving the Lord. Proverbs 22:6 really works. **E**

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*Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.





illed With the Spirit

PART 3: Is glossolalia a necessary component of the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

BY ANTHONY D.
PALMA

This article focuses on whether speaking in tongues (*glossolalia*¹) is a necessary component of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

According to Old Testament prophecies, the coming of the Spirit in an unusual way would herald the dawn of the new age (see Isaiah 32:15; Ezekiel 36:25–27; Joel 2:28,29). For the four-century intertestamental period, Israel had been without a significant prophetic voice. The situation changes dramatically when we observe the opening events of the New Testament era, which show the Holy Spirit once again at work among God's people.

Events connected with Jesus' birth signaled that the new covenant—the Age of the Spirit—was being inaugurated. John the Baptist was filled with the Spirit from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15). This very likely occurred at the time his mother Elizabeth was filled with the Spirit (verse 41). The Holy Spirit also came upon his father Zacharias and Simeon (Luke 1:67; 2:25–27). In addition, New Testament scholars regard Mary's song of praise as a Spirit-inspired utterance (Luke 1:46–55). Luke also mentioned that Anna was a prophetess (Luke 2:36).

It is best to think of the Age of the Spirit as an inclusive period extending from the announcement of John's birth to the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

The link throughout this period is Jesus Christ. Jesus was anointed by the Spirit at His baptism for His messianic mission (Matthew 3:13–17; Mark 1:9–11; Luke 3:21,22); He conducted His ministry in the power of the Spirit (Luke 4:14,16–19; Acts 10:38); and He poured out the Spirit on those who would continue and extend His anointed ministry (Luke 24:49; Acts 2:33).

SPIRIT-INSPIRED UTTERANCE PRIOR TO PENTECOST

In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit mani-

fested himself in a variety of ways. Virtually everything the New Testament says about His work and ministry is already found, in some way, in the Old Testament.² But in the Old Testament, the Spirit's most characteristic and most frequently occurring work was to give inspired utterance.

The Prophetic Books are predicated on the assumption that the Spirit inspired the writers (see 2 Peter 1:20,21). And there were many instances when persons prophesied orally at the Spirit's prompting. Repeatedly, we find accounts of people prophesying when the Spirit of the Lord came upon them (see Numbers 11:25,26; 24:2; 1 Samuel 10:6,10; 19:20,21). This *oral* inspiration of the Spirit to prophesy is the link connecting Old Testament oracular utterances with Joel's prediction that one day all God's people would prophesy (Joel 2:28,29), and with Moses' intense desire that all God's people might prophesy (Numbers 11:29).

Both oral prophesying and speaking in tongues involve the Holy Spirit coming upon a person and prompting the person to speak out.

In light of this, we see a connection between Spirit-inspired utterances in the Old Testament and comparable experiences of people in the pre-Pentecost, New Testament incidents recorded in Luke 1–4.³ But those accounts in Luke anticipate the wider, more inclusive, outpourings of the Spirit recorded in the Book of Acts.

Incidents recorded in Acts where believers experienced an initial infilling of the Spirit have a direct bearing on the question of whether speaking in tongues is a necessary component of the baptism in the Spirit. In my judgment, the inductive approach is a legitimate

means of trying to reach a conclusion. This methodology was employed from the earliest days of the Pentecostal movement to demonstrate that, based on the Acts accounts, tongues will indeed accompany one's initial infilling of the Spirit.

THE DISCIPLES AT PENTECOST (ACTS 2:1–21)

One immediately notices the three unusual phenomena that occurred on this day: “a noise like a violent, rushing wind,” “tongues as of fire,” and speaking “with other tongues” (Acts 2:1–4).⁴ The wind and fire are sometimes called theophanies—visible manifestations of God. As on historic occasions like the giving of the Law when there were thunder, lightning flashes, a thick cloud, and a very loud trumpet sound (Exodus 19:16), so on this historic day the Lord manifested himself in a most unforgettable way with heaven-sent wind and fire. Note that the wind and fire *preceded* the infilling of the Spirit; they were not part of it. Furthermore, nowhere else in Acts are they mentioned again in connection with people being filled with the Spirit. They were one-time occurrences to mark the beginning of a new era in God's dealings with His people.

The phenomenon of speaking in tongues is integral to the disciples' being filled with the Spirit. “And all were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them inspired utterance” (verse 4, *translation mine*).

The first important observation is that the phrase “inspired utterance” is a rendering of the Greek word *apophthengomai*, which is used in the Septuagint for supernaturally inspired speech, whether divine (1 Chronicles 25:1) or demonic (Micah 5:12). Especially important is the observation that this same word, which occurs only three times in the New Testament, is used in Acts 2:14 to introduce Peter's address to the crowd (he “declared to them”). Peter's speech was actually a prophetic utterance.

The specific terminology used in Acts is “to speak in tongues” (*lalein glossais*—2:4, with the adjective “other”; 10:46; 19:6). In that precise form, as well as with some variations, it is used by Paul throughout 1 Corinthians 12–14 in his treatment of spiritual gifts. It does not appear anywhere else in noncanonical literature as a technical term for an unusual occurrence whereby a person, under the impulse of the Holy Spirit (or any spirit), speaks a language unknown to him or her.

Speaking in tongues could be called a specialized type of prophesying as to the manner in which it functions.

The languages spoken by the Pentecost disciples were identifiable, human languages—a phenomenon that is sometimes called xenolalia (speech in a foreign language). But there is no indication in the other two incidents in Acts (10:46; 19:6) that the languages were identified or understood. The important point is that the Greek word *glossa*, when used in the phrase *lalein glossais*, must mean language.

In Paul's treatment of the gift of

tongues, he implies that the speech may sometimes be “with the tongues...of angels,” which may refer to a type of heavenly language by means of which a believer communicates with God (1 Corinthians 13:1; 14:2).

The corollary gift of the interpretation of tongues indicates that languages, whether human or heavenly, are being interpreted. The various forms of the word *interpret* used in the New Testament point, with only one exception, to conversion from one language into another.

The word *all* in Acts 2:4 does double duty, being the subject of both main clauses: all were filled with the Spirit, and all spoke in tongues. To rephrase it: *all* who were filled with the Spirit spoke in tongues. There were no exceptions.

Peter identified the disciples' experience as the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy that the Lord would pour forth His Spirit upon all mankind (Acts 2:16–21). Joel's prophecy said, “Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.” Yet Peter, in the midst of quoting Joel, added the words, “And they shall prophesy” (end of verse 18). Clearly, apart from all other elements in Joel's prediction, Peter stressed prophetic utterance as the key feature of the fulfillment.

Both oral prophesying and speaking in tongues involve the Holy Spirit coming upon a person and prompting the person to speak out. The basic difference is that prophesying is in the common language, whereas speaking in tongues is in a language unknown to the speaker. But the *mode of operation* of the two gifts is the same.

Speaking in tongues could be called a specialized type of prophesying as to the *manner* in which it functions. In this sense, in view of the fact that God had ordained for something unique to happen on that day, the disciples' speaking in tongues was indeed a fulfillment of Joel's prediction that the Lord's people would prophesy.

CORNELIUS' HOUSEHOLD AT CAESAREA (ACTS 10:44-48)

Several observations in this narrative are pertinent:

1. *Peter clearly identifies the experience of Cornelius' household with that of the disciples on the Day of Pentecost* (11:15-17; 15:8). To illustrate: common terms such as "baptized in/with the Holy Spirit," "poured out," and "gift" appear in both accounts.

2. *The outward, observable manifestation of glossolalia convinced Peter's Jewish-Christian companions that the*

Spirit had indeed fallen on these Gentiles. "For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God" (10:46). However one expresses it, glossolalia was the *evidence* or *sign* of the Gentiles' baptism in the Spirit.

3. *These Gentiles were "speaking in tongues and exalting (megaluno) God."* Very likely, "exalting God" indicates what they were saying in tongues (even though, apparently, the glossolalia was not understood). The Greek word for *and* sometimes introduces an explanatory note on what precedes it and may be translated *that is*.⁵ They were "speaking in tongues, that is, exalting God." This is related to the noun form of the verb *megaluno* that occurs in Acts 2:11, where the people say, "We hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds (*megaleia*) of God." In other words, speaking in tongues often involves prayer or praise to God (1 Corinthians 14:2,14,15).

The two incidents discussed so far (Pentecost in Acts 2 and Cornelius in Acts 10,11,15) indisputably connect speaking in tongues with the Spirit baptism of the recipients. In fact, the specific terminology "baptized in/with the Holy Spirit" occurs in Acts only in connection with these two accounts (Acts 1:5; 11:16). These observations

are important because the two incidents bracket two others found in chapters 8 and 9 and will help in understanding them.

THE SAMARITANS (ACTS 8:14-20)

The Samaritans had witnessed signs performed by Philip (demon expulsions, healings), had responded in faith to the message about Christ, and had submitted to water baptism. But they had not yet received the Holy Spirit (verse 15; see verses 17,19); "He had not yet fallen upon any of them" (verse 16).

In the Book of Acts, the experience of speaking in tongues first occurs at the time of Spirit baptism.

As Luke uses the phrase "receive the Spirit," it is synonymous with other terminology he uses such as "being baptized in the Spirit," "the Spirit falling upon" or "coming upon people," "the gift of the Spirit," "being filled with the Spirit" (see Part 1 of this series). In the New Testament, "receiving the Spirit" is a flexible term whose meaning depends upon a particular writer's intent and the context in which it occurs. It is inappropriate, for example, to try to force Luke's meaning of the term on Paul or Paul's meaning on Luke. This is a valid principle of biblical interpretation.

The important element in this narrative is that the Samaritan believers had a postconversion experience of the Spirit, which was mediated through Peter and John by the laying on of hands. Something unusual took place on that occasion, for why would Simon want the authority to impart such a gift? What was it that he desired so inordinately?

Luke simply says that "Simon saw [Greek *horao/eidon*] that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles' hands" (verse 18). This Greek verb is very common in the New Testament; its basic meaning is *to see*.

But it has the meaning also of perceive or experience. What took place was so unusual that even Simon was singularly impressed. The only thing that could have arrested his attention was the unique phenomenon of speaking in tongues. In light of the absolutely clear identification of tongues with Spirit baptism in the two major accounts that bracket this one (in Acts 2,10), it hardly seems that Luke would have thought it necessary to mention tongues specifically here.

Simon saw something; therefore, the traditional Pentecostal understanding of this incident is not really an argument from silence. It is based in part on the unambiguous association of tongues with Spirit baptism in the two main accounts that precede and follow this incident.

SAUL OF TARSUS (ACTS 9:17)

One purpose of the laying on of Ananias' hands was that Saul might "be filled with the Holy Spirit." This account also falls between the two major accounts which unambiguously associate glossolalia with individuals being initially filled with the Holy Spirit. But Luke does not record any details of Paul's Spirit baptism. It is certain, however, that Paul spoke in tongues regularly and often. He considered himself to be the archglossolalist: "I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all" (1 Corinthians 14:18).

In the Book of Acts, the experience of speaking in tongues first occurs at the time of Spirit baptism. It seems perfectly legitimate and logical for Pentecostals to infer that Paul first spoke in tongues at the time Ananias laid hands on him.

THE EPHESIAN DISCIPLES (ACTS 19:1-7)

What did Paul mean when he asked the Ephesian men, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2). In his epistles, receiving the Spirit is a component of the salvation experience (see Romans 8:15; Galatians

3:2,14). But the question shows that for Paul the expression could have an additional meaning.⁶

The narrative is clear about the meaning of Paul's question. He is alluding to the experience which they will indeed have shortly, when "they began speaking with tongues and prophesying" (verse 6)—the only other reference to the Spirit after verse 2. The terminology in this account is parallel to that found in previous accounts of people being filled with the Spirit: "receive the Holy Spirit" (verse 2), "the Holy Spirit came on them" (verse 6), "speaking with tongues" (verse 6).

On the basis of verse 6, which says the Ephesians spoke in tongues and prophesied, some assume that not all spoke in tongues—some spoke in tongues and some prophesied—and that *either* tongues or prophecy may accompany the experience. Focusing on this verse, I offer the following observations.

1. *If prophesying is an alternative to tongues as an indication of Spirit baptism, this is the only place in Acts that might suggest it.* It is not sound

hermeneutical practice to base a belief on only one passage of Scripture. If Acts 2 is programmatic, glossolalia fulfills Joel's prediction, not prophecy *per se*.

2. *A closer look at the Greek text permits, even suggests, the following translation:* "The Holy Spirit came upon them. Not only did they speak in tongues, but they also prophesied."⁷ Luke, then, is correlating this account with the previous accounts that record speaking in tongues by the recipients of the Spirit (2:4; 10:46) and says that the men, *in addition to speaking in tongues*, also prophesied.

The initial, physical evidence conveys the idea that speaking in tongues is an immediate, empirical accompaniment to the baptism in the Spirit.

Some suggest that Luke means to say, "they spoke in tongues, that is, they prophesied," relating the statement to "they spoke in tongues, that is, they exalted God" (10:46). But the Greek text of 10:46 has only the word *kai* (and,

that is), whereas the text of 19:6 reads differently (see endnote 7).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Inspired utterance when the Spirit comes upon people recurs throughout biblical history—in the Old Testament, in the beginning days of the new age (Luke 1–4), and in accounts recorded in the Book of Acts.

Speaking in tongues, in one important sense, is a specialized form of prophecy. As such, its occurrence on the Day of Pentecost and on subsequent occasions is indeed a fulfillment of Joel's prediction that all God's people would prophesy.

The narrative of the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost is paradigmatic. It becomes the model or paradigm for later outpourings of the Spirit. The term *programmatic* is sometimes used for this concept.

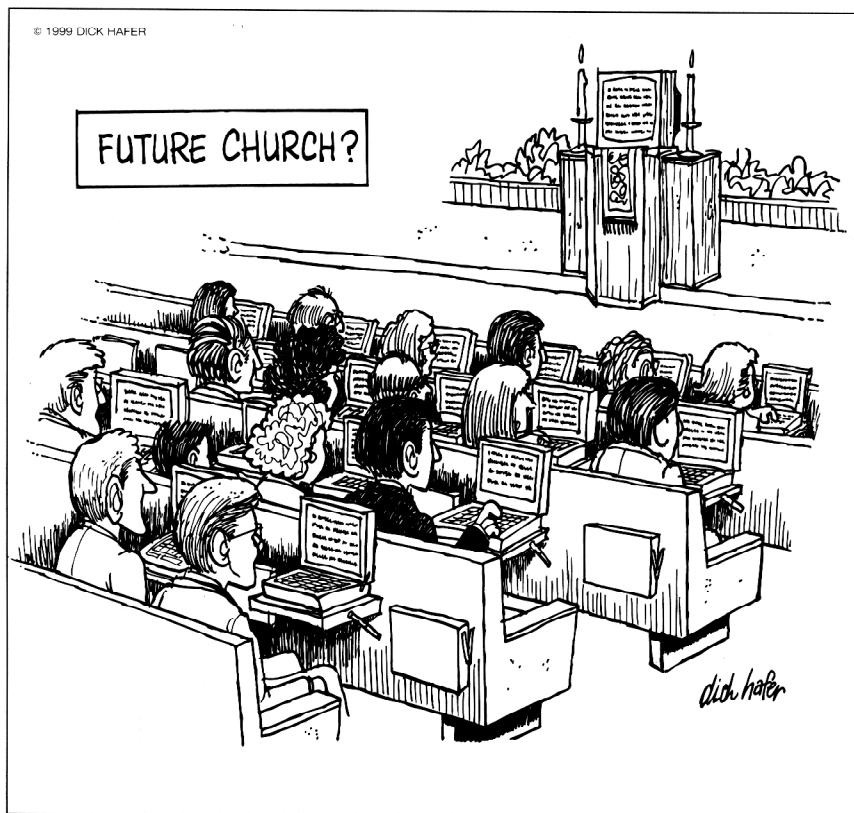
Parallel to the inductive approach, which sees a pattern of glossolalia in Spirit baptisms, is the contribution of a contemporary approach to interpretation sometimes called narrative theology. As it relates to this subject, Donald A. Johns says:

It is a common storytelling technique the world over to tell things in groups of threes: three times should be enough to tell anything. The paradigmatic effect of these stories should lead us to expect the same things in our own experience with the Spirit. Actually, as we are drawn into the story, we should experience the Spirit along with Peter, Cornelius, and all the rest.⁸

Inspired utterance when the Spirit comes upon people recurs throughout biblical history.

Throughout the Old Testament, the early chapters of Luke's Gospel and the Book of Acts, there is a pattern of inspired speech when the Holy Spirit comes upon people.

The viewpoint of some is that glossolalia may be the *normal* accompaniment of Spirit baptism but that it cannot be



considered *normative*; that is, tongues will not occur invariably. Yet the “all” of Acts 2:4 and the “for” of 10:46 speak tellingly against such a position.

Does Paul’s question in 1 Corinthians 12:30 undercut the Pentecostal position: “Not all speak in tongues, do they?” (translation mine)? The answer to Paul’s question must be no, based on the form of the question in Greek. But Paul, in context, is talking about the manifestation of tongues as it occurs in the assembly of believers. Not all are called upon to give *public* utterances in tongues. This understanding is justified in view of the following question: “Not

that the concept of prophesying focuses on the source and means of an utterance and may or may not include a predictive element.

4. All Scripture quotations are from the *New American Standard* Bible unless otherwise noted.
5. Technically called the epexegetical use of the word.
6. Luke faithfully records the essence of Paul’s question. He has not: (1) put his own words into Paul’s mouth; (2) edited or revised Paul’s question to conform to his own (Luke’s) theological agenda; (3)

created the entire incident to advance his own theological purposes. Luke, it must be remembered, is an accurate historian.

7. For the student of Greek, the construction *te...kai* is common in the Book of Acts. Translation possibilities are: as...so; not only...but also.
8. “New Dimensions in Hermeneutics,” a chapter in *Initial Evidence*, Gary B. McGee, ed.

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***The Pentecostal doctrine
of initial, physical evidence
is substantiated by an
investigation of Scripture.***

all interpret, do they?” (translation mine). Furthermore, Paul himself expresses a wish that *all* God’s people would speak in tongues (verse 5), evidently in private, as a means of spiritual self-edification (verse 4).

In conclusion, the Pentecostal doctrine of *initial, physical evidence* is substantiated by an investigation of Scripture. The terminology, though not divinely inspired, is an attempt to encapsulate the thought that at the time of Spirit baptism, the believer will speak in tongues. It conveys the idea that speaking in tongues is an immediate, empirical accompaniment to the baptism in the Spirit. ■

ENDNOTES

1. Glossalalia is a technical term often used for speaking in tongues, being a combined form of the Greek words *lalia* (speech, speaking) and *glossa* (tongue, language).
2. For example, His role in creation, in striving with humanity over sin, in guiding workmen in the construction of the temple, in physically transporting people, in giving life, in what the New Testament calls spiritual gifts.
3. This is with the correct understanding



*Re*thinking Ministry to Children

BY DARREN J.
DAUGHERTY

If parents are truly training their children in church, then I am thrilled when children sit with their parents. But if parents allow their kids to play around during the sermon, having the children there can be counterproductive.

Whether you are a newcomer to children's ministry or an established veteran, building a ministry to children is a never-ending process. God has commissioned us to be contractors in ministry (1 Corinthians 3:10). Just as we build our lives for His glory, we must also build our ministries to glorify Him.

THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY BUILDER

Builders of children's ministry programs must be aware of trends in children's ministry, be effective in recruiting and training other builders, and know how to work within existing structures. The skill by which they carry out their responsibilities grows with time, but the builders must choose to increase this skill.

Nine years ago I was invited to be a children's pastor. But I had no knowledge of children's ministry. That position stayed open for 9 months. During that time my wife and I took a crash course in children's ministry: volunteering, reading, and attending conferences. We gradually knew God was directing us into children's ministry. He was developing in us a burden for children.

Our first children's ministry position involved a small budget and no other children's pastors within a 500-mile radius. About 5 years ago, I wanted to know more about teaching and ministering to children, so I earned a master's degree in elementary education.

In his book, *Spiritual Leadership*, J. Oswald Sanders mentioned the lives of famous missionaries and church history leaders. Sanders said, "God gave these leaders gifts and talents that fit the mission to which they were called. What raised these men above their fellows was the degree to which they developed those gifts through devotion and discipline."¹ As children's ministry builders, we must continue to learn and grow in the gifts God has given us.

EVALUATE YOUR EXISTING STRUCTURE

Some time ago we went through a major evaluation of our children's ministries: Why do I do what I do? Do I ever feel I am just a program director? Am I really making a difference in the children? A clear focus concerning the purpose of your ministry can help you answer these questions.

In his book, *The Contemplative Pastor*, Eugene Peterson said, "All these things I am so busy doing—they aren't being done in that pastorless congregation, and nobody seems to mind. What if I, without leaving, quit doing them right now? Would anybody mind?" He then explained, "I did, and they don't."² How much of our busyness in children's ministry would be missed by people in our congregations?

Our evaluation process can be beneficial for existing, as well as newly formed children's ministries.

1. Blueprint: Specific Objectives

The first step was to make our objectives clear. We must have a clear focus on how we are to carry out the mandates of Scripture. As children's ministry builders, we need a blueprint. Specific objectives become the details that make up the blueprint.

In his book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren summarized Christ's five purposes for His church: worship, evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, and service.³ We started with these five purposes for our ministry to children and their families. On a piece of paper we made two vertical columns: one labeled "Help Children" and the other "Help Parents." In both columns we wrote the five purposes and listed specific objectives under each purpose.

2. Inspection: Ministry Assessment

We then listed all the children's ministry programs and events over the past 7 years. (If you are building a children's ministry from scratch, list all of the programs and events you may

want to incorporate into your ministry and evaluate their usefulness, using your specific objectives.) We then placed each program and event into one or two of the following categories: discontinue; continue as is; continue after making changes; bring back into commission. We also added a column for programs and events we wanted to start.

We then put each program and event on its own evaluation sheet. This helped us examine each program and event as it related to our objectives. As we evaluated each program, we could then place it in the

***Evaluating your ministry with
your goals and purposes as the
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children's parents.***

appropriate columns on the master sheet.

This process is time-consuming, but it has proved useful in our children's-ministry-building process. We are now better able to answer the question, "Why do we do what we do?"

Evaluating your ministry with your goals and purposes as the standard brings confidence to you, your workers, and the children's parents.

3. Accessibility: For All

Builders are concerned with making buildings accessible to different people. There are three areas of accessibility we should be concerned about in children's ministry: 1) *Non-Christians*. Is your children's ministry an outreach? If you cannot bring kids to the church, are you bringing the church to them? How well do you welcome visiting children?

GROWING A CHURCH THROUGH CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

ATTRACTING NEW FAMILIES

Parents are concerned about the well-being of their children. According to realtors, many families determine where the best schools are located prior to their moving into a new community. They then purchase a home in those school districts. Parents will often give up a house they want so they can live in a particular school district. In the same way, parents are seeking a church that will benefit their children. They will search until they find a church with quality children's programs, even if it means giving up something else they prefer. A well-planned, quality children's ministry will attract new families.

KEEPING NEW FAMILIES

First impressions are important. Families looking for a new church home usually visit a church only once. Your church gets one Sunday to make a favorable impression.

When parents visit your church and the children's area, they notice whether the workers are loving and caring. They look to see if the hallways, bathrooms, and classrooms are clean, neat, and child friendly or if they are cluttered, antiquated, and in disrepair.

Parents with newborns visit the church nursery. When they take their baby to a church nursery, they're expecting it to be clean and modern. A nursery full of old hand-me-downs does not impress them.

Children love personal attention, so each week "thanks for visiting" letters are sent to visiting children and parents. Teachers are trained to follow up on their visitors as well as children who were absent.

DEVELOPING A QUALITY CHILDREN'S MINISTRY IN YOUR CHURCH

First, invest in leadership. If your church is large enough, hire a children's pastor to oversee your children's ministry. Choose the best person you can. Train him/her. As your children's program grows, add other paid staff, such as an early childhood pastor, or an assistant children's pastor. The more staff, the more care that ministry will receive.

Second, staff your ministries with volunteers. The senior pastor must emphasize that the church will only be as successful as each person in the church is doing God's work each week. If each person in the congregation does one ministry job, every children's ministry vacancy will be filled, and every other ministry in the church will have adequate staff. No matter how excellent your paid staff members are, a church stagnates if the laity doesn't get involved reaching, teaching, and caring for others.

Third, support your children's ministry financially. Regularly evaluate your facilities. Do they appeal to new parents and children? Are your facilities inviting to children who attend? Is there adequate money to supply the many needs in the children's areas?

There are many ministries within the church that help the church to grow. If your target is young families, remember, they are concerned about the children's department. When churches make a whole-hearted effort to care for children and reach them with the gospel, they become churches that attract young families.

—David Boyd is children's pastor, First Assembly of God, Fort Myers, Florida.

2) *Christians*: Is your children's ministry making disciples? Do your programs and activities foster spiritual growth in children? 3) *Parents*: Do parents feel welcome in your children's ministry? Do parents feel you are on their side?

MYTHS ABOUT CHILDREN'S MINISTRY CONSTRUCTION

Though the list of children's ministry myths can be long, I mention two:

1. Parents want "tons" of programs and events for their children. There are a number of things children and parents can do without. Just as Eugene Peterson wondered if his congregation would mind if he stopped doing "busy-work," we also stopped a few things. Most people didn't care. Those who cared soon understood we were trying to be more effective.

2. Parents do not want their children with them in church. This is not true for every parent. Many parents would like to have their children in the worship service, but they are not able to for two reasons: The church fosters family separation more than togetherness; and parents are not aware of ways to create enjoyable together-in-church times.

In her book, *Parenting in the Pew*, Robbie Castleman said, "Churches sometimes develop programs for children because parents are not equipped or willing to train their children in the things of faith."⁴ Many parents are not willing because they are not equipped. The church and children's ministries can do a better job at helping families experience church together.

During my first years in children's ministry, I took it personally when parents would not send their children to children's church. I thought, *Why would anyone not want their child in my children's church?* I look at it much differently now. If parents are truly training their children in church, then I am thrilled when children sit with their parents. But if parents allow their kids to play around during the sermon, having the children there can be counterproductive.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY + FAMILY MINISTRY

The biggest aspect of our children's ministry remodeling process is a deliberate focus on parents. We decided that if we really want to make a difference in the lives of children, we must focus on making a difference in the entire family.

In his book, *The Future of the American Family*, George Barna said, "After a 5-year period of experimentation, Boomers have been departing from churches in record numbers."⁵ Many came back to church for help with their families, but left again because of the lack of practical help. Others wanted to experience church as a family, but were disappointed because the church did not foster family togetherness. Barna explained, "People will be open to ministries that provide tangible help. In fact, how adequately a church responds to family needs may well determine how that church grows in the years ahead."⁶

Family ministry at our church is seen in three different avenues: 1) providing parent education; 2) being available as a resource and support; 3) coordinating events that bring families together. In parenting education, we offer classes, small groups, and one-evening seminars. We have also held a parenting retreat. Being a support to parents is accomplished through ministries such as a network for home-schooling parents, a Bible study for young moms, and a parents' newsletter. Being a resource means being available for questions and counseling and providing a number of meaningful times with parents. We do not attempt to have all the answers. We simply connect parents with those who have been dealing with similar issues.

Our family events are: father-son retreat, father-daughter dinner, mother-son picnic, mother-daughter tea, dad's day out with preschoolers, family camp out. Other events that were just for children in the past—kids' crusades—are developed as family events.

The first event we established was Family Worship Sunday the last Sunday of each month. Elementary-age children

Growing a Children's Ministry on Any Budget

Many churches postpone children's ministry for lack of funds or personnel. But there are some ideas leaders can incorporate to develop good ministry programs for children. Parents, especially young couples, are usually motivated to give money and time for their children.

SELF-FUNDING MINISTRIES

Weekly offerings can fund your Sunday school and children's church. *Radiant Life* curriculum costs less than 50 cents per student per week for a student quarterly and weekly take-home paper. *Radiant Life's Children's Church* materials provide more helps than an average teacher can use for less than \$40 per quarter.

Many events for children—Junior Bible Quiz, vacation Bible school, and district summer camp—can be self-funding. One fall we hosted a free spaghetti supper to recruit kids into our JBQ program. We took a free-will offering that more than paid for the meal. The kids who join JBQ are charged a \$20 registration fee. Other expenses—the Bible Fact Paks, parties, and trips—are covered on a pay-as-you-go basis.

District summer camp costs are predictable. If a family saves \$10 a week during March through May, they will have more than enough money to send their child to camp. Churches can also take an offering to help those who may not be able to afford camp tuition.

PARENT-SPONSORED EVENTS

Ask parents to volunteer. They are usually the first to suggest activities for their children. Recruit them for a limited time, a specific event, or for a cause that is close to their hearts.

SPECIAL OFFERING

Christmas pageants can be paid for through an offering on the night of the event. Expenses for a kids crusade can be met through a boys-against-girls offering contest, but also take a designated offering on Sunday morning to help fund this event.

COSPONSORING DEPARTMENT

One department can adopt another department to subsidize expenses and assist with leadership responsibilities. Women's Ministries groups assist Missionettes, and HonorBound groups sponsor Royal Rangers.

The Women's Ministries group in one church buys the diapers, toys, latex gloves, and cleaning supplies for the nursery. In our church the adult education budget supplements the children's ministries budget. This year our missions budget financed the kids crusade.

START SMALL AND BUILD

When a church establishes a children's ministry, it should take one step at a time. First, organize the ministries that are important to your Sunday morning service—nursery, Sunday school, and children's church. Then follow with midweek ministries such as Royal Rangers and Missionettes.

A church can start its children's church with all children ages 4 to 11 in the sanctuary with their parents. During the offering, the children can go to another room where they have a Bible story, a memory verse exercise, a craft, and prayer time. This can be accomplished with two volunteers and one teacher's quarterly.

When my church first asked me to do a children's musical, the first pageant I did was simple, but cute. While these musical events have grown from one year to the next, so did my staff of volunteer parents, my church resources, and my understanding of how to organize.

—Bob Hahn is children's ministries pastor at First Assembly of God, Joliet, Illinois.

join their parents for the first two-thirds of the morning service. I share a 5-minute lesson, and the children are then dismissed to children's church. Two events we are planning are: the "We Love Parents" banquet and the parent-child Sunday school class. The "We Love Parents" banquet will provide children with an opportunity to serve their parents. Kids will buy tickets, invite their parents, and serve as waiters and waitresses.

Our parent-child Sunday school class will be open to parents and elementary-age children. We plan to use interactive lessons, drama, and other creative

teaching methods. Each week a different family will be assigned to act out next week's Bible story. The class sessions will work in cooperation with weekly family devotions that we will provide.

It is exciting to see the difference a family-ministries focus makes on families. I have seen moms and dads take their parenting more seriously, children and parents sharing spiritual experiences, and children being a witness by the ways they conduct themselves and show love to others. We must help parents disciple their children. God gave the responsibility to them first.

You may wonder how a children's

pastor can focus so much time on family ministries. We do not have as many children's ministry special events as we once had. We simply make sure we do the basics well (children's church, Sunday school, Wednesday evening programs, and a few other programs and events).

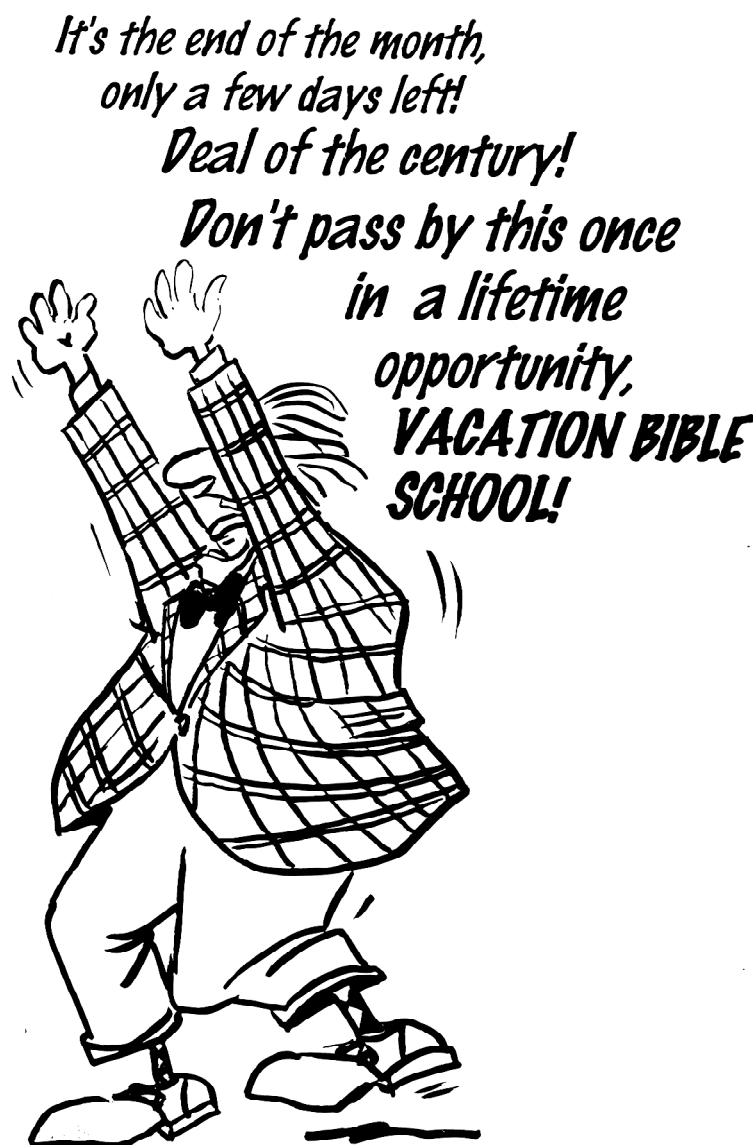
10 TIPS IN BUILDING AND REMODELING

1. Grow in the gifts God has given you and try new ways of growing.
2. Do not start too much too soon.
3. Develop ministry purposes and objectives, then develop programs and events that support them.
4. Do not give up. If you are a new children's ministry builder, do not get discouraged if you are the only one "building" for some time.
5. Try not to add without taking something away if remodeling an existing structure.
6. Spend time with your workers to build relationships.
7. Include parents.
8. Stick it out. Longevity in a ministry position will bring great rewards.
9. Keep your own relationship with God top priority.
10. Keep your family before your ministry. **E**

ENDNOTES

1. J. Oswald Sanders, *Spiritual Leadership* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 52.
2. Eugene H. Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 25.
3. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 107.
4. Robbie Castleman, *Parenting in the Pew* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 38.
5. George Barna, *The Future of the American Family* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993), 188.
6. *Ibid.*, 199.

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Ex-used car salesman Cal Burlington joins the ministry.



The Children's Pastor and the Senior

BY LON FLIPPO

*I share these things
so you might have a
better understanding
of my ministry and
who I am as a person.*

Dear Senior Pastor:

As your children's pastor I have a few things on my heart I would like to share with you. I share these things so you might have a better understanding of my ministry and who I am as a person. I appreciate your leadership and am hopeful that these matters of the heart will draw us closer in our ministry to the people of our church.

1. I desire to be part of the ministry team and have input in the direction of my ministry. Please allow me to contribute to the church's bigger picture; I believe I have a lot to offer. Don't assume I only care about my area of ministry; I want to help the church in anyway I can. Please accept my contribution as a concerned member of the ministry team and church.

2. I'm a minister, not a baby-sitter. As a children's pastor, I disciple children as well as the adult teachers and leaders who work in the classrooms. Every child needs a biblical moral compass to guide and protect him or her throughout life. Help me to dispel the myth that children's workers are baby-sitters. Let's teach people that kids are valuable members of the body of Christ. I'll do my part to have substance and merit in my ministry if you do your part in showing people that children are growing in Christ.

3. I minister to the leaders in all our children's programs, the children, and anyone else who crosses my path. I care about people. My teachers are very important to me. I understand that I could be their only personal touch with church leadership for the week. I'm representing you when I talk and fellowship with them. Trust me and see the scope of my ministry.

4. Please support me from the pulpit so people can recognize the importance of children's ministries. I need visibility to help me recruit volunteers. Recruiting in a vacuum burns me out. I don't have to be exalted, but it's tough to find people when they don't know you. Visibility creates vision. Allow me to share my vision and people will know my heart for kids. If I am hidden, my passion will perish.

*Every child needs a biblical moral
compass to guide and protect him
or her throughout life.*

5. Please take time to notice, recognize, and appreciate the people who give up their "feeding" time to work with our kids. Just a word or two from you, their shepherd, will make a difference. Your words count, pastor. If volunteers know that what they do (unseen and often unheard) is appreciated, they come back repeatedly with a heart full of service and love. Help them feel their role as a member of the church's ministry team is as vital as any other role.

6. Recognize that teachers need to be trained, not just shoved into a classroom. Part of my job involves discipling them, and without training, they will grow weary. Without training, we won't be growing disciples in Christ—we'll be scurrying to find replacements. Any soldier without training will die, and any teacher without training will soon burn out. Help me in any way you can; I value your expertise and knowledge.

7. Challenge everyone to do his or her part in ministry. Aren't you tired of 20 percent doing

CONTINUED ON PAGE 106

Pastor: God's Unique Ministry Team

Dear Children's Pastor:

With duties ranging from preparing great theological orations each Sunday to unstopping the nursery toilet plugged by a toddler trying to give a doll a bath, my job as senior pastor is perhaps one of the most unique job portfolios of any occupation known to man. Quite possibly, though, your job as children's pastor equals mine in its uniqueness. But as a team we hold tremendous potential in fulfilling the mission of winning the lost and making disciples.

I have served as a children's pastor and senior pastor. From each vantage point there is a drastically different view of ministry. As senior pastor, I understand the many issues that are important to the overall health of the church. I believe every children's pastor needs to know and understand these issues if he or she is going to be an effective team member.

Every volunteer in children's ministry must be given unlimited opportunities to be equipped for the ministry to which he or she has been called.

An essential component in the mission of winning the lost and making disciples is the vision God places in the senior pastor's heart for the church and community. As children's pastor, you have the responsibility to help fulfill the pastor's vision. We need to spend time together in prayer and in open communication so your vision stays in harmony with the overall vision of the church. We need to work together in this process. Without exception, these two visions should always complement each other.

Financing the children's ministry can often create dilemmas for both the senior and the children's pastor. As children's pastor, you may feel your children's ministry is being overlooked in the budgetary process. Many churches

Make a training investment in yourself and the lives of your staff; it will pay dividends in the lives of your children.

believe that adequately funding children's ministry is a high priority. But there are those who do not. It can be frustrating to not have adequate financing for your children's program.

You may feel your ministry is limited by the amount of money you have in your budget and this lack of funding will hinder your fulfilling your vision. This ought not to be. Our God has no limitations on the finances we need to reach the children in our community. I have learned one thing about God; what He ordains, He will finance.

In our personal finances, we live by faith and trust God to provide for our families. Should we approach our church finances differently? When your dreams and goals are larger than your budget, give them to God to finance. Don't limit your ministry by the amount of cash in the general fund. God desires to bless children. He will provide the finances for any church that dares to believe Him for help in ministry to children.

Staffing is another one of your concerns. The senior pastor may have hundreds of adults who flock to the main sanctuary each Sunday. But staffing for children's ministry is not always easy. The nursery requires a two-to-one staffing ratio; fourth grade an eight-to-one ratio. This means that children's ministry

BY J.D. WATSON

An essential component in the mission of winning the lost and making disciples is the vision God places in the senior pastor's heart for his or her church and community.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 107

80 percent of the work? Help me by encouraging through the Word and actual application the importance of everyone being involved. Together we'll give people a complete picture of the body of Christ. Every believer has a purpose in advancing the mission of the church.

8. Understand that children's ministry cannot and likely will not generate income—it requires a substantial budget to be effective. If we are unwilling to put resources into ministries that are not self-sufficient, children's ministries will suffer. Children are dependent on their parents for survival and their church for spiritual survival. When the bottom line is discussed in budget meetings, believe with all your heart that this is one area we can't afford to sacrifice.

Visibility creates vision. Let me share my vision and people will know my heart for kids.

9. Please don't put my spouse in a box by assuming her spiritual gifts and or talents are only for children's ministry. Every person has unique gifts that need

to be developed and used to strengthen the church. If my wife is fulfilled and happy, we as a couple will be at peace and will stay longer. See my spouse as a part of the Body, use her gifts appropriately, and the church will benefit.

10. Let me minister to the kids as my expertise has prepared me. Kids are not little adults; they need ministry on their own level of understanding. Be comfort-

I'm representing you when I talk and fellowship with children's workers.

able that although the tools are different, the message is still the same. I know my methods and style may seem unconventional, but every child deserves the presentation of the gospel at his or her level of understanding. Treat me with dignity as an expert in children's ministry, pay me a fair salary, and I will feel appreciated and want to continue my ministry in your church.

11. Don't confine me to only working with children. See me as Paul saw Timothy; I may have other gifts and burdens as well. For example, I might occasionally appreciate the opportunity to lead an adult ministry or to preach. This would help my spouse and me to meet

Look at me as a pastor to the children of your church. Recognize my gifts in this area, and I will help you to grow our church both numerically and spiritually.

adults who don't have kids. It will also help break the routine of my ministry. Such interaction and opportunities will again lengthen my desire to stay because I will be less likely to feel frustrated and burn out.

Finally, Pastor I wish to pledge my loyalty and support to you as my pastor and my leader. I will always support your decisions publicly. If I have concerns, I will talk with you—and you alone—about those issues. I also submit myself to your authority and give myself in loyalty to you and your leadership. In return, I ask you to consider me a part of your ministry, a vital team player. Don't look at me as a hireling. Look at me as a pastor to the children of

If volunteers know that what they do (unseen and often unheard) is appreciated, they come back repeatedly with a heart full of service and love.

your church. Recognize my gifts in this area, and I will help you to grow the church both numerically and spiritually. My heart is to pastor the children just as you pastor the adults. I want to be your companion in ministry. I love kids, and I love you as my pastor. **E**

For Christ and Kids,

Your Fellow Servant

Lon Flippo, former children's ministries consultant for the Assemblies of God, serves as senior pastor of Faith Assembly of God, Beech Grove, Indiana.

needs a large number of volunteers. Unfortunately, very few children's programs have an overabundance of volunteers. It is often the opposite; classes are understaffed, or not staffed at all. Some children's pastors are in a perpetual recruiting campaign. They are constantly analyzing the current and future staffing needs of each class.

As pastors, we understand that God has assembled a complete body of believers in each local church. He has sent or is sending someone to perform each needed task in every area of ministry. However, these people may not yet know what task they need to perform. If

***To be a successful trainer,
you must stay current with
the cutting edge of
ministry yourself.***

people don't know a need exists, they can't meet it. Part of your job is to present your staffing needs to the church. The telephone, bulletin, church newsletters, parent information sheets, and personal contacts are effective ways to recruit new workers. Let the people know; flood them with opportunities to serve God's kids.

But recruiting workers is not enough; they must also be trained. As a children's pastor, you must be diligent in

***As a team, the unique aspects
of the senior pastor and the
children's pastor hold tremendous
potential in fulfilling the
mission of winning the lost
and making disciples.***

training your staff. Every volunteer in children's ministry must be given unlimited opportunities to be equipped for the ministry to which he or she has been called. Someone once said, "You get what you train." If you want great

Sunday school teachers, Missionettes leaders, Royal Ranger commanders—train them. Training is an important part of ministry; sadly, it is often overlooked.

***As pastors, we understand
that God has assembled a
complete body of believers in
each local church.***

To be a successful trainer you must stay current with the cutting edge of ministry yourself. You will need to be a student of trends in children's ministry. Read children's ministry publications, network with other children's pastors, and attend training seminars to stay abreast of the latest in children's ministry. Make a training investment in yourself and the lives of your staff; it will pay dividends in the lives of your children.

Every community has children who must be reached with the gospel. The children's pastor—whether full- or part-time, paid, or volunteer—is an incredible tool in the hands of God to reach and disciple these children. Sometimes there is a tendency to feel children's ministry is not important. But it is. Children's ministry is one of the most important

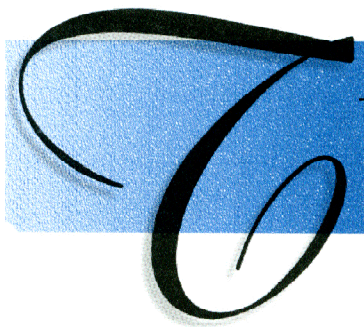
ministries of the church. Eighty-five percent of all who accept Jesus as Savior do so before they are 18 years of age.

When asked about your place in the Kingdom, don't respond with your hand over your mouth, and in a muffled voice say, "I'm *just* a children's pastor." Throw back your shoulders and with deep conviction declare that you hold one of the most important jobs that the Father has created. Tell them, "I *am* a children's pastor." Be proud that God has called you to minister to His children. **E**

For Christ and Kids,

Your Fellow Servant

J.D. Watson is senior pastor of New Life Assembly of God, Lewistown, Montana.



he Pastor as a "Big Person" in the Life of a Child

BY DONALD A.
LICI

*Bringing children to
Christ provides a
powerful motivation
for our work in coun-
seling and parenting
children in a godly
manner.*

Pastors often consult with and counsel parents struggling with the inevitable challenges of parenthood. Research by the author confirms that parenting issues and family problems are among the most frequent concerns that pastors encounter in their role as counselor. Moreover, the pastor is a significant "big person" in the life of every child in his church.

The importance of children to Jesus is reflected in His statement, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:14). Without a doubt Jesus loves little children and as the big people in their lives, we must love them too. Bringing children to Christ provides a powerful motivation for our work in counseling and parenting children in a godly manner.

One fundamental truth to keep in mind when working with children is that the "you" messages of childhood become the "I" messages of adulthood. Someone has wisely said, "The child is the parent of the adult." Simply speaking, a child's God-concept and self-concept are formed quite early in life. Much of the child's God-concept is formed by the interaction he or she has with the big people in his or her life. The pastor is a significant player in this process. So how do we communicate a healthy sense of worth to a child?

Realizing that children respond to the words and actions of the big people in their lives, it is important to let them know they are lovable, valuable, forgivable, and changeable. After all, isn't this the way God sees us? A child who develops a healthy self-image will find it much easier to develop a healthy image of God. Here are some practical how-to's to help the children in your church develop a godly self-image:

1. Communicate personal worth to the children in your church by verbally expressing their worth to you and to God. Statements like,

"You are very special" are internalized as, "I am very special."

2. Honor the name of the child. God loves to show the importance of names. He even gave names to the starry host (Isaiah 40:26). Avoid negative nicknames and use loving nicknames in the proper context.

3. Speak the child's name frequently with a happy inclination and in association with kind and helpful tasks. Catch them being good.

4. Make eye contact and get at their level whenever possible. If you do a children's sermon, have the children gather around you while you sit in their midst.

5. Speak words that focus on the child's character qualities rather than on his or her physical abilities or appearance. Take notice and reinforce qualities such as cooperation, kindness, and helpfulness.

6. Avoid using generalizations that cause confusion: Instead of "Johnny, you are a kind boy." Rather, "Johnny, I noticed that you shared your candy with Sue."

7. Anticipate what the child can become rather than expecting perfection today. All too often the motivation for a child to get good grades or excel in sports is parental pride.

8. Be willing to help a child who asks for help rather than acting disinterested, too busy, or annoyed. If it is not possible to assist the child at that moment, simply say, "I can't help you right now; but if you can wait just a few minutes, I'll be right with you."

9. Respect children as persons. Share your thoughts with them, but on their level. Avoid interrupting them. Say "please" or "thank you."

10. Acknowledge accomplishments with thanks and praise. Pay attention to the effort and attitude put forth in accomplishing basic tasks.

11. Show affection by the use of age-appropriate physical contact. Jesus held little

children. As a pastor it means a lot to a child for you to shake their hand.

12. Teach children to be polite and to use proper vocabulary regarding bodily functions.

13. Avert criticism of one child to another by counteracting with kind words. Children can be cruel to one another, especially siblings.

14. Teach children the importance of completing a job on time. Make time limits specific and encourage parents to inspect what they expect.

15. Encourage parents to create a quiet home atmosphere by speaking directly to the child rather than shouting from a distance.

16. Encourage parents to prepare children for experiences rather than expecting them to make quick adjustments. "In 15 minutes it will be bedtime." "When we go to the store, we are only going to buy such and such."

17. Encourage parents to use responsibilities as effective learning tools. According to their age, children can be assigned daily tasks. Living in a family requires certain responsibilities such as straightening a bedroom, doing dishes, and assisting in meal preparation and yard work.

18. Encourage parents to spend quality time alone with their child each day. "These 30 minutes are just for you and me. What would you like to talk about or do?"

19. Encourage parents to enjoy their children daily. Help parents to venture into their child's world...even if it is something they are not particularly interested in.

20. Regarding discipline, as much as possible allow the child to anticipate consequences (both positive and negative) ahead of time. "If you do such and such, this will happen; but if you do so and so, this will happen." God called this type of parenting the proclamation of the "blessings and curses." The most effective type of parent is high in love and high in discipline.

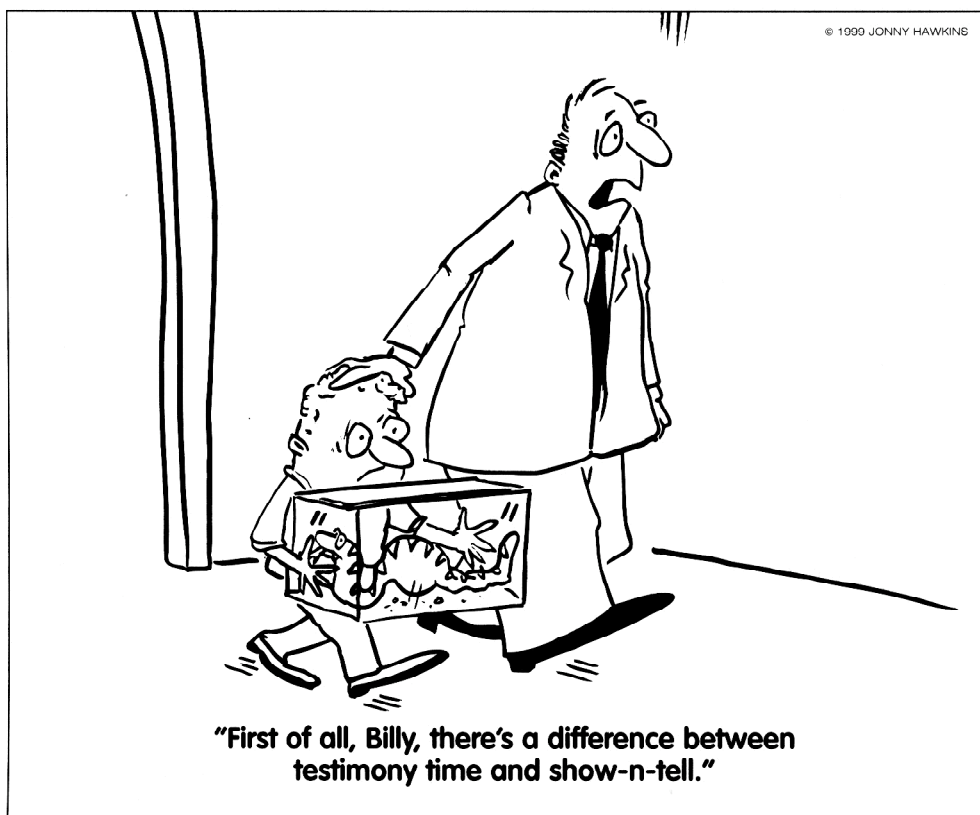
Help your parents learn the three Fs of effective parenting: Be firm, Be fair, Be friendly. The word "train" in Proverbs 22:6 means to tame something wild and to develop a taste for things good and nourishing. As a big person in the life of a child, lead the parents in your church by counsel and by example to relate to the children of your church. ■

**Parenting issues
and family problems
are among the most
frequent concerns
that pastors encounter
in their role as
counselor.**

ENDNOTES

1. Donald A. Lichi, "The Many Roles and Demands of the Assemblies of God Pastor," *Enrichment* 1, no. 2 (1996): 88-92.

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Reducing the Risk of Kidnapping

BY RICHARD R.
HAMMAR

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the court's ruling was its conclusion that the center could be legally responsible for the kidnapping on the basis of a breach of contract.

BACKGROUND

The kidnapping of a child from church premises is a risk that is seldom considered by parents and church leaders. After all, who would commit so brazen a crime in a church? But this very indifference not only increases the risk of such acts, but also exposes churches to significant liability in the event such an act does occur. A recent decision by the Alabama Supreme Court addressed the liability of a church-operated child care program for the kidnapping of a baby girl. The court concluded that the child care center could be sued by the baby's parents, even though the baby was found and returned to them. Church leaders (and any staff member who works with children) should review this article.

FACTS

A couple enrolled their 1-month-old daughter (the "victim") in a church-operated child care center. The center's administrator provided the parents with a document entitled "Operating Policies." This document contained rules and procedures to be followed by the center as well as by parents or guardians of enrolled children. It provided, among other things, that:

(1) The [center] provides a healthy, safe, and Christian environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual development of young children, and seeks to respond to the needs of families.

(2) All staff members are selected on the basis of experience in working with young children, educational background, emotional stability, as well as care and concern for the well-being of the child. All participate in a continuous program of in-service education and studies for professional advancement to remain alert to the ever-changing needs of today's children and families, and to the findings of current research.

(3) Children will be released only to properly identified persons who have been listed in the "child release" section of the Parent-Agreement Form. We must have written authorization for changes in this respect. In unusual circumstances,

we will accept verbal (phone) authorization to release a child to an individual not listed in writing. It must be followed up in writing if the child is to be released to that person on an ongoing basis. We will ask for identification of individuals we do not know. It would be helpful if you would arrange for the persons to pick up your child to visit the school with you so the staff may become acquainted with them. We will not release a child in the care of anyone under 14 years old.

In addition to a number of adults, the center employed a 14-year-old girl and her 17-year-old sister to assist in the care of the children. These girls were foster children who had lived with the center's administrator for a few months. The center also allowed another sister, who was 12 years old, to assist from time to time, although she was not paid for doing so. This sister was not one of the administrator's foster children.

When the victim was 3 months old, and under the center's care and supervision, she was kidnapped by the three sisters. At the time of the kidnapping, there was no qualified adult teacher—other than perhaps the administrator herself—directly supervising the sisters. The administrator later testified that the other teachers had "gone for the day" and that she thought one of the sisters had intentionally distracted her while the other two slipped the baby out the front door undetected. The evidence suggested that the 17-year-old sister was preoccupied with the notion of having her own baby, even to the point of misleading the administrator into thinking that she was pregnant, and she devised the plot to kidnap the victim.

The local police and FBI investigated the incident, found the baby, and reunited her with her parents. The parents experienced severe shock as a result of the kidnapping, and later sued the center. They claimed the center was legally responsible for the kidnapping on the basis of a number of legal theories, including breach of contract.

THE COURT'S RULING

The parents' claim

The parents asserted they entered into a contract with the center when they enrolled their daughter in the program and paid the weekly fee of \$55. In return, the center agreed to be entrusted with the care and custody of their baby. The parents claimed the center breached this contract by the following acts and omissions:

- (1) failing to properly supervise its employees and agents,
- (2) allowing the baby to get into the hands of "underaged, unqualified, and incompetent persons,"
- (3) allowing people to have unauthorized access to the day care,
- (4) employing unqualified people at the day care and allowing unqualified people to do the business of the day care,
- (5) failing to have a sufficient number of qualified persons on staff at all times to care for the babies and minor children entrusted to their care.

The court agreed

The evidence indicates that the center expressly contracted with the [parents] to care for their daughter on a daily basis for a certain sum per week. [T]he document entitled "Operating Policies" was provided to the [parents] and was intended by the center to become a part of the contract. [I]t specifically obligated the center: (1) to release the [parents'] daughter only to a properly authorized and identified person; (2) to employ only persons qualified (in accordance with [the state's] minimum standards) to care for the [victim]; (3) and to keep the [victim] safe while she was under its care and supervision. The evidence indicates that unqualified and unauthorized persons (the sisters) removed the [victim] from the center's premises. The evidence also indicates that a qualified teacher or child care provider was not directly supervising the [victim] at the time of her kidnapping. The basic elements of a contract are an offer and an acceptance, consideration, and mutual assent to the essential terms of the agreement. We conclude that the [parents] presented sufficient evidence of these basic elements to submit to a jury their claim

alleging the breach of an express contract.

RELEVANCE TO OTHER CHURCHES

This case represents an extended discussion of the liability of church-operated day care centers for the kidnapping of young children, and deserves serious study by church leaders in every state. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the court's ruling was its conclusion that the center could be legally responsible for the kidnapping on the basis of a breach of contract. The parents had signed a brief enrollment form containing very little information and no policies or procedures. However, the center also provided the parents with a separate document entitled "Operating Procedures." This document was not referred to in the enrollment form, was not signed by the parents, and did not indicate that it was a contractual document. Nevertheless, the court concluded that the "Operating Procedures" document formed a part of the "contract" between the parents and the center.

The "Operating Procedures" document contained the following provisions: (1) "[t]he [center] provides a healthy, safe, and Christian environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual development of young children"; (2) "[a]ll staff members are selected on the basis of experience in working with young children, educational background, emotional stability, as well as care and concern for the well-being of the child"; and (3) "[c]hildren will be released only to properly identified persons who have been listed in the 'child release' section of the Parent-Agreement Form." Since these assurances were contained in a document that the court considered to be part of a "contract" between parents and the center, the center was guilty of "breach of contract" if it violated any of them. The parents claimed the center breached this contract in numerous ways—and the court agreed—as noted above.

KEY POINT

Does your church operate a child care program? If so, you should recognize that any policies or operating procedures you adopt may be considered to be part of a "contract"

with parents. This exposes your church to liability for breach of contract in the event you violate any of these policies or procedures.

REDUCING THE RISK OF KIDNAPPING

What steps can a church take to reduce the risk of kidnapping and the risk of liability in the event that an incident of kidnapping occurs? Consider the following precautions:

Day care centers

- *Comply with applicable state requirements.* If your church operates a day care program, be sure you are in compliance with all applicable state requirements. Church day care centers are required to be licensed in many states. But even if your center is not required to be licensed, some state regulations may apply.

- *Additional precautions.* See the additional precautions for church nurseries that are summarized below.

Nurseries

- *Screening workers.* While screening workers may not reduce the risk of kidnapping, it will reduce a church's risk of liability in the event an incident of kidnapping occurs. Screening ordinarily will include an application form and reference checks.

- *Check-in procedures.* A number of churches have implemented a check-in procedure to reduce the risk of kidnapping. As children are checked in at the nursery, a small piece of plastic with a randomly selected number is pinned to their clothing. Another piece of plastic with the same number is given to the adult who brought the child. The adult is informed that the child will be returned only to a person presenting the correct number.

Example: A mother brings her infant child to the church nursery before a morning worship service. During the service, an adult male comes to the nursery and asks a teenage nursery attendant for the same child. The attendant is reluctant, because she had never seen the man before. He assures her that he is an "uncle" visiting from out-of-town. The

attendant is satisfied with this explanation and gives the child to the man. Following the morning service the mother goes to the nursery and is shocked to learn that her child is not there. It is later determined that the "uncle" in fact was a former husband who was seeking custody of the child.

Example: A mother brings her infant child to the church nursery before a morning worship service. An attendant pins a plastic number on the child and gives the mother an identical plastic number. The attendant informs the mother that the child will be returned only to a person presenting the plastic number. During the service, an adult male comes to the nursery and asks a teenage nursery attendant for the same child. He claims to be an "uncle" visiting from out-of-town. In fact, he is a former husband seeking custody of the child. The attendant asks the "uncle" to present the correct plastic number. He obviously does not have it, and so the attendant refuses to give him the child.

- **Adequate supervision.** Church nurseries should be staffed by an adequate number of qualified adults. The appropriate number will depend on the number of children present. Many churches use teenagers as helpers in the nursery. Such a practice will not increase a church's risk of kidnapping (or liability in the event of an incident of kidnapping) so long as adults are also present.

KEY POINT

It is often helpful to contact other institutions for assistance with staffing ratios. For example, some churches base their adult-to-child ratio in the nursery to what the state requires of licensed day care facilities. You may also contact the Red Cross, Salvation Army, or similar organizations. The point is this—if you can demonstrate that you based your adult-to-child ratio on the established practices of other similar organizations in your community, this will be a strong defense in the event you are accused of liability for an incident of kidnapping (or any injury to a child) on the basis of "negligent supervision."

- **Off-site activities.** Be especially careful

of off-site activities such as field trips. These outings can be difficult to control. It is essential that an adequate number of adults are present. While on the trip, precautionary measures must be implemented to assure adequate supervision of the group. For example, some churches group children in pairs, always keep the entire group together, and have frequent "roll calls." Once again, you can call other community-based organizations for guidance.

- **Be sure policies are being followed.** As this case demonstrates, it is absolutely essential to familiarize nursery workers with relevant policies, and to be sure these policies are followed. At a minimum, this should be part of an orientation process for all new nursery workers (both paid and volunteer). Periodic training sessions are also desirable to reinforce nursery policies.

- **Legal review of all policies, contracts, and enrollment forms.** It is a good practice

The court concluded that the "Operating Procedures" document formed a part of the "contract" between the parents and the center.

to have your nursery policies, contracts, and enrollment forms reviewed periodically by a local attorney. Such a review will ensure your policies are current and accurate, and in compliance with the law. The church-operated day care center in this case was found liable for the incident of kidnapping in part because it failed to update its official policies.

- **Two adult rule.** Churches can reduce the risk of an incident of kidnapping by establishing a "two adult" rule in the nursery. Such a rule mandates that no child shall ever be in the presence of fewer than two adults. Not only does such a policy reduce the risk of an incident of kidnapping, but it also protects workers from being unjustly accused of child molestation.

- **Video.** Some churches are incorporating video technology into their nurseries. Such a practice has a number of potential

benefits, including the following: (1) it reduces the risk of kidnapping, since the video camera will serve a powerful deterrent; (2) it reduces the risk of other inappropriate behavior; (3) it provides irrefutable evidence of innocence if a nursery worker is falsely accused of wrongdoing; (4) it may identify a kidnapper.

- **Restroom breaks.** Church restrooms present a unique risk of kidnapping for both infants and older children. Restrooms are frequented by children, they are easily accessible, they often are in remote locations, or are not adequately supervised. Church leaders should take steps to reduce this risk. While a full discussion of this subject is beyond the scope of this article, here are some ways that this risk can be reduced:

- (1) If possible, restrict restroom breaks to restrooms that have limited access to other adults.


- (2) Have two adults accompany children in groups to the restroom whenever possible.

- (3) Do not allow a lone adult to take one or more children to the restroom.

- (4) Consider installation of "half doors" that will permit adults to have partial vision into restrooms used by young children.

- (5) Do not allow young children to use the restroom without adult supervision.

- (6) Install video cameras in prominent locations to discourage kidnapping and provide evidence identifying the perpetrator in the event an incident does occur.

- **Architecture.** Unauthorized access to nursery areas by outsiders should be discouraged or prevented by the physical layout. Many churches accomplish this with counters staffed by an adult worker or attendant. 

Richard R. Hammar, J.D., LL.M., CPA, serves as legal counsel to The General Council of the Assemblies of God. A graduate of Harvard Law School, he is the author of over 30 books on legal and tax issues for churches and pastors. This article is excerpted from Church Law & Tax Report, copyright 1998.



The Religion of Islam

BY KERRY D.
MCROBERTS

One can readily deduce from the alleged "prophecies" of the Qur'an that the expansion of Islam was at the expense of their enemies' blood instead of the shed blood of the Author of life.

Inside a dark, sultry cave on Mount Hira, an entranced man silently meditated. The month of Ramadan had almost ended. In the solitude of the cave, the darkness suddenly exploded with an angelic light cascading down the cavern walls and surging into the altered psyche of Mohammed.

"Read!" the angel commanded.

"I cannot read," replied the startled Mohammed.

Again the angel ordered, "Read!"

Mohammed pleaded to be understood. "I cannot read."

A third time the angelic mandate resonated in Mohammed's ears, "Read!"

Mohammed finally bowed to the angel's demands. "What can I read?"

The angel replied, "Read: In the name of thy Lord Who createth. Createth man from a clot. Read: And it is thy Lord the Most Bountiful Who teacheth by the pen, Teacheth man that which he knew not."¹

As Mohammed regained control of his mind, he rushed from the cave. Once again the angel revealed himself. "O Mohammed! Thou art Allah's messenger, and I am Gabriel." The trembling Mohammed lifted his eyes and saw the angel hovering above the horizon. Again the angel announced, "O Mohammed! Thou art Allah's messenger, and I am Gabriel."

Did Gabriel actually appear to Mohammed, or was this a diabolical agent masquerading as "an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14)?

TESTING THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an (pronounced Koran) was revealed to Mohammed through several visions over 23 years.² The Qur'an, according to Muslims, is the "final Revelation from God."³ To what criteria do Muslims appeal to demonstrate this claim? The Islamic apologetic for the divine authority of the Qur'an consists of four criteria: preservation, eloquence, prophecy, and scientific value.

THE QUR'AN'S PRESERVATION

Maulvi Mohammed Ali contended, "The Qur'an is a universal book, and no variations, alterations, or errors exist in its text."⁴ It is the pure word of God as handed down to Mohammed.

Mohammed's successor Abu Bakr compiled all of the Qur'an's Surahs. The written Surahs were dispersed among the people, and many Muslims memorized the Qur'an. However, within 2 years of Mohammed's death (A.D. 632), many of these people were killed during battle.

Under the Caliphate of Uthman, all copies of the Qur'an were destroyed (the Recession of Uthman), except Uthman's copy. Through this destruction, Uthman rendered the textual criticism (the comparing of manuscripts to determine textual purity) of the Qur'an impossible. There exists no means by which to determine the purity of the Qur'an, and any argument for its preservation is meaningless. Therefore, this particular of the divine authenticity of the Qur'an is of no real consequence, because variant readings are nonexistent. Further, there exists no possibility of reconstructing the autographs (the original) from the manuscripts (copies) because of the deliberate cessation of the textual tradition by the Muslims.

THE QUR'AN'S ELOQUENCE

In Surah 17:88, the Qur'an claims its beauty and eloquence attests to its divine authority. Surah 7:157 refers to the "Prophet who can neither read nor write," as further evidence of the heavenly origins of the Qur'an. How could such a man produce such an eloquent book?

Indeed, the Qur'an possesses poetic eloquence. However, eloquence is hardly criterion for determining divine inspiration. If such criterion is valid, then Homer certainly deserves recognition for his literary genius in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Shakespeare's unparalleled literary accomplishments are the marquee of eloquence. And yet no reputable scholar claims divine origins for the works of either Homer or Shakespeare.

And what about Mohammed's illiteracy? Muslims are aware that Mohammed had

several amanuenses (scribes) in his service. He could have composed the Qur'an with their aid.

THE QUR'AN AND PROPHECY

Muslim apologists point to Islam's universal scope prophesied in the Qur'an as proof of its divine origins.⁵ These "prophecies" speak of the annihilation of those who oppose the Muslims in battle. If Mohammed is victorious in battle, these "prophecies" merely become self-fulfilling; and if he is defeated, then all is forgotten.

One can readily deduce from the alleged "prophecies" of the Qur'an that the expansion of Islam was at the expense of their enemies' blood instead of the shed blood of the Author of life.

THE QUR'AN AND SCIENCE

Maurice Bucaille attempts to demonstrate that the Qur'an, written in the seventh century, must be divinely inspired because it reveals scientific knowledge undiscovered until the 20th century.⁶ However, *Time* magazine acknowledges the obvious: "Western science and technology have wounded the deep pride of Islam. The success of the unvirtuous, the infidel unfavored by Allah, is psychologically confusing. 'Seen through Muslim eyes,' writes Berkeley historian Peter Brown, 'the emergence of [the West] as the temporary master of the world remains an anomaly in the natural unfolding of the course of history.'" ⁷

The fallacious reasoning behind such attempts as Bucaille's to establish the inspiration of the Qur'an is pointed out by John Warwick Montgomery:

"The fallacy in such an argument lies in the fact the philosophical scene is kaleidoscopic—that the Zeitgeist is never absolute. The static universe of one era became the relativistic, evolutionary universe of the next; and who is to say what cosmological views future generations will hold? Conformity to current philosophical views (even if granted) is therefore no proof of the validity of a religion."⁸

A series of weak arguments cannot be linked to make a strong argument. Muslim apologists are unable to offer any direct documentary evidence for a warranted belief in the divine inspiration of the Qur'an.⁹

CONCLUSION

The Qur'an asserts that the Taurat (the Torah),

the Zabur (Psalms), and the Injil (the gospel of Jesus Christ) were revelations of Allah (Surah 2:87; 4:163,164; 5:44; 32:24; 35:27–31; 46:11,12). Furthermore, God's revelations are incorruptible and unchangeable (Surah 6:115).

However, Muslims claim the Bible has been corrupted (the Islamic term is *Tahrif*).¹⁰ Although space does not allow a discussion of the issue of textual variations in the Bible, the Muslims have fallen on their own polemical sword.¹¹ In their attempts to discredit the Bible, they have refuted the claims of the Qur'an and called into question Allah's ability to preserve his revelations. The Muslims themselves force us to conclude that Mohammed was deceived by an angelic impersonator instead of having been called by God. ■

ENDNOTES

1. Qur'an, XCVI, 1-5. The word *Qur'an* derives from the Arabic verb, *qara'a* meaning "to recite." The Qur'an consists of 114 chapters referred to as surhas or suras.
2. Qur'an 17:106; 43:3; 44:48.
3. Qur'an, Preface, xxviii.
4. Maulvi Mohammed Ali, *Mohammed and Christ* (Lahore, India: The Ahmadiyya Anjuman-i-Ishaat-i-Islam, 1921), 7.
5. Qur'an 3:12; 5:36; 14:13,14; 41:53.
6. Maurice Bucaille, *The Bible, the Qur'an, and Science*, trans. Alastair D. Pannell and Maurice Bucaille (Paris: North America Trust Publication, 1978), 251.
7. Lance Morrow, "Islam Against the West," *Time*, 17 December 1979, 38.
8. John Warwick Montgomery, "How Muslims Do Apologetics," *Faith Founded On Fact* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1978), 94.
9. Concerning the historical reliability and divine inspiration of the Bible, see John Warwick Montgomery, *History & Christianity* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Pub., 1965) and *Faith Founded On Fact: The Apologetic Theology of John Warwick Montgomery*, (Master's thesis, Regent College, Vancouver, Canada, 1997).
10. Ahmed Deedat, *Is the Bible God's Word?* (Islamic Propagation Centre, Durban, South Africa, 1980), 38.
11. Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1968), 358-367 and Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on Greek New Testament* (Federal Republic of Germany: United Bible Society, 1975), Introduction.

In their attempts to discredit the Bible, they have refuted the claims of the Qur'an and called into question Allah's ability to preserve his revelations.

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Helping Children Develop a Healthy Conscience

NOTE: This information may be photocopied and given to Sunday school teachers and parents for their use.

BY RICHARD D.
DOBBINS

By the time your children become adults, they'll be grateful for many of the things you're doing for them today.

By the time your children become adults, they'll be grateful for many of the things you're doing for them today. But don't expect much gratitude before then. Parenting is a delayed-gratification task. Remember, your experience is similar to that of every other parent. Keep doing your best to "train up [every child in your family] in the way he [she] should go" (Proverbs 22:6).

There are no perfect children because there are no perfect parents. Get out from under that burden. There's no way you can make them perfect, anyway. All you have to be—to be a good parent—is "good enough." You do that by modeling a relationship with Christ that brings more peace than confusion, more pleasure than disappointment to your life.

Your first priority as parents is to create a thirst in your children for the things of God—a thirst that will encourage them to follow you into healthy Christianity. Your children will watch you more closely than anyone else. They will be checking whether you practice what you preach. The life you model for them will speak louder than anything you say.

As your children see how your relationship with Christ gets you through hard times, they will not forget those lessons. As they see you finding pleasure in reading your Bible and praying, through good times and bad, they will begin to realize that this spiritual discipline is a major source of your strength.

One thing that will help your children toward responsible adulthood is a healthy conscience. This is developed over a child's first 18–20 years, as life controls are gradually transferred from an external source (the parents) to an internal source (the growing child's own moral-management skills).

God has provided each of us a conscience, but our family and cultural environment deter-

mines the nature and content of that conscience. We learn what is right and what is wrong in our national culture, in our denominational Christian culture, and in our family culture.

PUNISHMENT VERSUS DISCIPLINE

Among the first tools we use to help our children toward a healthy conscience are punishment and discipline. Punishment is control from the outside; it teaches the child what not to do. If he touches the electrical outlet on the wall, he'll be punished. If she hits her brother or sister, or breaks one of their toys, she'll be punished. Running into the street or inappropriate language are all things that should bring punishment to children when the behavior is repeated after a reasonable warning.

Punishment applies a measured amount of pain to the child. This pain is less than the pain that would be experienced if the behavior were not stopped. Never punish a child because you are angry and out of control. This is not what you want to model for them. Consistent and controlled punishment—suitable to the seriousness of an offense and administered by an in-control parent—is the goal. Punishment teaches the child what not to do.

Discipline develops gradually over time as the child learns to exhibit appropriate behavior according to a set of guidelines initially instilled by the parent, but which now come from within the child. Discipline is a function of the child's conscience. It occurs from the inside out.

In teaching your children to be disciplined, try to set fair limits and enforce them in a firm and friendly way. Fair limits are based on what you can reasonably expect of each child, given his or her age and developmental level. Once you have established fair limits, be firm in enforcing them. Try not to let your mood dictate your children's limits. Your firmness, though, needs to be tempered with mercy; after all, you are modeling healthy Christian

adulthood. Your children's early images of God will be intertwined with their early images of you.

Finally, stay friendly. You don't need to be angry to be firm. If your decisions are fair, remain friendly during your delivery. You may need to remind your children that they don't always have to like what you say, but they do have to listen

Among the first tools we use to help our children toward a healthy conscience is punishment and discipline.

to you. If your child seems to have legitimate reasons for asking you to change your mind, let him know you will consider his request. However, your decision is the final one because someone has to be in charge, and right now it's you. God made you the parent. For older children and teens, be prepared to explain many of your decisions.

Your fairness allows the child enough space to make him comfortable without overwhelming him. He is free to make some decisions, some mistakes. Your firmness provides security. He knows

where the boundaries are and what will happen if he gets outside them. When you enforce the limits in a friendly way, you spare your child the frustration of living with a harsh and angry conscience for the rest of his life.

HEALTHY VERSUS UNHEALTHY CONSCIENCE

Another area is a healthy versus an unhealthy conscience. A healthy Christian conscience protects one from threatening or unwise decisions, and helps its owner live an integrated, productive Christian life. An unhealthy conscience is too narrow, too wide, or unreliable. It comes from limits that are too confining, too relaxed, or unpredictable.

Perhaps the parents of a child with a too-confining conscience were raised by overly strict parents. Maybe they resent the time it takes to care for a child. Or perhaps they've decorated their home with expensive furnishings and are afraid the child will ruin them. Normal childhood behavior finds these children frequently beyond the limits of their parents' approval. And they are far more likely to be confronted with their disapproved behaviors than they are to be commended for their approved behav-

iors. A too-narrow conscience leads to frequent feelings of guilt, depression, and inadequacy. It produces a person who can't stand him or herself.

A conscience that is too wide produces a child no one else can stand. Healthy parental love does not tolerate the kind of behavior from a child who hurts people or destroys things. Children need to learn that we love people and we use things, and we don't abuse either one.

The most damaging kind of unhealthy conscience is one that is unreliable. This generally comes from being raised by parents who punish the child according to their moods rather than the child's behavior. This is the parent who lets the child get away with almost anything when the parent is in a good mood, but

Your firmness, though, needs to be tempered with mercy; after all, you are modeling healthy Christian adulthood.

clamps down on the child if the parent has had a bad day. This leaves the child confused about where the real limits are on any given occasion. It does teach the child, however, to be an excellent predictor of others' moods, and a manipulator of people and circumstances. Of all three kinds of unhealthy conscience, this is the most damaging.

A damaged conscience is difficult to correct. However, with God's help, it is possible to restore one's conscience to healthy Christian limits.

As Christian parents, concentrate on being "good enough" parents to your children. Train each child "in the way he [or she] should go." Model a life that brings you more peace than confusion, more pleasure than disappointment. This is discipling at its best. **E**

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Investing Our Best in Children

BY SANDRA G.
CLOPINE

*God help us as a
Fellowship to invest
our best in children.
Sunday school, chil-
dren's church,
Missionettes, and
Royal Rangers provide
instruction and practi-
cal experience in
prayer.*

"O, God, You are my very best favorite!"

These words ring clearly in my mind, although a pastor's preschool daughter prayed them years ago. Alexa was kneeling beside me during a Sunday evening service. I can still hear the animated, childish enthusiasm in her voice. Alexa prayed to the God she adored.

I'm reminded of another young child who came to me while I was itinerating to return to Africa. Phil held one of my prayer cards in his hand, exclaiming, "Every time I look at this, I'm going to pray for you."

Adults can easily discount prayers like Alexa and Phil's, for they are just children. God looks at them differently; in fact, Scripture confirms this.

In Matthew 19:13-15, little children were brought to Jesus. The disciples rebuked those who brought them, probably feeling that Jesus was too busy to be bothered by children. Jesus, however, responded, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (verse 14).^{*} He then laid His hands on them and blessed them.

The tenderness and respect Jesus exhibited probably shocked those who stood by. The Greco-Roman mind-set viewed children as insignificant. Children were necessary for a family's survival, but they were not valued in themselves. Many unwanted infants were abandoned and left to die. Those who were rescued were often raised as slaves or prostitutes. Some pagan societies today still hold to these notions.

Christian societies must be different. We need to adhere to Christ's example of loving children. Why do we find in "Christian America" an attitude that considers children a burden or inconvenience? Why do we see multiplied thousands of babies aborted each year, children left homeless, and others treated like playthings in the hands of pornographers? How sad that millions of prospective intercessors have been eliminated, or have had their childhood trust shattered.

God help us as a Fellowship to invest our best in children. Sunday school, children's church,

Missionettes, and Royal Rangers provide instruction and practical experience in prayer. Children of all ages can enjoy God's presence and believe Him for their needs.

Those who have counseled at children's camps have witnessed powerful prayer meetings involving little people. When encouraged, children find it easy to yield to God. I can think of no greater thrill than seeing a move of the Holy Spirit on children. To hear them pray and worship God in other tongues—a language they have not learned—can convince the most skeptical adult. No wonder Jesus stated, "Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it" (Mark 10:15).

The home should be a child's first school of prayer. Paul's admonition to fathers serves the family well: "And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

Children raised in a home where Mom and Dad pray together learn to put prayer on their list of top priorities. The family altar provides discussion and training in prayer that nothing else can duplicate. Prayer becomes a daily lifestyle rather than a church-only event.

Theologians tell us that Mary was probably in her early teens when Gabriel announced she would bear the Messiah. Yet she readily accepted God's will for her life. She eagerly responded, "For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation" (Luke 1:49,50).

Let us not sell our children short. They are capable of praying for themselves and others. Alexa and Phil learned that; you and I should learn it too.

^{*}Scripture quotations are from the New King James Version. **E**

Sandra G. Clopine, former coordinator of the Assemblies of God National Prayer Center, lives in Springfield, Missouri.

Invasion 39 Is Working

In December 1991, the Assemblies of God Division of Home Missions launched Invasion 39. The goal: "to duplicate in the 39 major cities of America what we have done in the other cities of the world, using the same methods and strategy."

The number 39 represents the 39 population centers in the United States where one-half of Americans live. Many were shocked to discover it was possible to touch one-half of our nation with only 39 stops.

The church had been retreating from the inner cities to the supposed safety of the suburbs until we realized our mission is to take the gospel to all people, no matter where they live. Because evil had become so entrenched in these areas the church had abandoned, the term *invasion* was used to signify the gravity of the situation and the commitment needed. Here is a report on what has happened in these 7 years since Invasion 39 was launched.

One of the most significant things has been the awareness of the need to plant churches where sin is the worst. No longer is any territory off limits. If there are lost people present, we must provide a gospel witness through a local church. Reaching our cities is a top priority with the Assemblies of God. Many districts have moved aggressively in this area and God is giving an abundant harvest.

Chris and Monica DeLaurentis were saved through Teen Challenge and shortly thereafter felt called by God to go back to their former neighborhood in Minneapolis—not to deal in drugs, but to plant a church. Today there is a thriving congregation of almost 500 in a renovated building that has everything from a sanctuary to a gymnasium. They have invaded their area of the city, and the local press has given them excellent coverage.

Bill Gray, a former banker with no inner-city experience, and his wife Cheryl, a former foreign missionary, went to Mobile, Alabama. On property acquired from the city, they have erected a building that houses a successful outreach in one

of the neediest areas in America. They are training local people for local ministry, and it is working.

Otto Wegner left a strong suburban church and moved to Newark, New Jersey—the murder capital of the United States—to plant a church. Ten years and 10 churches later, Otto and his wife Pat have proven that any area can be invaded with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Doug Oss, a former professor at Central Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, was called by God to plant a church in Salt Lake City. Today there is a strong and growing church housed in a former Mormon church. I am continually amazed at the cross section of people God is calling to invade our cities.

Another valuable tool in the inner-city harvest is the Urban Bible Training Center. The philosophy is simple—train local people for local ministry. Recognizing that leadership is the top priority and that most inner-city people could not or would not attend a regular Bible college, we are taking Bible training to them. We use area Christians as teachers and local churches as classrooms, keeping the costs to a minimum. It's working. We now have 20 UBTCs with more scheduled to open. Missionary Jim Hall is leading this new thrust to raise up leaders. In these next 10 years we will see hundreds of trained inner-city workers placed in strategic areas to plant churches.

America is the most culturally and ethnically diverse nation in the world. As immigrants arrive, most of them settle in one of the 39 cities. We have specific ministry to 42 people groups and the number is growing. We believe God has brought millions of immigrants as well as 500,000 international students to America so they can be saved and, in turn, help reach their homeland.

It's harvest time in the United States. **E**

BY CHARLES E.
HACKETT

The number 39 represents the 39 population centers in the United States where one-half of Americans live.

Charles E. Hackett is executive director of the Division of Home Mission, Springfield, Missouri.



LET THE CHILDREN COME

Proverbs 20:11; Matthew 19:14

INTRODUCTION:

Are children lost? I think they are (see Proverbs 20:11; Romans 3:10,22,23; James 4:17; 1 John 5:17). Evangelism is an important part of the three-fold mission of the church. We must reach the lost, young or old. We need to approach ministry to children from the premise that some children could die and spend eternity without the Lord. We must do what we can to let the children come to Jesus.

MESSAGE:

If the church believes children are lost without Christ, it will:

1. Pray

- a. Pray for our children.
- b. Pray for laborers in the harvest of children (Matthew 9:37,38; Philippians 1:4,5).

2. Practice

- a. Set a godly example for children (Matthew 7:24; James 1:22).

3. Prepare

- a. Prepare for ministry to children.
- b. Prepare others for ministry (Ephesians 4:11,12; Ezra 7:10).

4. Provide

- a. Provide financially for ministry to children.
- b. Provide varied ministries to children.
- c. Provide an atmosphere of unconditional love for children (John 13:34).

5. Prevail

- a. Do not be weary in well doing.
- b. Do not give up on the undesirable child (Ephesians 4:32).

6. Proclaim

- a. The gospel of Jesus to children (Judges 2:10).
- b. The need for quality ministry to

every boy and girl.

- c. The need for total church involvement in this ministry (Romans 1:16).

CONCLUSION:

Let me speak up for the children! Children who do not know Christ as their Savior will spend eternity without Him. I won't argue the age of accountability. Some children understand salvation at an earlier age than others. And kids grow in their understanding of the gospel. But as long as there is a possibility that children may die and enter eternity without Christ, we need to present the gospel to them.

Let us, as a congregation, commit ourselves to praying, practicing, preparing, providing, prevailing, and proclaiming. Let us endeavor to be like Jesus when He said, "Let the little children come to Me."

—Dick Gruber, Apple Valley, Minnesota

THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

INTRODUCTION:

One indication of the great importance of the resurrection of Christ is the thoroughness with which it was attested by both friends (1 Corinthians 15:3–8) and foes (Matthew 28:11–15). Consider its importance in relation to:

MESSAGE:

1. The divine provision.

- a. It dramatizes the inspiration and reliability of Scripture through fulfillment of prophecy (Luke

24:45,46; Acts 13:34,35).

- b. It declares the deity of Christ (Acts 13:33; Romans 1:4).

2. The believer's hope.

- a. It provides resurrection power for daily living (Philippians 3:10; Ephesians 1:18–20).
- b. It assures resurrection in Christ's likeness (Acts 26:23; 1 Corinthians 15:20–23; 1 John 3:2).

3. The unbeliever's alternatives.

- a. It assures forgiveness of sins to those who accept Christ

(1 Corinthians 15:17).

- b. It warns of future judgment for those who reject Christ (Acts 17:31).

CONCLUSION:

In the natural, world conditions seem hopeless, but the resurrection of Christ provides hope both for this life and the life to come (1 Corinthians 15:19).

—Hardy W. Steinberg,
reprinted from *Advance*

WHAT CHRIST'S COMING MEANS

INTRODUCTION:

The second coming of Christ is one of the prominent future events of Scripture—foretold by Christ himself (John 14:3), by angels (Acts 1:10, 11), and by the apostles (Acts 3:20).

MESSAGE:

1. The attitude of the believers.

- a. They look for it (Philippians 3:20;

Titus 2:13).

- b. They love it (2 Timothy 4:8).
- c. They prepare for it (Luke 12:40).
- d. They are patient unto it (James 5:7,8).

2. The attitude of unbelievers.

- a. They scoff at it (2 Peter 3:3,4).
- b. They claim delay (Matthew 24:48).
- c. They live wickedly (2 Timothy 3:1–4).

- d. They pretend godliness (2 Timothy 3:5).

CONCLUSION:

While no one knows the day nor the hour of the Second Coming, it should be considered as at hand (1 Peter 4:7).

—Hardy W. Steinberg,
reprinted from *Advance*



PENTECOSTAL POWER IN ACTION

Acts 3:1-23

INTRODUCTION:

The crippled man in Acts 3 is a example of the world reaching out to the church for help. This man was not healed by Peter and John, but by the power of God working through them in response to his faith in Christ. This incident occurred shortly after the outpouring of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

MESSAGE:

1. The prayer (verse 1)

- a. Regularity of prayer.
- b. Rule of prayer (Matthew 6:6).
- c. Results of prayer (James 5:16).

2. The person (verse 2)

- a. The man was lame from birth.
- b. He depended on friends to carry him.
- c. He was at the temple asking for help.

3. The power (verses 3-7)

- a. A look of faith (verse 4).
- b. A gift of faith (verse 6).
- c. An act of faith (verse 6).

4. The praising (verses 8,9)

- a. Leaping—giving expression to the Holy Spirit's power.
- b. Walking—putting the healing to work.
- c. Praising God—giving God the glory for the healing.

5. The people (verses 9-11)

- a. Do not glorify man (verse 12).

- b. God has glorified His Son (verse 13).
- c. Though He was crucified, God raised Jesus from the dead (verse 15).
- d. Through faith in His name, this man was healed (verse 16).
- e. Repent and be converted (verse 19).

CONCLUSION:

A lame man was healed and a throng of Jews came under conviction for their sin in rejecting Christ—all because Peter and John put Pentecostal power to work. The Holy Spirit comes upon us to give power to work for God, power to worship God, and power to witness effectively.

—Croft Pentz, Waynesboro, Pennsylvania

A PORTRAIT OF PERSISTENT FAITH

Matthew 15:21-28

INTRODUCTION:

A Canaanite mother teaches the importance of compassion, faith, humility, and persistence.

MESSAGE:

1. She was an unlikely prospect (verse 22).

- a. because of her nationality.
- b. because of her problem.

2. She faced unexpected obstacles (verses 23,24).

- a. in the silence of Jesus.
- b. in the attitude of the disciples.
- c. in the statement of Jesus.

3. She made an unusual plea (verse 25).

- a. by worshiping steadfastly.
- b. by pleading persistently.
- c. by responding humbly.

4. She enjoyed a major triumph

(verse 28).

- a. in the complement to her faith.
- b. in the desire of her heart.

CONCLUSION:

Because of the testing this woman endured, she was probably made stronger for future tests.

—Philip Wannenmacher, reprint from Advance

SNAPSHOTS IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

INTRODUCTION:

We cannot change the direction of children and youth in America by pointing our fingers at them. We must instill in them a vision of God. We must also provide godly leadership to help our children grow into godly adults.

MESSAGE:

1. We must lead our families, guided by our vision of God (2 Samuel 7:18-29).

- a. David had a heart for God.
- b. David recognized God's sovereignty in his life.
- c. David recognized God as the source of his strength.

Application: We need to help our children understand the sovereignty of God and the fact He is the source of our strength.

2. We must lead through godly parenting (2 Samuel 13:1-22; 1 Kings 1:5,6).

- a. David was furious with Amnon, but did nothing (2 Samuel 13:21).
- b. David was a father, but not a parent to his boys (1 Kings 1:5,6).
- c. Godly discipline helps instill our values in our children.
- d. Parenting is necessary, but not always popular.

3. We must lead by a godly example (2 Samuel 5:13; 1 Kings 11:3).

- a. Whatever Dad can do, I can do better.
- b. David loved God, but also love women.
- c. Solomon built the temple, but he also married more women than David. Solomon's many wives eventually led him away from God.
- d. Our actions will influence our children more than our words.

CONCLUSION:

Having a godly vision for our family is vital. But we must also parent with courage, and lead by example if we are to see our children withstand the forces of moral decay and rise above them.

—Nate Lashway, Helena, Montana



THE PROMISE IS UNTO...YOUR CHILDREN

Acts 2:39

INTRODUCTION:

The Christian church was empowered by the Holy Spirit as God fulfilled His promise proclaimed in Joel 2:28,29. Throughout the Book of Acts, the Early Church surged forward to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to all the known world by the power of the Spirit.

Today we celebrate Pentecost Sunday in a world of desperate need, but once again experiencing a mighty surge of the Holy Spirit. Our text focuses on the fact children are specifically included in the Pentecostal promise and provision.

MESSAGE

1. The promise.

- a. The baptism in the Holy Spirit.
 - (1) Recorded by Joel (Joel 2:28).
 - (2) Reported by Jesus (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4,5).
 - (3) Repeated by Peter (Acts 2:16-21).
 - (4) Received by the Church (Acts 2:1-4).
- b. Promised by the Father.
- c. Poured out by the Son.
 - (1) Jesus is the Baptizer (Matthew 3:11; John 1:32-34; 16:7).
 - (2) His final command at His ascension (Acts 1:4).
 - (3) Arrival of the Holy Spirit confirms Jesus' position and relationship to the Father and fulfills His promise

(John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7).

- (4) Peter linked the Baptizer and the baptism in the Holy Spirit to speaking in tongues (Acts 2:32,33).
- d. Prevalent in the Church (Acts 2,8,10,19).
2. The promise is:
 - a. Ever in the present tense.
 - (1) On the Day of Pentecost—(Acts 2).
 - (2) In A.D. 34, at Samaria—(Acts 8).
 - (3) In A.D. 41, at Cornelius' house—(Acts 10).
 - (4) In A.D. 54, in Galatia—(Acts 18; Galatians 3:1-5,14).
 - (5) In A.D. 58, in Ephesus—(Acts 19:1-7; Ephesians 5:18).
 - (6) On January 1, 1901, in Topeka, Kansas.
 - (7) In 1906, at Azusa Street Mission, Los Angeles, California.
 - (8) In the 1960s, 70s, 80s, and 90s, believers in every denomination are receiving the Promise.
 - (9) On Pentecost Sunday, 1999.
 - b. "Keep on being filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18, literal translation).
3. The promise is unto...your children.
 - a. To those present.
 - b. To those distant by geography or generation.
 - c. The children have a special promise (Acts 2:17,39).
 - d. Parents have a special privilege and responsibility.
 - (1) For salvation of their families

(Acts 16:31; Proverbs 22:6).

- (2) To pass on a powerful Pentecostal heritage.
- e. The Holy Spirit is God's promise (Luke 11:13).
 - (1) For those who ask (Luke 11:13).
 - (2) For those who believe (John 7:39; Galatians 3:2).
- f. You and your children are inseparable in this promise (Acts 2:39). So lead the way.

CONCLUSION:

The Bible gives no mechanical formula for receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Rather, it emphasizes God's promise and how freely He fulfills that promise. The simple pattern that emerges in Scripture holds true today.

1. Christians pray for the Baptism.
2. They believe.
3. They receive
4. They speak in other tongues.

Now is the best time for you—parent or child—to experience your personal Pentecost. If you are a Christian, but have not received the Holy Spirit baptism according to Acts 2:4, ask God in expectancy. Then express aloud the utterance given by the Holy Spirit.

Remember: "The promise is unto you, and to your children...."

—Mel Surface, Waxahachie, Texas,
adapted from Advance

EXAMINE YOUR ATTITUDES

Luke 21

INTRODUCTION:

In Luke 21, Christ taught about His Second Coming and mentioned the attitudes to be maintained by those who anticipate His soon return. Christ presented the negative and positive attitudes toward His return.

MESSAGE:

1. Negative attitudes

- a. Do not be deceived by imposters (verse 8).
- b. Do not be disturbed by international

news (verse 9).

- c. Do not worry about how to answer those who oppose the gospel (verse 14).
- d. Do not be fearful when natural disasters come (verses 25,26).
- e. Do not be entangled in evil social trends (verse 34).

2. Positive attitudes

- a. Be patient (verse 19).
- b. Turn your thoughts heavenward ("look up," verse 28).
- c. Be confident ("lift up your heads," verse 28).

d. Be alert to the times (verse 31).

- e. Be concerned about your spiritual welfare (verse 34).
- f. Be watchful (verse 36).
- g. Be prayerful (verse 36).

CONCLUSION:

Since "the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:8), we need to make sure we have the right attitude as we wait His return.

—F. Helen Jarvis
Adapted from Advance



THREE COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

2 Timothy 4:5

INTRODUCTION:

There are many things we can do in ministry for children. We may use puppets, stories, object lessons, drama, and more. Many of the skills and tools we use can help us teach, but what are the most important ingredients in a successful children's ministry?

MESSAGE:

1. Dedication (Acts 26:19,20)

- Paul remained true to the vision that God had given him (verse 19).
- Many times God directs us by showing us the needs of those around us (verse 20).
- Has God given you a vision of ministry?
- Like Paul, we need to remain dedicated to the vision God has given us.

2. Devotion (Matthew 25:35–40)

- When God gives us a vision and call to ministry, He will also give us a love for the people to whom we are ministering.
- Children can sense when someone is ministering because they love them.
- Those who minister out of obligation will not have the impact of those who minister with devotion and love.

3. Discipleship (Matthew 28:19,20)

- Becoming and making disciples is not optional.
- You need someone to whom you can look for help. You also need to have someone you are discipling. Every believer needs to have a Paul/Timothy type of relationship with another believer.

- Every children's worker can disciple children as well as others who minister to children.
- When you teach someone to minister effectively, your church's effectiveness will grow.
- Also, if God moves you to a new place of responsibility, there will be some one who is already trained to carry on your ministry.

CONCLUSION:

Touching the hearts of children is perhaps the most important work we will ever do. The rewards are eternal. With God's help, we can successfully fulfill the ministry to which He has called us.

—Dan Rector, Minneapolis, Minnesota

PLEASING FAITH

Hebrews 11:5,6; Genesis 5:19–24

INTRODUCTION:

Very little is recorded in the Bible about the life of Enoch. We don't know what he looked like, even where he lived. But what we learn is enough to give us an example of great faith.

MESSAGE:

1. Pleasing faith produces a trust.

"He that cometh to God must believe

that he is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6).

2. Pleasing faith produces a testimony.

"By faith Enoch...had this testimony, that he pleased God" (verse 5).

3. Pleasing faith produces a translation.

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him" (verse 5; see Genesis 5:19–24).

As faithful Christians, we have the promise of our soon coming "transfer" in the rapture of the Church (1 Thessalonians 4:14–18).

CONCLUSION:

Every person can have faith that is pleasing to God.

—Tom Drake, Montrose, Colorado

DOES GOD ANSWER PRAYER NOT PRAYED IN FAITH?

Acts 12:5–8, 11–17

INTRODUCTION:

This has to be one of the most amazing answers to prayer recorded in the New Testament. It was surely placed there to encourage Christians who are always "hoping against hope" instead of acting in faith.

MESSAGE:

1. Prevailing prayer

- The people put their case before

the Lord (verse 5). When a situation seems hopeless, when a cause is seemingly lost, we can always pray.

- Prevailing prayer will bring heaven down (verse 7).

2. Powerful deliverance

- The divine delay was not a denial.
- While the believers prayed, heaven's forces were working (verse 7,8).
- The deliverance revealed the unbelief of the believers (verses 14–16).

- It is still the hand of God that delivers today.

CONCLUSION:

Do you need to be delivered from a prison of sin, sickness, depression, or habit? Don't give up; keep praying, and soon deliverance will come—for God is on your side.

—James D. Wilkins
Sacramento, California



GOOD YOUNG ADULT CONNECTIONS

Two years ago my wife and I stepped out of our comfort zone to teach a class of young couples. This meant we would teach during our first hour on Sunday morning and would also need to partially delegate the administration of the children's program to others.

As we began developing relationships with these young couples, we realized we were also ministering to their children through our children's program. We began to attend social gatherings with the parents of the kids in our children's ministry. Our increased knowledge of these children's parents helped us better understand their children.

The parents in our class are also open to express ideas about ministry to children. They are providing information in relaxed settings that has a positive influence on our approach to children's ministry. Although not an original motive to start teaching these adults, many of the parents are now helpers in our children's program.

The most powerful aspect of this approach is the idea-sharing and support that flows through the growing relationships we are having with these parents.

—Jay Hostetler, San Diego, California

EARLY CHILDHOOD EMPHASIS DAY

If children are important at your church, show it. Plan an Early Childhood Emphasis Day. Schedule it several months ahead so the day can go as smoothly as possible. Several items can be included to show just how important children are.

1. Serve complimentary animal crackers and juice at locations around the church.
2. One or 2 weeks before the event have children color pictures. Display the pictures throughout the church on this special day.
3. Display photographs of the children. (Take the photographs on several

Sundays prior to the event day to include as many children as possible.)

4. Decorate the church with balloons.
5. Decorate the platform to appeal to children. Consider taking furniture and toys from their classrooms and putting them on the platform. This will make children feel more at ease.
6. Plan for each department to have a part in the service. Infants can ring bells, do small motions, or listen to a finger action play. Toddlers can sing songs with motions, play games, or do finger rhymes. If your department includes 4- and 5-year-olds, have them sing songs or quote Bible verses.
7. Honor nursery workers and volunteers with small gifts such as flowers, gift certificates, or bath and beauty items.
8. Honor the parents of the babies by having them stand as you call out the name of their child. If your budget allows, honor parents with a gift acknowledging their willingness to raise their children in church. (Be prepared for visitors that day. Write down their names before you start the event and have a few extra gifts available.) Gifts for the parents could be a simple rose, an imprinted item, or a card.

9. Getting babies who do not walk onto the platform can be challenging. Consider rolling them in strollers pushed by teen volunteers. If the church owns cribs on wheels, two or three babies could be rolled in each crib. Or parents could carry their own child.

10. Communicate with your pastor the exact details of your program and how much time you will need. Communicate with parents that their child will be taking part in this special service. To build excitement for this day, communicate with the church through its newsletter, bulletin, or by handouts.

—Tonya Langston, Arlington, Texas

COLLEGE STUDENTS

Each week one of our secretaries sends audiocassette copies of the Sunday services to our college students who are away from home. These students have repeatedly stated how this helps them stay connected to the church and makes them feel a part of the church family. We also encourage our people to write letters and send cards to our college students. Each week in our church bulletin we focus on one student by listing his or her name and address. Members of the congregation use this as an opportunity to send goodies and gifts.

At such a pivotal time in the lives of our young adults, this ministry shows how much we and Christ care for them.

—John R. Baschieri, Lehigh, Florida

GET—GRANDPARENTS ENROLLING TOTS

Many emphases are made on enrolling people in Sunday school, but most of these emphases are focused on enrolling youth and adults. Few ideas are aimed at enrolling small children. GET provides this opportunity.

In classes or departments where there are grandparents, give them a 3- by 5-inch card. Ask them to list all of their grandchildren who live in the community and are not attending Sunday school anywhere. Have them include each child's address, phone number, age, and other pertinent information. These children can be enrolled with a telephone call, postcards, or a prospect card filled out and given to the proper age-group department.

—Adapted from 100 Great Growth Ideas by Neil Jackson, Jr., ©1990, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee.

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HONEY CREEK KIDS

Honey Creek Kids is an innovative children's ministry based on a six-class



rotation system with an emphasis on learning God's Word six different ways. This ministry is designed to continue through the Sunday school and church hours on Sunday morning.

When each child arrives at Honey Creek, everything (decorations, teachers, and materials) is ready. The child checks into a well-staffed check-in desk. There the child receives a nametag, quotes his or her memory verse, and receives incentive cards. The incentive cards are Bible card-based contests that enable children to win prizes for cards collected. Up to four cards can be awarded for knowing the memory verse, bringing a visitor, bringing a Bible, and for attendance. Visitors check in at our visitor station where they are treated royally and escorted to their class.

Children enter a six-class rotation system set up according to grade. Each class is 26 minutes long with a 4-minute period for changing classes. The six classes are: Bible story, craft, video, prayer, Bible Nintendo®, and music. This schedule is designed to allow parents to drop off or pick up their kids at any time during the morning.

The class philosophies are:

Bible Story—Twenty-six minutes of creative Bible teaching. We use skits and props. A Bible story coordinator meets monthly with the teachers and reviews lesson plans and creative teaching methods.

Craft—We provide a craft that relates to the Bible story. The craft coordinator meets with the teachers monthly to assign crafts and lesson plans.

Video—The videos used relate to the Bible lesson for the day. Some examples are Bible stories, cartoons, or music videos.

Prayer—Using the Bible lesson for the day as a theme, we use this time for prayer requests and praying for each other. We have an altar and encourage

kids to lay hands on and pray for each other. We make a prayer list from the requests that day and send it home with each child.

Nintendo®—We use regular Nintendos® and TVs for this class. There are a variety of Christian games that can be played on the Nintendo® including Bible Buffet. Bible Buffet enables the child to base his or her game on the Bible lesson for the day.

Music—Kids learn to worship and praise the Lord.

These six classes proved a complete Bible learning experience and ministry opportunity that works well with discipling each person.

—Tommy Sparger, Springfield, Missouri

OUTREACH IN THE PARK

For the last several years we have conducted an outreach to some of our elementary schools. The concept is simple: Create a ministry opportunity with kids near a school.

In California, many elementary schools have city parks next door. We wrote to our city Parks and Recreation Department and obtained a permit to conduct our meetings.

We then informed the principal of the school in the area we were going to be conducting our club. On the next three Tuesdays we set up our puppet stage, prepared some games, a story, and brought a lot of snacks. After school, adults dressed in animal costumes and clown suits invited children from the school to our 45-minute club program. Since our goal was evangelism, we invited kids without a church home to a special event at our church.

This is a great ministry to the community. Many parents visit the clubs, and some have made commitments to Christ along with their kids.

—Jay Hostetler, San Diego, California

RESERVED PARKING FOR VISITORS

Many times church parking lots are filled, and the inconvenience of finding a vacancy is sometimes frustrating. This is especially true for visitors. But this true account shows how a church can minister to visitors.

A man, his wife, and their two children had been visiting a number of churches. One Sunday they came to First Church. When they arrived, the parking lot was crowded. But they were pleasantly surprised to find parking places reserved for visitors close to the main auditorium.

As a result, the family joined First Church that morning. The father stated, "Reserved parking for visitors does pay off." He encourages all churches to have an area designated for visitors.

—Adapted from *100 Great Growth*

Ideas by Neil Jackson, Jr., ©1990, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee. Used by permission.

MEMORIAL PLANTS

Memorials to loved ones are more meaningful during special days on the church calendar. Seasonal décor is also important on these special days. We met these two needs with a special promotion at church.

A few Sundays prior to Easter we take orders for lilies. The order form includes the price of the lilies and a place to write the donor's name and the name of the person he or she wants to honor. Church members fill out this form and attach it to an envelope with their money. On Easter Sunday, we have a specially tiered platform in the foyer filled with Easter lilies. We also have a special bulletin insert with the names of those being honored, as well as the names of the donors. For Christmas we do the same, except we use poinsettias.



Funds from the purchase of these plants cover part of the expenses for decoration. After the morning worship service, each donor takes a plant home.

—Doug Rose, Belleville, Illinois

PHASE 2

Many people in children's ministries are aware of the challenge of teaching fifth and sixth graders. Kids who were previously excited suddenly become restless. Their sense of humor begins to border on obnoxious and their attitude becomes one of indifference or disdain. These behaviors, combined with intensive peer pressure, often create havoc for well-meaning teachers and children's pastors.

How can we effectively minister to these kids? In searching for a new approach, we noticed they were searching for significance and recognition during their pre-teen years. Our children's ministry began to treat them as unique, rather than grouping them with the younger children. We created a group called Phase 2 just for them.

Phase 2 was structured differently from other children's ministry settings. Because this age group is strongly influenced by peers, we decided to make our group as visitor friendly as possible. This meant no workbooks or table activities that tend to isolate visitors. Instead, we conducted our meetings much like a youth group. We had upbeat worship with kids as worship leaders. Teaching times were centered on interactive games and small group discussions. We provided extra activities such as trips to water parks, roller skating, and nerd night.

We saw more visitors in Phase 2 than any other children's ministry. And through the years we have noticed that kids who went through Phase 2 went into youth group with a sense of unity

and purpose, which helped to make a great transition.

We also tried a new time. Our group was held on Wednesday night, but a Sunday evening or an alternative Sunday school class might work. Much of the curriculum written for middle school children can be tailored for this slightly younger age group. *Radiant Life* Young Teen curriculum is a good Bible-based curriculum that provides activities for young teens.

When searching for leaders, young couples or college-age students make great leaders. They have the stamina to keep up with the activities and energy needed for your group.

Phase 2 provides an excellent opportunity for kids to get involved in community service projects or learn more about ministries such as puppets, human videos, or drama. Once their energy is properly channeled, it is amazing to see what these kids can accomplish for Christ.

—Denise Calentine, Salem, Oregon

LITTLE TYKE FUN NIGHTS

Our children's ministries department has always had a strong focus on elementary children, but we realized our preschool children and their families needed a special time to meet their needs as well.

With this in mind, we developed "Little Tyke Fun Nights" for ages 2 through 5. Our first event was a summer barbecue with great food and loads of fun. Our event lasted 2 1/2 hours and featured pony rides, puppet shows, a clown who entertained with animal balloons, a Winnie-the-Pooh® moonwalk, and a meal. As a kick-off, this first fun night was free of charge.

The response was tremendous. Parents were extremely grateful to have a safe place to bring their young children. This event not only provided fun activities for

the children, but also much-needed fellowship for parents.

Little Tyke Fun Nights can be held quarterly or as often as you want. Other fun night ideas to try are:

1. Pajama Party. All the children wear pajamas. Include games, craft, snack, and puppets.

2. Veggie Tales® Theme Party. Show Veggie Tales® videos, have veggie snacks, and a veggie land fun house.

3. Road Rally. Preschoolers bring cardboard cutout "cars" and "drive" through cardboard towns complete with a gas station, post office, grocery store, church, McDonalds®.

4. Preschool Pizza Party. This can be held at your church with pizza and carnival-style games or held at a pizza restaurant that specializes in fun for children.

We encourage parents to attend the fun night with their child. An occasional Parents Night Out could also be offered if you have the staffing. Remember, preschoolers need more supervision than older children.

Most fun nights can be organized according to the church's budget and can be as low-cost or extravagant as you like. If cost is a factor, charge families \$1 or \$2 per child. This is still economical for families. Little Tyke Fun Nights benefit your church by blessing families and providing an outreach for friends and neighbors.

—Denise Calentine, Salem, Oregon

SEND US YOUR IDEAS

Enrichment will pay up to \$50 for each published account of a ministry idea. Send your ideas, along with a detailed description, to: Ministry Ideas That Work, *Enrichment* Journal, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802-1894.

E-mail: You may send your ministry ideas to: enrichment@ag.org



BEYOND THE CROSS

Every year thousands of people climb a mountain in the Italian Alps, passing the "stations of the cross" to stand at an outdoor crucifix. One tourist noticed a trail that led beyond the cross. He fought through the thicket and, to his surprise, came to another shrine, a shrine that symbolized the empty tomb. It was neglected; brush had grown up around it. Almost everyone had gone as far as the cross, but had stopped there.

Far too many have come to the cross and have known the despair and the heartbreak. Far too few have moved beyond the cross to find the real message of Easter—the message of the empty tomb.

—Adapted from *James S. Hewett, ed.*,
Illustrations Unlimited © 1988,
Tyndale House Publishers.

BLESSED IS THE CHILD

Blessed is the child who has someone who believes in him, to whom he can carry his problems unafraid.

Blessed is the child who is allowed to pursue his curiosity into every worthwhile field of information.

Blessed is the child who has someone who understands that childhood's griefs are real and calls for understanding and sympathy.

Blessed is the child who has about him those who realize his need of Christ as Savior and will lead him patiently and prayerfully to the place of acceptance.

Blessed is the child whose love of the true, the beautiful, and the good has been nourished through the years.

Blessed is the child whose innate imagination has been turned into channels of creative effort.

Blessed is the child whose efforts to achieve have found encouragement and kindly commendation.

Blessed is the child who has learned freedom from selfishness through responsibility and cooperation with others.

—Adapted from *Parents Magazine*.
Reprinted from *The Speaker's*
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RAISING CHILDREN, NOT FLOWERS

A devoted father was teaching his young son how to operate a gasoline-powered lawn mower. The safety-conscious dad walked by his son's side, reiterating procedures and precautions. Suddenly, the mother called to her husband from the back door. He stopped, turned, and answered her. Meanwhile, the mower got away from the boy, cutting a 2-foot-wide swath through a beautiful flower bed. As the father was chewing out his son, the mother called to her husband, "Remember, John, we are raising children, not flowers."

—Adapted from *500 Illustrations*,
Stories From Life for
Preaching and Teaching,
by *G. Curtis Jones and Paul H. Jones*,
© 1998 *Abingdon Press*.

TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION

Max Jukes lived in New York. He did not believe in Christ or Christian training. He refused to take his children to church, even when they asked to go. He has had 1,026 descendants—300 were sent to prison for an average term of 13 years; 190 were prostitutes; 680 were alcoholics. His family, thus far, has cost the state in excess of \$420,000. They made no contribution to society.

Jonathan Edwards lived in the same state, at the same time as Jukes. He loved the Lord and served the Lord to

the best of his ability. He made sure his children were in church every Sunday. He has had 929 descendants. Of these, 430 were ministers; 86 became university professors; 13 became university presidents; 75 authored good books; 7 were elected to the United States Congress; and 1 was vice president of his nation. His family never cost the state 1 cent but has contributed immeasurably to the lives of many in this land.

—Adapted from *James S. Hewett, ed.*,
Illustrations Unlimited © 1988,
Tyndale House Publishers.

TO MY GROWN-UP SON

My hands were busy through the day;
I didn't have much time to play
The little games you asked me to—
I didn't have much time for you.
I'd wash your clothes, I'd sew and cook;
But when you'd bring your picture book
And ask me please to share your fun,
I'd say: "A little later, son."

I'd tuck you in all safe at night,
And hear your prayers, turn out the light,
Then tiptoe softly to the door....
I wish I'd stayed a minute more.

For life is short, the years rush past....
A little boy grows up so fast.
No longer is he at your side,
His precious secrets to confide.
The picture books are put away;
There are no longer games to play.
No good-night kiss, no prayers to hear—
That all belongs to yesteryear.

My hands, once busy, now are still.
The days are long and hard to fill.
I wish I could go back and do
The little things you asked me to.

—From *Stories for the Heart*,
by *Alice Gray*
© 1996, *Vision House*.
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HEALED BY GOD'S POWER

Joseph Paul Wannemacher was born to a devout Catholic family in Hungary on April 29, 1895. His mother died of tuberculosis when he was 3 years old. Four of the children inherited this sickness from their mother. By the time Joseph was 5, he was also afflicted with the incurable disease.

In 1909, Joseph urged his family to immigrate to the United States where he planned to support them by working as a mechanic. The family took his advice and settled at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where Joseph found work as a mechanic and toolmaker. Shortly afterward his foot became swollen with consumption, and he was unable to work as a mechanic. Doctors wanted to amputate his foot, but Joseph decided to trust God for whatever might come.

For a time, he turned to Christian Science seeking a cure for his condition, but this did not work. One night as Joseph was praying, he saw a vision of Jesus with His hands outstretched. Jesus said, "Fear not." Later Joseph had another vision of Jesus carrying the cross up Golgotha hill. Blazing words appeared which read, "Whosoever believes in me shall not perish but have everlasting life."

Because of these two visions, Joseph became persuaded that he should live by the teachings of the Bible, so he began diligently searching the Scriptures. In the meantime, he had turned to music for a livelihood. He began playing the violin in various restaurants and music halls and eventually became an orchestra director in a concert theater.

One morning in May 1917, a neighbor told Joseph's stepmother of a church in Milwaukee that believed in divine healing. It was a German-speaking Pentecostal mission pastored by Hugo

Ulrich. That afternoon Joseph visited the church and readily accepted the message. As the altar call was given, he went forward for salvation and healing.

While kneeling at the altar, the power of God fell on him and he saw a vision of two beautiful white hands touching his body from head to toe. He was instantly healed of the disease that had plagued him for 17 years.

A few weeks later, after hearing a sermon about the baptism in the Holy Spirit, Joseph went to his music studio to pray. He cried out, "Lord, give me what You gave Peter on the Day of Pentecost." The Spirit of God came upon him in a downpour, and he began to speak in tongues as the Spirit gave utterance. Saved and delivered from his bondage and fear of death, and now filled with the Spirit, Joseph began playing the violin and giving his testimony everywhere he went.

—Adapted from *"Two Pioneers of Pentecost in Milwaukee"* by Glenn Gohr, Assemblies of God Heritage, Vol.1, Spring 1989. Used by permission.

WHEN I GET TO HEAVEN

When I get to heaven I shall see three wonders. The first wonder will be to see many people there whom I did not expect to see; the second wonder will be to miss many people whom I did expect to see; and the third and greatest wonder of all will be to find myself there.

—John Newton. Reprinted from My Sermon Notes by C.H. Spurgeon, Fleming H. Revell.

CAN I BE A CHRISTIAN WITHOUT JOINING THE CHURCH?

In the Wesleyan Christian Advocate, the question was asked, "Can I be a

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4. If the publication has suspended publication as a general or irregular publication, this Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation must be published. It must be printed in any issue in October of the publication or not published during October, the last issue printed and dated.
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PS Form 3526, September 1998 (Rev. 9/98)



Christian without joining the church?" The answer was, "Yes, it is possible. It is something like: being a student who will not go to school; a soldier who will not join an army; a citizen who does not pay taxes or vote; a salesman with no customers; an explorer with no base camp; a seaman on a ship without a crew; a businessman on a deserted island; an author without readers; a tuba player without an orchestra; a parent without a family; a football player without a team; a politician who is a hermit; a scientist who does not share his findings; a bee without a hive." May God help us as believers to model the biblical lifestyle so the world may see Jesus in us.

*—Reprinted from Tidings,
the official newsletter of the West
Texas District Council, June 1998.*

MOTHERS

Sylvia Porter, a noted financial analyst, states that although their labor is not counted in the gross national product, the 25 million full-time homemakers contribute billions to the economy each year. Porter further states that only the wealthiest families could pay for the services a mother provides for her family's economic well-being. By assigning an hourly fee for nursemaid, housekeeper, cook, dishwasher, laundress, food buyer, chauffeur, gardener, maintenance person, seamstress, dietitian, and practical nurse, Porter found that the labor performed by a mother at home would cost a family \$23,580 in Greensboro, S.C.; \$26,962 in Los Angeles; and \$28,735 in Chicago.

*—Submitted by Douglas Rose,
Belleville, Illinois. Adapted from
Focus on the Family Newsletter,
January 1992 Focus on the Family,
Colorado Springs, Colorado.*

PENTECOSTAL REVIVAL

It was my privilege to be present in 1921 when a religious awakening reminiscent of the earliest days of Pentecost swept over a rural community about 30 miles northeast of Bismarck, North Dakota.

This mighty Holy Ghost revival began in a men's prayer meeting on a Saturday night in January 1921, when 12 men were gloriously filled with the Spirit according to Acts 2:4. Some said they were sure the schoolhouse where the meeting was held was shaken as by an earthquake. All felt lifted in the Spirit into the very presence of God.

Mrs. Andrew Trygg was keenly disappointed that she was not allowed to attend that Sunday night prayer meeting with her husband. She had never witnessed anyone being filled with the Spirit, but her heart was hungry. As she retired for the night, she humbly asked the Lord to fill her with the Spirit. She went to sleep; but about the time her husband was being filled with the Holy Spirit in the men's prayer meeting, she awakened and she was also filled, speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gave utterance.

After the initial outpouring, the revival fires grew to such great proportions that the boards of two rural schools decided to dismiss school every day at noon so teachers and pupils could attend afternoon tarrying meetings in private homes.

For weeks these daily meetings drew such crowds that there was scarcely room for people to kneel. Members of some of the leading families in that area were swept into this glorious experience of the fullness of the Spirit.

*—Adapted from "A Revival That
Closed the Country Schools" by Fred G.
Frank, Assemblies of God Heritage,
Vol.1, Spring 1988. Used by permission.*

TO QUOTE—

Children are a great comfort in your old age—and they help you reach it faster too.

—Lionel M. Kauffman

Children are the only earthly possessions we can take with us to heaven.

—Robert C. Savage

Most things have an escape clause—but children are forever.

—Lewis Grizzard

The most influential of all educational factors is the conversation in the child's home.

—William Temple

The great Easter truth is not that we are to live newly after death—that is not the great thing—but that we are to be new here and now by the power of the Resurrection; not so much that we are to live forever, as that we are to, and may, live nobly now because we are to live forever.

—Phillips Brooks

Green the grass. Ripe the bud. Yellow the flower. Blue the sky. Beautiful the butterfly. Risen the Lord!

—Anonymous

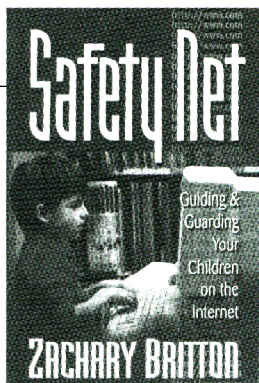
The heavy, ponderous stone that sealed Jesus in the confines of that rock-walled tomb was but a pebble compared to the Rock of Ages inside.

—Anonymous

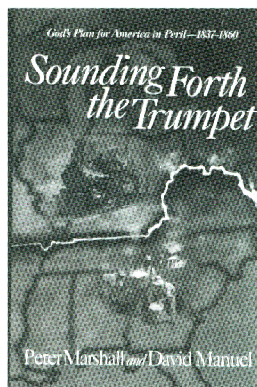
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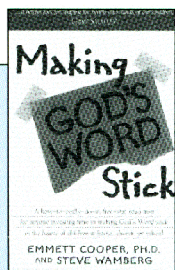
E-mail: You may send your illustrations to: enrichment@ag.org



Zachary Britton (Harvest House, 180 pp., paperback, \$8.99)



Peter Marshall and David Manuel (Fleming H. Revell, 559 pp., hardback, \$19.99)



Making God's Word Stick

Emmett Cooper, Ph.D., and Steve Warnberg (Thomas Nelson, 146 pp., paperback, \$9.99)

The authors have a passion for teaching God's Word to children. They strive not to merely expose their students to biblical information, but to present biblical truth in a way that makes it stick

to the heart of each child. Their hearts-on approach is a shift from a teacher-centered instructional style to a student-friendly opportunity to communicate the Word.

The authors' inventive and life-changing ideas are practical, easy-to-use, and encouraging. This book is for any teacher, parent, pastor, or caregiver who is looking for concrete ways to reach children with the gospel.

With Deuteronomy 6 as their battle cry, the authors press on with a zealot's message: "Make the most of the sacred second you have with the children God has entrusted to your care."

—Reviewed by Sandy Friesen, managing editor,
Christian School curriculum, Springfield, Missouri.

Safety Net: Guiding and Guarding Your Children on the Internet

Zachary Britton (Harvest House, 180 pp., paperback, \$8.99)

Safety Net is a must-read for every parent and children's worker who wants to be well-informed about the threats to children and teens that exist on the Internet. Since a parent's active intervention is essential for a child's well-being, this book, authored by the president of KidShield.com, explains why and how.

For parents who feel ill-equipped for this task, Britton provides an introduction to the Internet and a glossary of terms. He alerts parents to the easy and accidental accessibility of pornography on the net and how pedophile's deceptively contact children.

Besides explaining the dangers, the author clearly covers strategies to provide protection for one's family through filterware and family computer-use rules. The most popular filterware are thoroughly compared for effectiveness. Installation helps for the main two are also included.

A practical list of suggested rules concerning Internet use is given, as well as explanations concerning the necessity of each. In addition, important information on filtered search engines and an index and evaluation of family-friendly sites is also provided.

Safety Net is a crucial tool that provides parents and children's workers with sound information to properly deal with the current issues faced through the escalating use of the Internet by children.

—Reviewed by Gary R. and Alisa J. Linn,
Children's Ministry Today, Jacksonville, Florida.

Sounding Forth the Trumpet; God's Plan for America in Peril—1837-1860

Peter Marshall and David Manuel (Fleming H. Revell, 559 pp., hardback, \$19.99)

Good news for pastors: There is a U.S. history series that gives unprecedented attention to the significance of Christianity—a significance that is ignored in much of today's educational processes.

The first two volumes (*The Light and the Glory* and *From Sea to Shining Sea*) address God's plan for America. In *Sounding Forth the Trumpet*, we find that plan in peril, primarily because of slavery. The topic of slavery is relevant in a day when the Supreme Court has ruled that an unborn child, like the slaves, has no rights. Christians are also recognizing the need for racial reconciliation.

Authors Marshall and Manuel show us a nation where slave traffic was still prospering, even though politicians had agreed that slavery would be allowed to die a slow death by attrition. The overwhelming majority of slaveholders were professing Christians. They justified slavery by twisting Scripture to meet their own ends.

The chapters build one upon another in novel-like fashion and lead the reader to the brink of the Civil War. The information about John Quincy Adams is valuable and not readily available elsewhere. At 69, this unsung Christian hero sacrificed his latter years to lead the battle against slavery. Included are accounts of revivals and how one revival helped prepare the nation for the Civil War that would end slavery.

The three books in this series tell the untold

story of the Christian faith in our nation. Pastors, educators, students in Christian schools, and home schoolers need to read them. All the people of your church would benefit.

—Reviewed by Ken Horn, managing editor, Pentecostal Evangel, Springfield, Missouri.

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry Church

Dean Merrill (Zondervan, 183 pp., paperback, \$12.99)

Dean Merrill tackles one of the great challenges facing the church—how to be the church in a deteriorating culture. This powerfully provoking book challenges the traditional way that the church has endeavored to change our society.

The book begins by a scriptural review of the Old Testament and the way the people of God dealt with the challenges of an anti-God culture. The author also contrasts the New Testament church's relationship to the world of its day with the approaches that are often used by the church of the 20th century. Merrill states, "The church is not to set a standard for our society, but an example."

The author's approach to how the Christian should live and function in relationship to the world is challenging. This book provides great insight for pastors desiring to make a difference in their city or state.

The final chapter of the book brings the issues discussed into perspective and shares principles of how to truly change a culture. Also included is a to-do list for Christian followers that gives direction for believers who want to make an impact on their world.

Dean Merrill has succinctly articulated a better way to influence our culture than the traditional ways the church has attempted in the past. The book is a must-read for all pastors as well as laity.

—Reviewed by Ron McManus, Equip Ministries, Atlanta, Georgia.

The Five Love Languages of Children

Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell, M.D.,

(Northfield Publishing, 224 pp., paperback, \$11.99)

Children are different—let me count the ways: Seven intelligences; four learning styles; three temperaments—or is it four? And now, thanks to Gary Chapman and Ross Campbell, five languages of love.

Does understanding these differences really matter to ministry? Yes. God is a personal God who deals with each of us as individuals. If we want to model God's personal interest in each child, we need to learn what different children need.

Chapman and Campbell combined their areas of expertise—how love works and how children develop—to help parents and those who lead them understand five ways to communicate love to children—love languages.

Physical touch

Words of affirmation

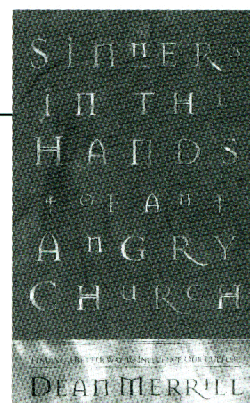
Quality time

Gifts

Acts of service

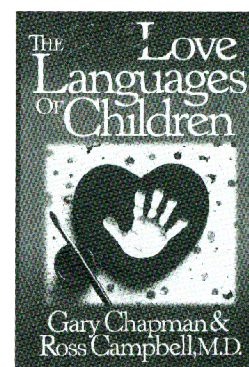
Even though every child can receive love in all these ways, "most children have a primary love language that speaks to them more loudly than the others."

To avoid communication breakdowns—giving gifts to a child who really needs quality

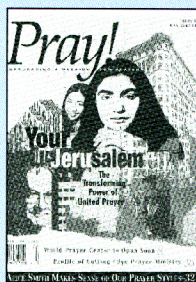


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Pray! Magazine

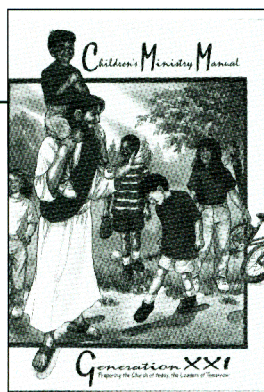
The Navigators (NavPress, 39 pp., \$14.97 per year USA) NavPress launched *Pray!* magazine on May 1, 1998. While funded and published by The Navigators, *Pray!* is also published in cooperation with America's National Prayer Committee, Denominational Prayer Leaders Network, Mission America, and National Association of Evangelicals. Each of these organizations has placed members on *Pray!*'s editorial advisory board.

Articles encourage and challenge readers to pray more diligently and effectively. Writers motivate believers to step out of their comfort zones in regard to prayer and to be informed of the scope of the prayer movement. The magazine delivers a balanced approach to prayer that does not represent the view of one theological group.

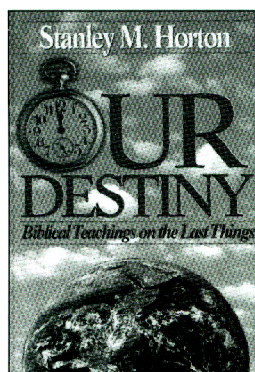
With a present circulation over 28,000, *Pray!* targets three groups: 1) intercessors; 2) believers who know their prayer lives aren't what they should be and want to do something about it; and 3) prayer mobilizers—leaders from Christian organizations, pastors, prayer groups—all those who encourage others to pray more fervently.

Created specifically for people who are serious about prayer, *Pray!* stirs the coals of the prayer life and keeps them burning brightly.

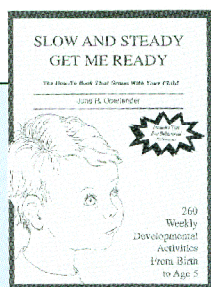
—Reviewed by Sandra G. Clopine, former coordinator, National Prayer Center, Springfield, Missouri.



Janet Arancibia (*Latin America/Caribbean Resource Development Ministries*, 200 pp., paperback, \$24.95)



Stanley M. Horton (*Logion Press*, 304 pp., hardback, \$19.95)



Slow and Steady Get Me Ready: The How-To Book That Grows With Your Child

June R. Oberlander (*Bio-Alpha, Inc.*, 324 pp., paperback, \$17.95)

God gave parents the primary responsibility for nurturing their children. Today's parents need churches to partner with them in this responsibility. Resources like this book can help.

The birth of a grandchild motivated June Oberlander to draw on 19 years of early childhood teaching experience to create over 250 developmental activities parents and children can do week-by-week during the first 5 years of life. While the book does not teach Bible ideas, parents can connect scriptural principles with the daily routines used in the book. Churches can add this book to parenting libraries. Home schools, preschools, and Sunday school teachers for ages birth through 5 years will find this book a rich resource for affordable, developmentally accurate teaching activities.

—Reviewed by Sharon Ellard, early childhood consultant, Springfield, Missouri.

time—the authors describe how to discover a child's primary love language and how to integrate love languages into loving discipline, fulfilling learning, and controlling anger.

The action plan at the end helps adapt the book for parenting classes or small groups. Some churches use this book in their children's ministries training.

—Reviewed by Sharon Ellard, early childhood consultant, Springfield, Missouri.

Generation XXI—Children's Ministries Manual

Janet Arancibia (*Latin America/Caribbean Resource Development Ministries*, 200 pp., \$24.95)

This training manual has something for children's pastors, Christian education directors, or lay leaders who are involved in discipling workers in the local church. The manual is laid out in user-friendly blocks that are easy to understand. In the philosophy block are charts and descriptions that explain child and adult development.

Every church needs a philosophy of ministry that defines its Christian education ministry. The information in this manual can help a church develop a mission statement on mentoring the children, youth, and adults in

their church. Also, the job descriptions and agreement of commitment are super tools for recruiting and challenging new workers.

"Effective Communication With Children" is a valuable chapter. Along with the chapter "Children Respond to Positive Feedback," the writers give several examples of how to speak to children. The chapter on "Leading Children to Christ" provides a biblical and practical overview of this process. The various patterns and ideas mentioned are good ways to give children a visual expression of what they are being taught.

I strongly recommend this manual to every Christian leader who works with children and mentors workers in teaching children. It is a fantastic tool.

—Reviewed by Jim Gerhold, children's pastor, The Church of Glad Tidings, Austin, Texas.

Our Destiny: Biblical Teaching on the Last Things

Stanley M. Horton (*Logion Press*, 304 pp., hardback, \$19.95)

Rather than finding significance in the most recent news reports coming from Israel, *Our Destiny* presents reliable biblical treatment of such topics as death and the intermediate state, the Rapture, the Tribulation, the Millennial Kingdom (including problems with liberal, dispensational, and amillennial views), final judgment, and the ultimate end of the wicked and the righteous. Popular unbiblical views are refuted.

Study questions at the end of each chapter provide good discussion starters. A glossary of 103 entries presents definitions for those who do not have a basic understanding of key eschatological terms and concepts. Scripture and subject indexes also make the book a valuable study guide.

An eternal destiny awaits each of us. For the wicked, that destiny is sobering. Those who know Christ as personal Savior have a glorious destiny. Reading *Our Destiny* will

refresh those whose focus on God's design for their future may have waned.

As a Logion Press book, this volume will find wide use in eschatology courses in Pentecostal Bible colleges. Pastors and lay students of Scripture will also find valuable teaching in the volume.

—Reviewed by Zenas J. Bicket, Ph.D.,
president, Berean University of the
Assemblies of God and chairman of the
Doctrinal Purity Commission,
Springfield, Missouri.

Leading the Small Church

Doran McCarty, (Broadman and Holman, 176 pp., paperback, \$7.99)

Small churches have special gifts. They comprise over one half of the quarter million Protestant churches. Smaller churches are not down-sized large churches, but as McCarty notes, they are a central force in touching the root fabric of our culture. Simply put, small churches have a vital role in the Kingdom.

McCarty gives a clear portrait of the various dynamics of the small church: its theology, what it means to be a small church, pastoral leadership in a small church, and how to handle conflict in the small church. He illustrates how small churches have been instrumental in raising outstanding leaders.

Pastors desiring insight to secrets of effective ministry will expand their vision through this work.

—Reviewed by Milton E. Dykes, Home
Missions director, Peninsular Florida
District, Lakeland, Florida.

It Takes a Church Within a Village

H.B. London and Neil B. Wiseman (Thomas Nelson, 237 pp., hardback, \$14.99)

In response to Hillary Clinton's book *It Takes a Village*, authors H.B. London and Neil B. Wiseman issue a clarion call to churches with their book, *It Takes a Church Within a Village*.

The authors contend that the church should lead the reformation of nurturing children, even when critics cry, "Let the church mind its own business."

To this the authors reply, "Children are our main business."

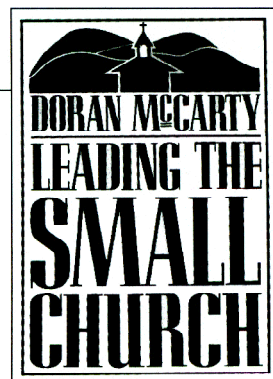
It Takes a Church further outlines the hostile world children face today divorce, gangs, and poor education. Today's children also face physical abuse, violence, television addiction, school problems, and even churches that believe "Caring for children requires too much time, energy, and sacrifice."

The authors cite the problems churches have in recruiting children's workers and respond, "You can't live a careless spiritual life and be a model of Christ for children... You can't think only of yourself and follow Christ's command to spiritually and emotionally care for children. You can't be guaranteed we will have a church tomorrow if you fail to minister to children today."

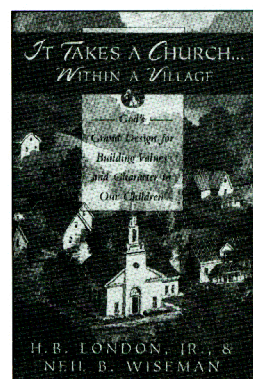
The authors call for Christian adults who will have a spiritual kinship with children, be authentic Christians, give children a high priority, allow them to be children, help lower society's antagonism against faith, be loving Sunday school teachers, and speak up for reforms. The book gives advice for making churches child sensitive, and counseling advice for making families strong. The last chapter suggests 39 ways a church can improve its impact on children.

The book is must reading for every pastor and children's worker. Layworkers and ministers alike will receive inspiration, renewed vision, and a sense of urgency from London and Wiseman's book.

Reviewed by Darla Knoth,
children's projects editor, Radiant Life
curriculum, Springfield, Missouri.



Doran McCarty,
(Broadman and Holman,
176 pp., paperback,
\$7.99)



H. B. London and Neil
B. Wiseman (Thomas
Nelson, 237 pp., hard-
back, \$14.99)

A SERVICE

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NEWS & RESOURCES

NATIONAL MISSIONETTES WEEK

"Changing the World One Girl at a Time" is the theme for National Missionettes Week, May 9–15, 1999. The theme, based on Jeremiah 29:11, emphasizes that God has a plan for every girl's life.

During the week, activities and accomplishments of local Missionettes clubs will be featured in events such as banquets, teas, luncheons, awards presentations, and various Missionettes celebrations, including graduate ceremonies.

Club Connection, the exciting magazine for girls and sponsors, also features creative ideas and helps for planning and organizing a memorable National Missionettes Week.

According to Kerry Clarensau, Missionettes coordinator, 172,000 girls—ages 3 through high school—are involved in about 22,000 Missionettes clubs.

The national Missionettes office mails the annual Missionettes theme packet to every church that reported an active Missionettes program on the 1997 Annual Church Ministries Report. The packet includes ideas for celebrating National Missionettes Week and information on theme-related products available from the Gospel Publishing House.

National Missionettes Week offerings from local clubs and churches enable the national Missionettes office to provide excellent helps for the local church.

NEW MISSIONETTES CURRICULUM AVAILABLE

The Missionettes program has been extensively revised and updated, according to Kerry Clarensau, Missionettes coordinator. The new curriculum and products were introduced at the first national Women's Ministries Leadership Seminar held August 3–5, 1998, in Springfield, Mo. Some 800 district and sectional Women's Ministries and Missionettes leaders attended the event.

The new Missionettes program better equips churches to evangelize and disciple girls. Changes include grade-level adjustments, full-color curriculum, user-friendly sponsors guides, new music and uniforms, and much more. New club levels in the revised program include: Rainbows, for girls and boys ages 3 and 4; Daisies, for kindergarten girls; Prims, for girls in grades 1 and 2; Stars, for girls in grades 3, 4, and 5; Friends, for girls in grades 6, 7, and 8; and Girls Only, for girls in grades 9 through 12.

Some 400 district and sectional Missionettes leaders participated in the first leadership training course covering the new curriculum and format at the August seminar. Workshops for each club level demonstrated the quality and flexibility of the new curriculum. "Through Missionettes, we can reach girls and guide them to become godly women," Clarensau said. "Using these fun and exciting new Missionettes materials, we can help girls discover how to apply God's Word to every area of their lives."

All curriculum and supporting products are now available from the Gospel Publishing House.

AG FOUNDATION CHURCH STEWARDSHIP SERVICES

"The results were incredible!" That statement was sent to the Church Stewardship Services office after a capital stewardship campaign. The pastor also wrote, "The commitment totaled over \$6.4 million—surpassing our 'miracle goal' by \$1 million. Thanks for the remarkable campaign; we can move forward immediately."

Church Stewardship Services, a division of the Assemblies of God Foundation, offers Capital Stewardship Campaigns for churches anticipating capital fund needs to accommodate growth. These needed funds are often

used to purchase property or for new construction.

The campaign plan offered by CSS is designed specifically for each local congregation and is based on the biblical foundation of stewardship found in 1 Chronicles 29.

The executive director of CSS is Larry Russell, a minister in the Assemblies of God for over 25 years. Larry has over 16 years of church consulting experience in over 65 churches. CSS has three additional committed and qualified consultants to serve your needs. They are: Roger Lane (Minn.), Harold Davis (Southern Calif.), and Mike Wynn (Fla.).

For a personal interview with a CSS consultant, a brochure, or more information, call the CSS office at 1-800-962-7499.

The results could be incredible.

HILLCREST AND HIGHLANDS: RESOURCES FOR YOUR CHURCH

Is there an unmarried pregnant young woman in your congregation or neighborhood looking for help? Refer her to Highlands Child Placement Services and Maternity Home. The toll-free pregnancy hotline number is 1-800-235-0652. Send E-mail inquiries to: Highlands@ag.org.

Do you know a child who needs a temporary or permanent home? Contact Hillcrest at 1-501-262-1660 or E-mail: Hillcrest@ag.org

A new colorful 8-page brochure outlining the ministries and programs of these homes is now available through the Benevolences Department. A good day to distribute the brochure and invite your congregation to support these important ministries is on Child Care Day, March 21, 1999.

To receive free brochures for your church or church group, check rsc#1 and indicate quantity.

APRIL IS DISASTER RELIEF MONTH

El Niño may be history, but other forms of severe weather are still with us. We must continually be ready to offer financial assistance to our churches that are hit by natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, or floods.

April is the start of tornado season and is also Disaster Relief month. Churches can contribute to the Disaster Relief Program by receiving an offering during April or by including the ministry in their monthly World Ministries Giving.

Free Disaster Relief brochures are available by checking rsc#2 and indicating quantity.

AMA DAY IS MAY 30

For 60 years Memorial Sunday has been recognized as Aged Ministers Assistance Day. On that Sunday pastors receive an offering for AMA in memory of ministers who are now with the Lord, and to help needy retired preachers who are still with us. Some 500 retired or disabled ministers and their spouses are currently on the AMA rolls.

Free AMA Memorial Sunday bulletin inserts are available for your congregation. Check rsc#3 and indicate quantity.

ON-LINE COURSES BENEFIT BEREAN STUDENTS

Berean University began offering a few courses over the Internet in 1996. Now, 22 of Berean's ministerial courses are available on-line. For many adults, this is a practical way to complete their study programs while they work full-time.

Berean's experience with this new delivery system for education shows a remarkably high completion rate of 96 percent. Students rarely drop out of Internet courses because the weekly on-line sessions provide motivation. While these Internet students do not go to a

physical classroom, they still have the benefit of live interaction with their instructor and classmates through their computers. Students have also appreciated the on-line testing procedures because their scores are available immediately.

Clifford Cottrell, a youth pastor in Tawas, Mich., took *Life of Christ* on-line with Berean in 1998. He wrote, "The most important thing about the class is getting to interact with other people who might challenge you to look at the subject a little differently. It has challenged me to search the Scriptures more deeply than I would have on my own."

A current schedule of Berean University's on-line courses is available at Berean's web site: www.berean.edu/vstudy.

BEREAN PRODUCES TEACHING GUIDES FOR ITS STUDY CENTERS

Not all distance-education students who enroll in Berean University study alone. Many of them complete Berean courses in traditional classroom settings, usually in a church facility. These student groups are called Berean Study Centers, and there are more than 500 of these centers located throughout the country. This study option provides the discipline, interaction, and motivation of traditional education. In fact, some students prefer classroom learning to solo studying.

Each study center selects a qualified facilitator to lead the class meetings. In the past, these leaders have guided students by using only course materials and their own creativity. Now Berean offers them assistance in the form of Instructional Facilitator's Manuals (IFMs). These instructional guides, created especially for study centers, provide the instructor with additional teaching materials including lesson outlines, activity suggestions, and masters for handouts and transparencies. IFMs are now

available for these institute-level courses:

Acts

Introduction to Theology

Life of Christ

Ministering to Children

New Testament

Old Testament

Assemblies of God History and Polity

Biblical Theology of Prayer

Cults, World Religions, and the New

Age Movement

Genesis

How To Study the Bible

Marriage and Family

Sermon Preparation

Soul Winning

Psalms

How-to information for launching new study centers and/or ordering IFMs is available toll-free at 1-800-862-9533.

BEREAN PROVIDES SERVICES FOR DEAF STUDENTS

Berean University is increasing its efforts to serve deaf students through the assistance of the Deaf Culture Ministries of the Division of Home Missions. For more than a year, the school has had a text telephone/teletypewriter for communicating with people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech disabled. These students can call the school directly, bypassing a relay service. The student who dials the Berean number "talks" to a Berean staff member by typing his or her message on a telephone's keyboard. The Berean staff member types a reply on Berean's text teletypewriter.

Berean is also sending teaching videos to deaf students at no charge when they order specific courses. Deaf Culture Ministries representative Kevin Babin is coordinating the production of these videotapes. The videos for the New Testament Survey course are available now. These eight videos feature an instructor signing each lesson of the

NEWS & RESOURCES

course study guide. Videos for other courses are being developed.

Several deaf students have completed Berean's various programs and several are currently enrolled. Berean desires to inform the deaf community about its acquisition of the text telephone/teletypewriter, hoping this equipment will

benefit students who are hearing and speech impaired. Berean University's text telephone/teletypewriter number is 417-865-7167.

CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION NYSP WINNERS

The Christian Higher Education and Youth departments have announced the top three winners in the Assemblies of God 1998 J. Robert Ashcroft National Youth Scholarship Program.

Andrew Lundgren, from Livingston, Mont., took first place. He will use the \$2,500 scholarship to attend Evangel University in Springfield, Mo. Andrew graduated first in a class of 131 from Park High School. At Livingston A/G he is a children's church leader, a youth council member, and writes the youth newsletter. He tutors and volunteers for the Red Cross. "I believe that the well-rounded education provided by an A/G college will help me gain the experience and skills necessary to grow and succeed, not only in life, but in ministry," he said. Andrew is the son of Ed and Karlene Lundgren.

Second place, a \$1,500 scholarship, went to Natalie Tanner of Ellsinore, Mo. She will also use the scholarship to attend Evangel University. She was valedictorian of East Carter High School and received National Merit Commendation. Natalie teaches Rainbows and is part of the youth song team at Ellsinore A/G. She is also the founder of two community programs, Coats for Carter County and All-School Activity Day. "Building my career skills on a Christian foundation will help me focus on Christ in my job and minister to co workers," she said about attending Evangel. Natalie is the daughter of Phillip and Cynthia Tanner.

David Bush, of LaFayette, Tenn., won third place and received a \$1,000

scholarship. He plans to attend Evangel University. He graduated third in a class of 146 from Macon County High School. David was involved in several clubs and ran track and cross-country. He volunteers his time to Adopt-a-Highway, landscaping at the city park, and helping the local goodwill store. At First A/G, he ministers through drama, children's church, and Royal Rangers. "I plan to use [student ministry] opportunities to learn effective and appropriate methods of ministry to the many non-Christians I will encounter in my life," he said. David is the son of Ronald and Deborah Bush.

The J. Robert Ashcroft National Youth Scholarship Program is sponsored annually by the Christian Higher Education and Youth departments. Applications are available from district youth directors after November 3, and are accepted from January 1 to March 31 each year at the district youth director's office. High school seniors who attend an A/G church (or are dependents of A/G missionaries) and who plan to attend an endorsed A/G postsecondary school after graduation are eligible to apply. There are 17 endorsed A/G postsecondary schools.

A/G COLLEGES ANNOUNCE COMMENCEMENT DATES FOR 1999

The following Assemblies of God postsecondary schools have announced spring 1999 commencement dates:

American Indian College, Phoenix, Ariz.—April 30.

Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Mo.—June 4.

Berean University, Springfield, Mo.—not available at press time.

Bethany College, Scotts Valley, Calif.—May 8.

Black Hills Indian Bible College, Rapid City, S. Dak.—April 30.

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National Music Department
417-862-2781, ext. 4130

Central Bible College, Springfield, Mo.—April 29.

Evangel University, Springfield, Mo.—May 7.

Latin American Bible Institute, La Puente, Calif.—May 1.

Latin American Bible Institute, San Antonio, Tex.—April 30.

North Central University, Minneapolis, Minn.—May 7.

Northwest College, Kirkland, Wash.—May 8.

Southeastern College, Lakeland, Fla.—April 23.

Southern California College, Costa Mesa, Calif.—May 8.

Southwestern University, Waxahachie, Tex.—May 7.

Trinity Bible College, Ellendale, N. Dak.—April 30.

Valley Forge Christian College, Phoenixville, Pa.—May 7.

Western Bible Institute, Phoenix, Ariz.—May 3.

NEIGHBORHOOD MAPPING NOW POSSIBLE

The U.S. Decade of Harvest, through Harvest 2000, has networked with the Mapping Center for Evangelism in Lenexa, Kans., to provide mapping capabilities to local churches. By signing up with the Mapping Center for Evangelism, a local congregation will receive a custom CD containing demographic information and computer software necessary to prepare neighborhood maps, develop prayer lists, or coordinate evangelism strategies.

Harvest 2000 is a national thrust of the Assemblies of God working in cooperation with other evangelical groups to pray for every home in America and to share a meaningful presentation of the gospel with every person. Through MCE, a local church can develop prayer lists and maps by neighborhood, streets, or even blocks

to provide a systematic approach to prayer and evangelism efforts.

More information on Mapping Center for Evangelism resources can be obtained by calling the U.S. Decade of Harvest office at (417) 862-2781 or by contacting MCE directly at 888-627-7997 or E-mail: support1@map4Jesus.org.

BLIND TO THE BLIND

According to Paul Weingartner, librarian for the Whitney Library for the Blind, one of the biggest obstacles to the visually impaired in Assemblies of God churches is leadership simply doesn't "see" them.

"Right now, there are over 24,000 adults sitting in Assemblies of God churches in America who cannot read their Bibles, hymnals, Sunday school lessons, or any other literature because of visual impairment," Weingartner said, "And of those, 12,000 are legally* blind."

"People are legally blind if they have 20/200 or worse vision," Weingartner added, "People with 20/200 vision can navigate a familiar setting—such as a church—without people noticing their impairment. The telltale sign is reading. If they bring a Bible and never read it or hold a hymnal close, they are almost certain to be legally blind."

The numbers may seem surprisingly high, but as Weingartner explained, "Many people, especially older adults, simply don't want to say anything about having difficulty seeing—but they're being left out, and they don't have to be."

The situation can be difficult for churches to handle, but Weingartner has the answer. "Here at the Whitney Library for the Blind, we have free resources. We can help churches determine if they could benefit from these resources. Most churches will find they can."

For more information about free resources from Whitney Library and other helps for the blind and visually impaired, call (417) 862-2781, ext. 1240.

* Ten percent of all legally blind persons have no sight.

PENTECOSTAL EVANGEL

The *Pentecostal Evangel* continues to publish Frontline Reports—regular features highlighting workers and ministries that are proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. In addition, periodic revival updates feature churches that are experiencing renewal, and the News Digest provides timely information on the spiritual awakening coming to America. Pastors are using the *Pentecostal*



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Evangel to inspire and encourage their congregations to seek revival in their hearts and community.

LIGHT-FOR-THE-LOST TAKES THE GOSPEL TO MUSLIMS

There are more than 1 billion Muslims in the world today. The first printing of

The Bible for Muslim Readers is expected to go to press soon with the help of Light-for-the-Lost funds. Although the Bible has been available for some time from a Christian Arabic perspective, this will be the first available translation to take into account the Muslim worldview and use of language.

This exciting development started last year with a letter from Middle East/North Africa area director Doug Clark. His letter included an explanation of the need for this translation and a request for help from Light-for-the-Lost. At the 1998 LFTL convention in Colorado Springs, the need was presented to the group of councilmen and district leaders with a challenge to give. Within moments, \$29,000 was pledged for funding this Bible project. According to Clark, "Putting the Bible into the heart-language of Arabic-speaking Muslims will challenge and shape all Arabic Bible translation for a generation to come. And it will open the door of salvation to many devout Muslims the world over."

CONVENTION '99 IS ON THE WAY

The 46th annual Light-for-the-Lost Convention will take place in Charlotte, N. C., at the Charlotte Marriott Executive Park, April 22,23. Call the Light-for-the-Lost office at 1-800-988-0292 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. (c.s.t.) to register. Hotel reservations need to be made directly with the Charlotte Marriot (1-800-541-4089). There will be activities for ladies and walk-ins are welcome. This year's speakers include: George Wood, Assemblies of God general secretary; Robert Holmes, missionary to West Africa; and Benny Ferguson, LFTL coordinator.

KEY BEARERS UPDATE

Key Bearers is a cooperative effort between the *Pentecostal Evangel* and Light-for-the-Lost designed to provide

free *Evangels* for prisoners. Recently, Light-for-the-Lost sent a letter to LFTL councilmen explaining the purpose of Key Bearers. So far this year, LFTL has received \$77,859 in contributions. This amount is 22 percent ahead of last year's contributions at this date and still rising. Last year, 416,000 *Evangels* were sent to prisoners through this effort and LFTL has received 1,768 salvation reports.

PIANO BOOKS

Throughout the history of church music, many churches have experienced the same problem—a lack of capable pianists. Two new piano instruction books have been created with this problem in mind: *Piano Instruction for Today's Worship*, by Stephen Snyder and Marla Gebelein, and *Learn To Play by Ear*, by Diane Griffin.

Piano Instruction for Today's Worship, starts at the very beginning of music theory for students who have never played the piano, and works through basic piano accompaniment to more involved accompaniments. Helps are also provided for preparing song lists for services as well as general aids for playing with soloists and choirs.

Learn to Play by Ear follows the same basic principles, but is written for students who have studied piano, even briefly. Either tool will be valuable to the music ministry at your church, or for your own personal growth. For more information on ordering these books, contact the national Music Department at (417) 862-2781, ext. 4130.

MUSIC MINISTRY NETWORK

This is more than just another choral club. The Music Ministry Network was created to benefit the needs of the local church music ministry. This program offers a variety of resources to strengthen a church's music ministry. Quarterly mailings include the Network News newsletter, Music Ministry

Network Leadership Training Series (aids in the major aspects of music ministry), Music Ministry Referral Service, and the Network Praise and Worship Cassette Series (new praise and worship choruses written by talented men and women involved in local church ministry). The four mid-quarter mailings include the newsletter *Update*, updated Music Ministry Referral List, and additional articles to add to the Leadership Training Series. All eight mailings are only \$40 a year in the U.S. and \$50 a year outside the U.S. For more information, or to place your order for the Music Ministry Network, contact the national Music Department at (417) 862-2781, ext. 4130.

SERMON/DEVOTIONAL SOURCE MATERIAL

For almost 5 years, Ralph W. Harris has written a column dealing with religion/ethics for the editorial page of the *Springfield News-Leader*, Springfield, Mo. He is making copies of his published columns available to ministers at no cost.

These columns can be used as illustrations, devotionals, short radio or TV programs (each piece is about 550 words in length), or for personal reading. They come from the writer's varied experiences covering 60 years of ministry at home and overseas. Some columns have appeared in the *Enrichment* Journal and the *Pentecostal Evangel*.

If you would like to receive a sample copy, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Ralph Harris. His address appears in the *Official List of Ministers and Missionaries of the General Council of the Assemblies of God*.

RADIANT LIFE RELEASES UNDATED CHILDREN'S CHURCH CURRICULUM

Radiant Life is pleased to announce the release of *Young Explorers* undated children's church curriculum. Beginning with the

spring 1999 quarter, users can choose from among the following four units: "A Blast From the Past: Lessons From Abraham" (a time machine environment); "New Frontiers: Lessons From Joseph and Moses" (a wagon train environment); "Playing on God's Team: Lessons From the Disciples" (a baseball team environment); or "Life's

Classroom: Lessons From the Parables" (a classroom/schoolyard environment). Undated curriculum allows the user flexibility in deciding when to teach each unit.

The *Young Explorers* Kit (\$34.99) contains a laminated-wrap, four-color binder with 186-page leader's guide, two extra session guides, a music cassette

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with zip-pocket cassette holder, and three posters. Each leader's guide contains 13 lesson plans, with activity sheet answer guides, 3 reproducible activity sheets per lesson, resource pages, 3 black-and-white music transparency masters, and 1 full-color transparency of the unit backdrop.

Young Explorers music will also be available on compact disc for \$12.99 (for four units), or individual units on cassette for \$9.95. Extra session guides (\$12.95) and posters (\$2.50) can be purchased as needed.

Four more *Young Explorers* units will be released in fall 1999, and a final four units will be released in spring 2000, for a total of 12 undated units.

RADIANT LIFE'S "TIME EXPLORERS" VBS

Over 100 years ago vacation Bible school was birthed to give children a constructive form of expression during their summer vacation. Today, VBS programs provide children with exciting biblical themes and a rich learning experience. Children interact with each other in a structured social setting. They learn how to make practical crafts, play entertaining games, and learn about Bible characters. Five days devoted

to reaching children for Christ—VBS.

Vacation Bible school is still the most exciting and effective method to reach young people for Jesus Christ during the summer months. It involves both children and adults in the church in fulfilling the strongest directive given to us as Christians, "Go and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19, NIV).

Vacation Bible school evangelistic outreaches commit adults to being role models through volunteering as teachers and leaders. Children in the church become proactive by inviting their friends and neighbors and by participating in the program.

Vacation Bible school can be one of the most effective evangelistic tools to reach children for the Lord Jesus Christ. Be the light in your community this summer. Use *Radiant Life's* "Time Explorers" VBS to bring children to a right relationship with Christ.

Contact your *Radiant Life* distributor today, or call 1-800-641-4310 for more information.

NURSERY MINISTRIES FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

According to recent findings, what happens to children during the first 3 years of life can affect the way they will live as youth and adults. The experiences and

relationships of a child's early years affect intelligence, interpersonal skills, and even tendencies toward juvenile delinquency.

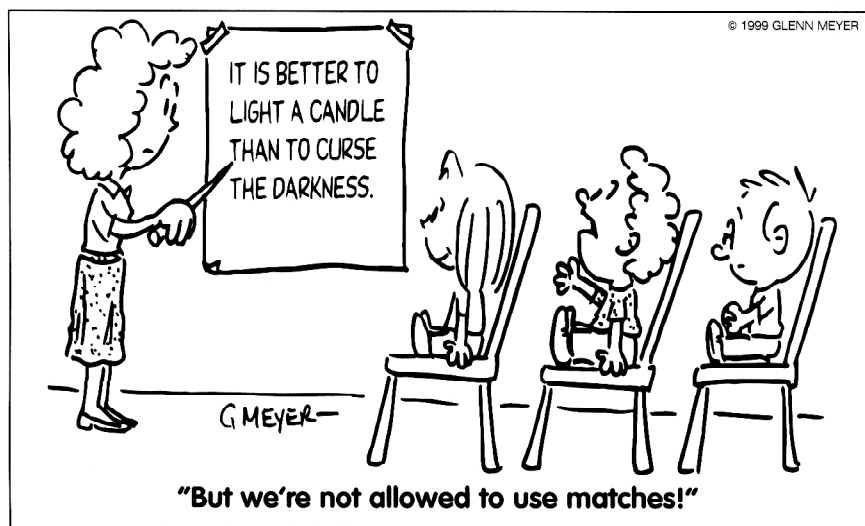
For the church, such findings confirm Proverbs 22:6. In fact, PET brain scans demonstrate that the principle in Proverbs 22:6 begins during the first 12 months of life.

Based on recent findings, government agencies are investing millions of dollars to influence children and help them mature into responsible adults. How will the church respond? As a church, we can change the future one baby at a time. With that as a goal, several Assemblies of God ministries are coordinating efforts to mobilize churches for Nursery Ministries in the 21st century.

Beginning with fall 1998, *Radiant Life* provides two curriculum items that add Bible teaching to the loving care already demonstrated in church nurseries. *Radiant Baby* uses posters, music, puppets, and play-and-learn cards to introduce babies to their first ideas about God. *Toddlers & Twos* curriculum continues to teach 1- and 2-year-olds about God. The repetition and interaction of these first Bible lessons help little ones begin to learn to love, trust, and obey God.

Beginning in November 1998, three issues of the *Christian Education Counselor* will emphasize an awareness campaign for nursery ministries. The theme is "Changing the Future: One Baby at a Time!" Campaign components include a miniposter, a reproducible infopage for mobilizing church members, an overview of the research, a planner for an awareness weekend, and a sample of what babies and toddlers can learn. Text for the planner can be accessed on the Internet at: <http://www.we-build-people.org>.

Finally, an article in the March 14, 1999, *Pentecostal Evangel* will emphasize the lifelong impact of early church relationships and experiences on children.



AGTS SITE OF SEMINARIANS CONFERENCE

In an attempt to establish stronger ties with Pentecostal students in places of higher education outside the Assemblies of God, the executive presbytery hosted 48 seminary students who have A/G affiliations but are attending non-A/G seminaries.

"Our agenda was to build a bridge," says Wayne Kraiss, commissioner of the Commission on Christian Higher Education, which conceived and organized the seminar. "We wanted to give them an opportunity to know the vision of the leadership of the church."

Students, whose expenses were underwritten by the executive presbytery, spent 2 weeks attending classes at the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary in Springfield, Mo. in July and August. They earned seminary credit in courses that are required to receive A/G credentials: "History and Polity of the Assemblies of God" and "Pentecostal Theological Perspectives."

The four executive officers of the A/G met with the seminarians for dialogue and to discuss opportunities for future ministry within the Fellowship.

Because of the success of the seminarians conference, similar conferences may be held in the future.

TEENS CELEBRATE NEW MILLENNIUM AT DAY ONE 2000 EVENT

Assemblies of God teens will celebrate New Year's Eve of the new millennium in nearly 20 locations around the nation. Via satellite connections, Assemblies of God students will also be a part of a nationwide Speed-the-Light goal-setting service. In conjunction with other parachurch campus ministries and denominations, 400,000 students are expected to participate in perhaps the single largest calling of campus missionaries. Day One

2000, will focus on: the return of Christ, mobilization of campus missionaries, world missions, and encouragement. For more information, contact your district youth director or the national Youth Department at 417-862-2781 or E-mail: dayone2000@ag.org. A promotional video is available by calling 417-862-2781, ext. 4034.

NATIONAL YOUTH EVENTS IN ORLANDO

Several events are available for teens at the 1999 General Council: Youth Congress, national Bible Quiz competition, national Fine Arts Festival, and Passion for the City AIM outreach. For information, contact the national Youth Department at 417-862-2781, or E-mail: uth@ag.org.

IT'S ALL ABOUT UTH VIDEO SERIES NOW COMPLETE

Videos are now available in the conversation-provoking *It's All About Uth* video series. Using the bold, straightforward discussion of four students, teens are provided relevant biblical solutions to life's challenging questions. Titles include: "Precious and Few"; "Behind the Mirror"; "More Than Feelings"; "What's Your View?"; "After the Bell Rings"; "Says Who?"; "These Feelings Aren't Friendly"; and "When Life Isn't Easy." Topics range from relationships, racism, and reputation to self-esteem, sexual responsibility, suicide, and other relevant student issues. *It's All About Uth* video series is ideal for small groups, youth groups, or campus clubs. Videos can be purchased individually or as a shrink-wrapped set. To order the 9-volume set, call 1-800-641-4310 and request item #731-340; or inquire about individual videos. The 9-volume set costs \$99, plus postage and handling; individual videos cost \$15, plus postage and handling.

NEW AG DISTRICTS FORMED

The Executive Presbytery of the Assemblies of God has announced the formation of three new language districts. Effective November 1, 1998, the Pacific Latin American District will be divided into two districts—the Southern Pacific Latin American District and the Northern Pacific District. The new addresses and officers for these districts are:

- Pacific Latin American District Council
914 S. 5th Avenue
LaPuente, CA 91746
Rev. Samuel Sanchez, superintendent
Rev. Daniel Tamara, assistant superintendent
Rev. Louis Ortiz, secretary-treasurer
- Northern Pacific Latin American District Council
P.O. Box 231070
Sacramento, CA 95823
Rev. Felix Posos, superintendent
Rev. Aaron Victorio, assistant superintendent
Rev. Lee Baca, secretary-treasurer

The Southern Pacific Latin American District includes Southern California, Arizona, and part of Nevada. The Northern Pacific Latin American District includes Northern California, Washington, Oregon, and part of Nevada. The boundary line between these districts is from Bakersfield, Calif. to Pismo Beach on the ocean side. Churches north of Bakersfield will be in the Northern Pacific Latin American District. Churches south of this line will be in the Southern Pacific Latin American District.

The third district is the Portuguese District. Its address and officers are:

- Portuguese District Council
85 Washington Street
Somerville, MA 02143
Rev. Oriel DeJesus, superintendent
Rev. Paulo R. Rosa, assistant superintendent
Rev. Francisco Pires, secretary
Rev. Roberto DeSouza, treasurer

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In Closing

BY LEROY BARTEL

NEW GENERATION CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

What picture comes to mind when you hear someone mention children's ministry? What scene do you see? What are the leaders doing? What are the children doing? Do you see adults ministering to children—presenting a program for them as the recipients of ministry? Or do you see children actually involved in ministry—active participants in serving one another and the Lord—encouraged and guided by caring adults? Your answer to these questions will reveal a lot about your concept of children's ministry.

In the past, many have viewed children's ministry as something done *for* children—adults putting on a program for children. They speak of “ministry to children.” The role of children in this approach is passive. Their principle responsibilities are watching and listening. Children participate by shouting, singing, clapping, laughing, repeating, and giving. Those who use this model of children's ministry believe success depends on the teacher's presentation skills. The children's worker must be enthusiastic, expressive, and dramatic. Most of what really matters goes on up front, on the stage, supported by lighting, expensive props, and video.

Recently, however, another paradigm has emerged. It is not as though this paradigm has not existed in the past. Progressive and effective children's leaders have always embraced it. These “new generation” children's workers engage and involve children in learning. They know the power of an effective, graphic presentation of truth, but are not satisfied to merely “put on a good show.” They are determined to make disciples—children who are

obedient followers of Jesus Christ. They believe their success in changing the lives of children is dependent on the level of the children's personal engagement, participation, and involvement in ministry. These leaders think in terms of “learning experiences,” “worship experiences,” and “ministry experiences” for children.

The goal of these workers, however, is not simply to get children involved in learning. They want to involve children in ministry. In the new generation children's ministry, you'll see children involved in worship teams, receiving the offering, running the sound system, and praying with one another at the altar. They'll be involved in evangelistic and outreach ministries in parks and in giving to missions. These children will be guided, coached, encouraged, and surrounded by trained adults.

Children grasp truth when they have an opportunity to experience it.

This perspective is consistent with the *We Build People* model of discipleship. It affirms and intentionally involves children at every base of spiritual development. It includes children in the life of the church. It seeks to instruct them and lead them to spiritual maturity. This approach helps children identify their gifts and abilities and involves them in ministry. It seeks to provide appropriate ways to invest children in reaching others. Children in these churches are involved in worship, growth, fellowship, ministry, and evangelism. New generation children's ministry is truly purpose driven.

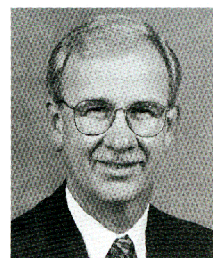
New generation children's ministry is biblical. Jesus was indignant at those who excluded children—He commanded that

children be included (Mark 10:13–15). He used children as prime examples of greatness, faith, receptivity, and obedience (Matthew 18:1–5; Mark 9:33–37; Luke 9:46–48). A thoughtful reading of 1 Corinthians 12 will conclude that children are to be considered a vital part of a church and its ministry—“Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable” (1 Corinthians 12:22, NIV). There is no escaping it, effective churches include and involve children.

New generation children's ministry is consistent with how children learn. Truth is not simply something we have them memorize and repeat; it is to be lived and practiced. Children grasp truth when they have an opportunity to experience it. Children learn by doing; they learn ministry by becoming involved in ministry; they learn faith by practicing faith; they learn love by expressing love in concrete ways. This approach embraces a hands-on approach to learning what the Christian life is all about.

What understanding of children's ministry will guide your congregation? What picture of children's ministry will you teach and preach about? What approach to children's ministry will you insist on from the leaders who work with children in your church? What will you look for in a children's pastor—simply a performer or a true people builder who understands the importance of including, instructing, involving, and investing children in ministry? **E**

Leroy Bartel is national director of the Division of Christian Education, Springfield, Missouri.



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