

enrichment

SUMMER 2001

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*Empowering
the Next
Generation:*
**CHILDREN'S
MINISTRIES
TODAY**





ministry matters

BY GARY R. ALLEN



Ministry to Children

Transition is always challenging and exciting. The invitation from Thomas E. Trask and the Executive Presbytery to lead the Ministerial Enrichment Office is challenging, but I am excited about being a part of such an effective ministry. The Ministerial Enrichment Office is a valuable asset to our Fellowship in resourcing our ministers and assisting them and their families in times of personal crisis.

Wayde Goodall made an imprint on this office and our Fellowship that will long influence us and affect how we do ministry. I commend him for his 5 1/2 years of dedicated service to the Ministerial Enrichment Office, and I cherish his friendship. His return to pastoral ministry was the desire of his heart. First Assembly of God, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, is blessed to have him and Rosalyn.

The staff of *Enrichment* journal is to be commended. Rick Knoth, managing editor, and his staff are committed to you. Their dedication to excellence has contributed to making *Enrichment* one of the most recognized and effective ministry journals available today.

I desire to see the Ministerial Enrichment Office and *Enrichment* journal continue to be effective in encouraging and supporting our ministers. The challenges of ministry are constantly changing, and the demands on ministers and their families are ever increasing. We need each other, and we need resources that enable us to be our best in service to our Lord. His heart is for the lost; His passion must be our passion.

The theme of this issue of *Enrichment* is Empowering the Next Generation: Children's Ministries Today. During my years of pastoral ministry, I experienced the blessing and fulfillment of effective ministry to children. Working with young couples as they nurtured their newborn children, sharing with them in dedicating their children, watching their children through the early years of learning, and seeing these children develop into young adults was an awesome responsibility, but

they have some of the best social activities of life. If not, the world will provide these things for them.

The local church needs to facilitate the ministry to children. The ministry to children needs to be appropriate to their spiritual and emotional maturity. Mentoring must begin in the early years, teaching them to pray and be sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and the possible call of God on their lives. Children can learn to be accountable to

Reaching the children of your community is still one of the best means of evangelizing families.

also a tremendous reward. The responsibility for raising children is a joy that is to be shared by the entire local community of faith. When we see the children of our church as our children, they become our spiritual responsibility.

So much of what is directed toward children outside of the church appears to be the latest and the greatest. For the church, it is not about the biggest and the best, but using the best materials and equipment feasible. Outdated resources and methods will hinder the ability to assimilate children into the church and effectively present the gospel to them.

Reaching the children of your community is still one of the best means of evangelizing families. When and where the kids want to go is usually where the parents take them. Make your church a place where kids love to come. It should be where their friends are and where

adult leadership and to their peers for their actions and attitudes. They can learn to pray for and with their peers for salvation and Holy Spirit baptism.

Children can have effective ministry as God anoints and uses them in His kingdom. Samuel was just a child when God called him, and he began his service in the temple with Eli. Jesus, at 12 years of age, was interacting with the temple leaders in Jerusalem.

Children's ministry must be powerful and exciting. The church, however, must never dilute the gospel or minimize Christian values. We must give children the opportunity to experience the transforming power of Jesus Christ in their lives. **e**

Gary R. Allen is coordinator of the Ministerial Enrichment Office and executive editor of Enrichment journal, Springfield, Missouri.



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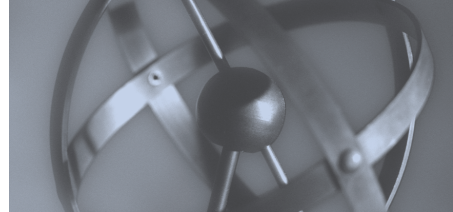
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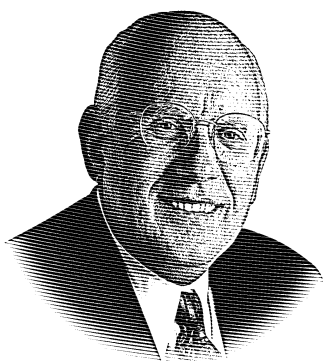
interview

WITH THOMAS E. TRASK



ASK THE SUPERINTENDENT— Children's Ministries: The Church's Priority

Do not serve in children's ministries for the pastor, the Assemblies of God, or the church; do it for Jesus and for the sake of those whom God has given to you.



General Superintendent Thomas E. Trask knows the value of children's ministry. Throughout his many years of pastoring, he saw the positive impact ministering to children had on the church and the kingdom of God. Under his leadership, the Assemblies of God has made children's ministry a priority. In his quarterly interview with Enrichment, Superintendent Trask shares his insights into effective children's ministry and stresses its importance in building the church of today and the church for tomorrow.

WHY IS CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES IMPORTANT IN THE LOCAL CHURCH?

TRASK: First, let me say how thrilled we are that God has given us David and Mary Boyd and Joey Ellis to lead the

The church of today and of tomorrow rests in the lives of our children. Today's world system knows it can influence society by touching, shaping, and molding children. Thus, it is important for the church to reach children with the gospel. The local church must give top priority to children's ministries. We cannot delay our ministry to children.

If I were to plant a church today, I would give greater emphasis to children's ministry. Many pastors today are pioneering churches and having Bible clubs, sidewalk Sunday schools, kids crusades, and vacation Bible schools.

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

**It is the responsibility of leadership to
utilize laypeople in their areas of giftedness.**

Children's Ministries Agency. Through this agency and other ministries at Headquarters, God has given us the privilege of helping the local church touch the lives of children.

can't place a greater price tag on adults than you do on children. As you reach children, there is a very good chance they will be saved. And many times God uses a child to reach his or her parents.

You win the child, then you win Mom, Dad, and other family members.

One example of the benefits of children's ministries in the local church is Wayne Benson, one of our executive presbyters. He was saved as a young boy. He rode a bus to Brightmoor Tabernacle in Southfield, Michigan, the church I pastored. Wayne has served for 25 years as a senior pastor and built a great church—First Assembly of God in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

HOW CAN PASTORS ENCOURAGE AND TRAIN THEIR MEMBERS TO BECOME INVOLVED IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES?

TRASK: Pastors need to encourage laity to become involved in children's ministries. It is also the pastor's responsibility to help mobilize and equip the laity to have the joy of serving in ministry. If the people in the congregation know the vision and heartbeat of the senior pastor toward children's ministries, they are usually waiting to be challenged to serve. It is the responsibility of leadership to utilize laypeople in their areas of giftedness. As they develop in God and develop in their God-given gifts, they need to be given places of ministry.

Once a year at Brightmoor Tabernacle we had a Recruitment

If I were pastoring a Pentecostal church, I wouldn't have curriculum that wasn't written by Pentecostals.

are not involved in ministry. They find problems, and they become involved in things they shouldn't. Pastors need to remind their congregations that involvement in ministry is a command from God. When Christians are busy, there isn't time to worry about trivial things.

Something else may happen as laypeople in the church become involved. As they develop leadership skills and as the church grows, there may be staff positions they could fill. Trained laypeople know the congregation, and the congregation knows them. There is no learning curve. This is a win-win situation for the laity, the church, and the kingdom of God. It is tailor-made for what God wants to do today.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR OUR CHILDREN TO HAVE PENTECOSTAL CURRICULUM?

TRASK: Writers of Pentecostal curriculum have experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit. They are writing from personal experience. There comes with that a conviction that is communicated through creating effective curriculum. The baptism in the Holy Spirit and the work of the


give to missions. The best way for a person to become missions-minded is to start young. When children make faith promises for BGMC, they learn to pray and work to earn the money to fulfill those promises. And as God helps them fulfill their promises, they see that He can supply all their needs.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES AREA LOOKS SHARP AND INVITING?

TRASK: When parents are looking for a church home, they want one that gives priority to children.

Facilities indicate whether or not a church has children as a priority. A church doesn't need the best or newest facilities, but the facilities should be the cleanest and nicest a church can provide. This lets parents know that your church values children. If you have a clean and safe nursery, you will attract young families.

SPEAK FROM YOUR HEART TO EVERY CHILDREN'S WORKER.

TRASK: Scripture says, "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9). Pastors and parents may not say thanks as often as they should. Sometimes the burden feels heavy, but God is keeping the records. He said, "If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones...he will certainly not lose his reward." Do not serve in children's ministries for the pastor, the Assemblies of God, or the church; do it for Jesus and for the sake of those whom God has given to you. The day will come when you will stand around the throne of God and see those in whose lives you had a part. That will be reward enough. We are placing stars in our crowns now as we labor and work together. Thank you, children's workers, for giving to the cause of Jesus Christ and the Assemblies of God. 

The local church must give emphasis and top priority to children's ministries.

Sunday. We emphasized the need for people to volunteer and commit to ministries. As new people were saved, those already involved in ministry would say to them, "Here's how you can be involved. I need some help in my area of ministry." Whether it was children's ministry, Royal Rangers, or some other area, laity recruited laity. This had far-reaching effects on all the members of the congregation. It was an ongoing process.

Having people involved in ministry is critical for the church's overall spiritual health and happiness. Many church problems occur when laypeople

Holy Spirit also give revelation of who Jesus is. There are some far-reaching effects in being Pentecostal, some of which are almost intangible. If I were pastoring a Pentecostal church, I wouldn't have curriculum that wasn't written by Pentecostals.

EXPLAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF BOYS AND GIRLS MISSIONARY CRUSADE.

TRASK: Boys and Girls Missionary Crusade buys literature for our missionaries. It provides literature for evangelization. You can't put a value on that. But BGMC also teaches our children to

interview

WITH DAVID BOYD, DICK GRUBER, AND JIM WIDEMAN

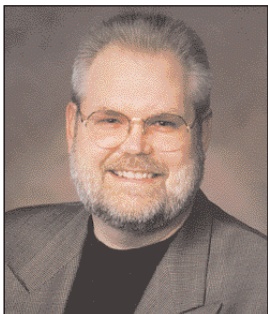
Children's Ministries— Building Tomorrow's Church



DAVID BOYD



DICK GRUBER



JIM WIDEMAN

A radical shift in America's moral landscape over the past few decades has fostered a cosmopolitan culture that now suffers from a multiplicity of societal ills—not the least of which is the breakup of the family. Our children have become the innocent victims of broken marriages, physical and sexual abuse, as well as many other ills of society. Is it any wonder why the Lord blesses the church that places a high priority on children's ministries?

Three long-time champions of children's ministries visited with the managing editor of *Enrichment journal* to talk about the importance of children's ministries in the local church. Participants in the discussion were David Boyd, coordinator of the Children's Ministries Agency/BGMC for the Assemblies of God in Springfield, Missouri; Dick Gruber, children's pastor at Bloomington Assembly of God in Bloomington, Minnesota, and former children's ministries consultant for the Assemblies of God national Sunday School Department in Springfield, Missouri; and Jim Wideman, Christian education director and children's pastor at Church on the Move in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

HOW CAN CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES GROW A CHURCH?

GRUBER: A church that reaches children will grow. Statistics show that 80- to 85-percent of those who believe in Christ came to know the Lord between the ages of 4 and 14. If you have a quality ministry to children, you will assimilate more new, young families. When people see that

your church cares about children and is leading them to Christ, they will be more likely to stay at your church.

I talked with three home missions pastors at a family camp in one of our districts a few years ago. Of the three, two had self-supporting churches that grew within the first 1 1/2 years. The third one did not grow; it was still supported by the district. What was the difference? The two that were self-supporting had emphasized children's ministries and missions giving from their first Sunday.

WIDEMAN: It is God's will for every person to grow in Christian maturity. But for years we only focused on helping adults mature in Christ. A balanced church teaches the Word to every age and trains members in Christian living. It's important, then, to have a strong commitment to raising children for a lifetime of service.

In building houses, new construction is cheaper than renovation. Some churches haven't spent much money on new construction (children's ministry), but try renovation by putting their money into the teen and adult ministries. If we build strong people from children on up, our churches will be stronger.

We've built our church on three principles. First, if you minister to people who can't pay you back, God will pay

you back. That's why we have strong missions, children, and youth programs. Second, we strive for excellence in all we do. Third, God gives you what you can handle. If you want to have hundreds of children, have a program that can handle hundreds of them.

BOYD: In some churches that emphasize children's ministries, the senior pastor conducts children's church during Sunday school or has someone else teach the adult Sunday school class while he or she teaches a children's class.

Ministering to children seems to be a key to attracting young families and

There are certain places in the mall where children like to go because these places are designed with them in mind. Most churches design a multipurpose area, but it is just another term for "designed for adults." The church needs to start decorating for those whom it's trying to reach.

We live in a day where organizations stand out when they give good service. The church needs easy-to-find classrooms and other things that will cause it to stand out. This shows people we care about them.

GRUBER: Parents are looking for excited, happy people who love the Lord Jesus

children's department, the children's ministry perishes.

Children's church leaders and children's pastors need the senior pastor to recognize them as God's anointed people to minister to children. Sometimes children's workers are given a second-class rating by the senior pastor. Many children's workers are hurting, wondering if their pastor loves them.

I love my pastor, and he loves me and the children. He talks about it from the pulpit, and he sends money our way. A couple of years ago our church was planning to recarpet the sanctuary platform. I asked the pastor, "Have you seen the carpets in the nurseries?" The

I have discovered that I can give far more to missions and reach more souls overseas by emphasizing missions to the families in our church through our children. —Boyd



getting them involved in ministry. Quite often small churches stay small because they don't attract young families and new people do not stay.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMON DENOMINATORS YOUNG FAMILIES ARE LOOKING FOR IN A CHURCH'S MINISTRY TO CHILDREN?

WIDEMAN: The appearance of the children's area is important. We started by looking at our nurseries and asking what parents would like. This caused us to change the way we staff and how we organize our children's areas.

and love kids. Even in a smaller church, if a young family sees that the nursery and Sunday school classes are well equipped and clean, they will be more confident leaving their children.

HOW IS YOUR SUCCESS IN MINISTRY TO CHILDREN RELATED TO THE SENIOR PASTOR'S VISION AND SUPPORT OF CHILDREN'S MINISTRY?

GRUBER: If the senior pastor does not have a vision for the children's ministry and does not proclaim that vision from the pulpit through his or her lifestyle and by funneling finances toward the

money that was supposed to go for the platform went to our nurseries.

WIDEMAN: Everything rises and falls with leadership. The pastor is the leader of the children's ministry because he is the leader of the congregation. The children are just as much a part of the congregation as any other member.

I'm the pastor's representative to children. If he doesn't give me his vision, I can't carry it out. Many pastors hire someone to have the vision for his or her area. But senior pastors are the ones responsible for having a heart and

If the senior pastor does not have a vision for the children's ministry and does not proclaim that vision from the pulpit... the children's ministry perishes.—Gruber



vision for that area and conveying it to their staff. It's our job to serve the senior pastor and lift up his or her hands. My pastor is very vocal in letting me know the kind of program and the things he wants. He lets me work out the details.

DOES THE LARGER CHURCH HAVE AN ADVANTAGE OVER THE SMALLER CHURCH WHEN IT COMES TO CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES?

WIDEMAN: We sometimes let the word *small* become the biggest word in our vocabulary. I started with seven kids in my children's church. If you will do when you're small what you are forced to do when you are bigger, you will get bigger. If we are faithful in small things, God will make us ruler over much. In the smaller church, the biggest problem is recruiting volunteers. But this is also true in the big church. When I was in a smaller church, I had to be more creative in my worker base. I used teenagers as well as adults as leaders.

In any size church, modeling, mentoring, and duplicating your heart into somebody else is the key. If you are by yourself in a small church and can take just one other leader

and duplicate yourself in that person, you have doubled the effectiveness of your ministry.

GRUBER: A big church doesn't have an advantage over a small church when it comes to ministry to children. A small church may only have five children, but it can still have a kids crusade, a VBS, or a neighborhood outreach week. There may only be 12 kids in children's church Sunday morning, but the small church can still minister effectively and with quality to these children.

When people wanted to push children away, Jesus said to let them come to Him. He wanted to bless the children. If a small church will follow the Jesus way and let kids come to Jesus, then it won't be a small church for long.

WHY SHOULD MULTIPLE STAFFING BE AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES?

BOYD: In churches today, there seems to be a rule of 200. If a church grows to 200, the senior pastor hires a youth pastor and maybe a music pastor. If the youth group grows to 200, the church hires a junior-high pastor. In children's ministries, there needs to be something similar. When the children's ministry grows to

200, the pastor should hire a second children's pastor. If not, the children's pastor cannot effectively relate to the kids, children's workers, or parents.

WIDEMAN: Many churches may have both a senior-high and junior-high pastor, but only one children's pastor. The children's pastor may be ministering to more children than the two youth pastors combined. Multiple staff in children's ministry can help a children's pastor be more effective in ministry to children.

At Church on the Move, I am over the nursery, preschool, elementary, and bus ministry. I'm like the senior children's pastor. I have a full-time assistant or a pastor who works with me. I also have a nursery and preschool pastor, an elementary pastor, and a bus pastor. I communicate my pastor's vision to those who work with me.

Having a person in charge also provides consistency in policies and procedures for all workers. If a church does not have one person in charge, the workers will have different policies and procedures. I am more valuable to my pastor as a problem solver and a leader of leaders than a teacher of

children. I still teach children every week, but I'm not the only pastor in the children's area.

GRUBER: A children's pastor must represent the vision of the senior pastor to the children's department and oversee the various areas within the children's department. That system can work even in a smaller church with a volunteer children's leader. The children's leader can have people who are leaders over 6, 12, and 24 children. As the church grows, the number of children's leaders grows with it.

The average children's pastor who has 200 children is ministering to those 200 children plus the parents and family members of those children. This is one reason why multiple staffing is an important issue for the church.

WHAT LESSONS HAVE YOU LEARNED IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES ABOUT WORKING WITH LAYPEOPLE?

WIDEMAN: Some children's workers say they want help, but they really don't. They guard what they're doing.

The first thing Jesus did when He started His ministry was recruit help. If the Son of God needed help, we in children's ministries need help.

It was a big step for me when I chose to share coloring pages and leg hugs with another leader. People sometimes say, "They can't do it as well as I can." There was a time when I couldn't do it well either, but someone let me have a group of children, and I learned how to do it.

GRUBER: Pastors can help the layperson leading a children's ministry to recognize the need to trust other people with ministry and allow them to grow in their ministries. People come to visit my children's church and walk away disappointed because I was only up front 3 minutes. I have a group of trusted laypeople and children doing the work of the ministry. That's the big difference between me now and 20 years ago. God has grown me beyond the need to be the man up front.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO INVOLVE CHILDREN IN MINISTRY? HOW DO YOU INVOLVE THEM?

GRUBER: Scripture says to train children in the way they should go and when they are old they won't depart from it. For many years we told children in Sunday school to sit down and be quiet, and they learned how to sit

down and be quiet. Now that they are grown, they are not teaching, helping, or doing anything in the church. We need to train children to serve one another in love. Children are today's church and tomorrow's Sunday school teachers, pastors, and missionaries. Eighty-five percent of today's Assemblies of God missionaries were called to the mission field between the ages of 9 and 13.

We can train children in Sunday school, children's church, or any ministry that involves children. We need to let children have a part in ministering to others. We have children lead in worship, do human videos, run the sound, usher, and run the computer and PowerPoint. We have children who pray around the altar for other children and anoint them with oil.

Integrity and honesty are qualities I expect of my senior pastor. These are the same qualities I look for in the children I'm training. When they pray, they have two ears listening to God. When they see a need, they fill it. We are working to develop in our children attitudes of servanthood and love.

Many Bible college students preparing for youth ministry were called to youth ministry at youth camp. If we

God gives you what you can handle. If you want to have hundreds of children, have a program that can handle hundreds of them.—Wideman



present the call of God to ministry to children and let them minister to others, they may desire to be children's pastors when they grow up.

A wise senior pastor will want those who work with children to train them to minister. The 9-year-old child sitting in children's church could be a future board member voting on the pastor's salary. The wise pastor will think of the long-term effect of the children's program and say, "I'm building a church for the future. If I invest in children now and allow them to minister, in 10 to 15 years I will have a strong body of believers that love me and love Jesus."

WIDEMAN: My children's pastor was a boy in my children's church in Birmingham, Alabama. He was on my puppet team when he was 8 years old. God called him as a child while he was helping me.

My dream is that a pastor will never need to ask for volunteers or workers. I want children to start ushering when they're in children's church and youth group. When they are in the adult service, they will be experienced ushers.

I have more than 80 Timothys—children who have answered the call to ministry—from my children's church over the years. This is because we have emphasized children ministering to others.

Allow children to learn by doing because that's the best teacher. I use my adult leaders as mentors to teach the children to minister by showing them how, and by letting the children have part in ministering to others.

The altar workers in my children's church are some of my biggest soul winners. They bring friends to church whom they have won to the Lord at school.

I tell people to make a list of everything they want children to be when they are grown. If they want them to be saved and filled with the Holy Ghost, write that down. If a children's

pastor will take the youth pastor to lunch and ask, "What do you want a young person that comes into your youth group to become? Write it down."

The next thing you need to do is become a model leader. Put others before your children who model the things you want your children to become. Then teach the children what the Word teaches about Christian living and serving. As you teach and model, the children will become what you want them to be.

WHY IS IT VALUABLE TO TEACH KIDS ABOUT MISSIONS?

WIDEMAN: I recently received a newsletter from a missionary to India. He was in my children's church in Jackson, Mississippi. He thanked me for teaching him the importance of missions. If we do not teach and emphasize missions, our children may not be sensitive to God's call on their lives.

Teaching about the importance of missions has done great things for our church. We are taking 700 puppet stages, 2,100 puppets, and a year's worth of curriculum to 700 churches in Peru. It has been a wonderful thing for the children and the adults to be involved in building the puppet stages and raising money for the things that we are doing through mission outreaches. The Great Commission is not just for part of the Body; it is for all believers.

GRUBER: One problem with American teenagers is their feelings of hopelessness. And they are self-centered. They wonder, *How are people going to serve me?* And when people don't serve them, they experience a hopelessness. When you instill missions in children, you instill a Christ-centeredness and an others-centeredness. They understand they can reach somebody else with the gospel. They realize it's not all about me; it's about others. When children share the gospel through missions and missions giving, they share the gospel more readily with their friends.

BOYD: Two things happen when children become involved in missions. One,

a poor family in your congregation will decide they are not poor when they compare themselves to people in other countries. And these families will begin to sacrifice, give, and be satisfied with what they have instead of comparing themselves to the people who have more.

I have discovered that I can give far more to missions and reach more souls overseas by emphasizing missions to the families in our church through our children. We are raising kids who minister, and we're impacting the mission field. We do this through the Boys and Girls Missionary Crusade.

WHAT ARE IMPORTANT PROCEDURES OR CONCERNS CHILDREN'S PASTORS NEED TO BE AWARE OF WHEN STRUCTURING THEIR MINISTRY TO CHILDREN?

GRUBER: We follow Richard Hammar's (the Assemblies of God legal counsel) safeguards. We do reference checks, police background checks, and fingerprinting. We have a legal and moral responsibility to safeguard those under our care. We want to have the best people in ministry to our children and need to make sure no child will be hurt in any way in our classrooms.

We never have a leader alone with a child in any setting. We have the three-person rule: There are always two or more leaders with any child. When the first child is checked into a Sunday school room, there needs to be two adults in that room. Some churches also use video surveillance.

We also have check-in and check-out procedures for the preschool. We are talking about implementing that in the upper-age levels as well, rather than letting kids leave to find their parents. In the nursery and preschool, we have guidelines for changing diapers and using bathrooms. Every church, small or large, needs these kinds of things.

Some guidelines and restrictions

**In any size church,
modeling, mentoring,
and duplicating your
heart into somebody else
is the key.—Wideman**



include not allowing men to change diapers. The incidence of child molestation is far greater when men are involved rather than women. We use antibacterial hand lotion to try to stop the spread of diseases. We also have latex gloves available for workers who change diapers.

WIDEMAN: We have video surveillance in the halls and classrooms. We don't allow workers to accompany a child into a bathroom; workers stand outside. We also require two or more people to be present with children. No one is ever left alone with a child. Parents sign in and pick up their children.

We do more than a basic criminal history check. A person can be arrested, and it may not show up on his or her police record. If you are checking on a person in a particular state, and that person has not lived in that state all of his or her life, you must check every state in which that person has lived. We do a known sex offenders check with the FBI. We also do a Department of Corrections check to see if the person has a police record. We do a social security verification. Some people have multiple social security numbers or a dead person's social security number that they

purchased. Find out if they are who they say they are. The same Bible that says "whosoever will come...let him...follow me," says "know them which labor among you."

When you are conducting worker interviews, never be alone in the interview process. I have a prayer warrior whose discernment can override my eagerness because of my need for workers. I require all staff who conduct worker interviews to have someone with them.

We have a plan for various safety issues. Some churches don't have an emergency nursery evacuation plan. If they do, they may have never practiced it. We have an evacuation crib (one that will fit through a door) in every nursery. My ushers have practiced, and we've timed loading dolls into the crib to see how quickly we can get them out if there is a fire or another emergency. If every mother runs to the nursery, you've got a problem. Every time I go to a church, if they have a policy and procedure manual, I purchase it. I have five different manuals that answer questions the workers may have about procedures.

SHARE SOME FINAL THOUGHTS.

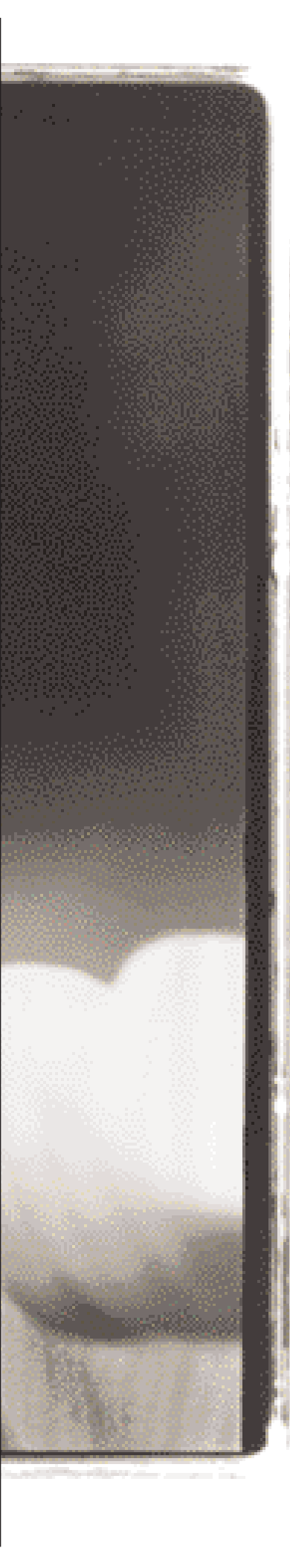
GRUBER: Many teachers and children's

church leaders don't believe God wants to do great things in the lives of boys and girls. They need to realize God wants children to be saved in Sunday school. He wants them to be baptized in the Holy Ghost in children's church. They don't need to wait until camp every year. God desires that boys and girls be used in the gifts of the Spirit, pray for one another, and see people healed. I encourage senior pastors to encourage their leaders and workers to look at the children's ministry through Jesus' eyes.

WIDEMAN: We should expect God to do big things in our churches. Stephen Covey, in his book *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, says to begin with the end in mind. Pastors should ask, "How do I want the children's ministry of this church to end up? What do I want boys and girls to do as they get to the youth group?" They then need to establish a vision and develop a plan. We get a plan by looking at where we are, determining where we're going, and taking steps to get there. God promised to lead us. God will honor the steps, and we can have the children's ministry that we've dreamed. **e**

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES:
HELPING TO GROW A
21ST-CENTURY
CHURCH





Is reaching children important for growing a 21st-century church? Are young families with children in your community worth the investment of time, talent, and resources? Does God's Word instruct us to place importance on reaching children?

The answer to each of these questions is yes.

Deuteronomy 6:5–9 gives three commands:

1. Love the Lord God with all your heart (verse 5).
2. Remember My commands (verse 6).
3. Teach the children (verse 7).

Israel was to follow these commands if it was to remain spiritually healthy and raise up a generation of godly children.

The third command, teaching children, is vital to obeying God's plan for the church today. Reaching kids has never been more important. Early teen society has become a gun-toting, sexually perverse, and disease-rampant society. This demands that churches, pastors, and children's leaders reach kids for Christ. Many churches are reaching children and are growing in the process.

B Y D A V I D B O Y D



Not every church can afford a children's pastor, but every church can afford to train and invest in children's leadership.

GROWING A CHURCH THROUGH CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Churches are discovering that young families are looking for churches that minister to children.

Leith Anderson, author of *Dying for Change; A Church for the 21st Century; Leadership That Works: Hope and Direction for Church and Parachurch Leaders in Today's Complex World*, and *Winning the Values War in a Changing Culture*, is senior pastor of Wooddale Church, Eden Prairie, Minnesota. He writes. "The old top three factors families used to choose a church were 'location, pastor, and denomination.' Not so anymore. Today the new top three are 'location, pastor, and children's ministry.'"¹

With the rise in danger from distraught peers and perverse adults, parents are awakening to the fact their children need to be safe, secure, and well cared for. They are looking for this in their children's school and church. Parents expect quality facilities and quality leadership. They are looking for clean, modern, kid-friendly rooms. In the nursery and preschool areas, they are looking for clean, sanitized toys and surroundings. A quality children's ministry will attract young families and grow your church. (See sidebar, "How Children's Ministry Can Grow a Church.")

Leith Anderson states: "In the past, parents picked the church and the children had to go. Increasingly today, children pick the church and the parents go where the 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."²

Children's ministry is one of the areas where a big church isn't necessarily better. The nursery doesn't have to be huge to impress parents. The care, love, and cleanliness that are there impress them. Parents will choose a lesser house in a neighborhood with better schools because parents are concerned about their children. They will also drive farther and cross denominational boundaries to find a church that will care for their children.

Dan Betzer, senior pastor of First Assembly of God in Fort Myers, Florida, states: "Be honest: Ask yourself, *Is my church a place where young parents would bring their children?*"

Here are more questions to ask:

- **Does our nursery and preschool areas have old toys and mismatched high chairs, cribs, and changing tables?** If this describes your nursery and preschool, you're telling young parents with babies and toddlers that you don't care enough about their children to purchase new and safe equipment.

- **How are the walls in our classrooms decorated?** Are they freshly painted with bright and cheery murals and children's wallpaper, or is the paint chipping, the wallpaper peeling, and the walls painted a hospital sterile off-white? The children's areas should be fresh and clean.

- **Do we have a room for children's church?** Can parents visit this room and immediately feel this church cares about kids?

- **What are the children's restrooms like?** Visiting parents go in these restrooms with their children. Compare your kids' restrooms with the restrooms the adults use.

Senior pastor, find a family who has never been to your church and walk them through your building. Let their fresh look point out things that need to be updated.

INVESTING IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Many times children's ministry is at the bottom of the church's budget. When that happens, churches will not attract new, young families. Or worse yet, they may lose young families to a church that does invest in children.

Young adults come to our churches, get involved, and become our leaders. Without them, churches stagnate. When God told us to teach the children, He knew that investing in children was the best way to perpetuate, grow, and expand the church.

Children's ministry takes an investment. Not every church can afford a children's pastor, but every church can afford to train and invest in children's leadership. Some of our best children's pastors were laypeople whose senior pastor sent them for training. Send your children's leadership to every training conference you can. Every dollar you spend training your children's leaders will pay huge dividends toward building the quality children's ministry you, your church, and community desire.

HOW CHILDREN'S MINISTRY CAN GROW A CHURCH

In the past 6 years, First Assembly of God in Fort Myers, Florida, has enjoyed an attendance increase of over 1,000 persons on Sunday mornings. There are many reasons for this increase. There is most certainly a revival spirit in the congregation. Our ministry philosophy of reach, teach, and send keeps us on target in evangelism and discipleship. The emphasis on our far-reaching missions philosophy has played a pivotal role in the growth, both numerically and financially. But this church also puts a premium on reaching children. In 1998-99, the children's ministry increased an average of 183 youngsters. Each Sunday morning, the church ministers to more than 450 children. Shortly, we will begin constructing a Children's Center connecting directly to the main sanctuary building.

HOW HAS THIS HAPPENED?

A church simply reflects the vision and burden of its senior pastor. If the pastor does not have a zeal for reaching children, the church will not have zeal either. Do you have an organized plan to reach the next generation? In merely accommodating the existing generation, we fail to prepare for the one to come.

Pastoring affords many joys to a minister. One of the prime blessings to me is dedicating babies. Flanked by the parents, and often today it is a single parent, I thrill to hold that precious child in my arms and lift him or her to the Lord in the act of dedication. My sincere reaction to that ministry affects the congregation and increases their interest in touching the lives of our little ones.

Through years of evangelistic ministry and traveling during my days on *Revivaltime*, I have spoken in nearly 1,500 of our churches. Many times I observed that children's ministry was near the bottom of the totem pole in importance and finances. A growing congregation urgently needs a strong, Spirit-led children's pastor. This is no place to scrimp.

I urge pastors to find the very finest leadership for children available. As a church reflects the philosophies and heart of its senior pastor, so its children's ministry reflects that of its children's pastor. Put this ministry firmly in your budget. You are making a vital investment.

Our children's ministries are a subsidized part of our annual budget. Our children's pastor knows that each month there will be money in his account. Pastors truly tie their children's workers' hands for effective ministry when they do not give them the funds they need.

When you start this subsidy, it is often inconvenient. But stay with it. Over the long run, your investment in children will bear incredible dividends. For example, a man who was part of our children's ministry years ago is now a successful businessman. He recently came to us and said, "Let's improve the children's play area." He gave the church a check for \$50,000 to do the work. Investing in children is truly casting your bread upon the waters.

GIVE THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY VISIBILITY IN YOUR CHURCH.

We frequently feature the children in our Sunday services. We bring all the children into the sanctuary and the adults see for themselves the hundreds of children who attend our church. It does not come as a shock to them when we announce we must do something major (such as the new Children's Center) on their behalf.

We are currently raising the needed \$3 million up front to build our Children's Center. To do this, our people need to be constantly reminded that there are tens of thousands of unreached kids in our county. As the pastor, I keep this information front and center.

One final note: Pastor, take a hard and honest look at your church. Be as objective as you possibly can. Then ask yourself: *Is this church a place where young parents would want to bring their children? Would the children themselves enjoy being here? Would it remind them of a dentist's reception area or some other unpleasantry? Does my church really reach out to the young generation?*

Jesus loved children. "Of such is the kingdom of God," He taught. First Assembly is literally exploding with growth in every area. Our church's ministry to children plays a vital role in our growth and development. But far more important than this, we are influencing the generation to come by perpetuating the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

—Dan Betzer is senior pastor, First Assembly of God, Fort Myers, Florida.



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

EIGHT GOALS OF THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES AGENCY

The discipleship goals of the Children's Ministries Agency are based upon preparing the children for life. Following are the eight qualities of spiritual character we want every child to develop. We believe that every child should be:

1. Powerful in prayer

Every child should be a powerful prayer warrior through regular opportunities of seeing God answer his or her prayers.

2. Baptized in the Holy Spirit

Every child should be endowed with power for his or her Christian walk by being baptized in the Holy Spirit.

3. Radical in worship

Every child should worship God intimately through age-appropriate songs, lifting his or her hands in worship.

4. Mobilized in service

Every child should be taught the value of service in God's kingdom through opportunities to exercise his or her talents and abilities to minister to others.

5. Sacrificial in giving

Every child should be taught through BGMC to pray for and sacrificially give to help reach the lost people of the world.

6. Active in evangelism

Every child should be willing to be a bold witness for Christ and allow his or her life to be used to bring glory to God and salvation to others.

7. Knowledgeable in God's Word

Every child should be knowledgeable of God's Word through systematic teaching by trained leaders using Pentecostal curriculum and resources.

8. Baptized in water

Every child needs to follow Jesus' command to be baptized in water and to boldly stand up and publicly proclaim his or her faith in Christ.

—David Boyd, Springfield, Missouri.

THE SENIOR PASTOR AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

A tremendous children's ministry begins with a senior pastor who truly wants to reach children and young families. The senior pastor dictates the value the people and the board place on children's ministry. The pastor's vision for reaching children spreads to the whole congregation. The vision should include investing in children outside the walls of the church (Deuteronomy 31:12,13). It is the church's responsibility to reach the unsaved children in its community.

The senior pastor is the key to the way the congregation responds and supports the children's ministry. The pastor is the key to successfully encouraging every member of the adult congregation to get involved in ministry, especially children's ministry.

Like no other ministry in the church, children's ministry is dependent on volunteers. It is not unique to have more volunteers involved in children's ministry than all other ministries of the church combined. In one church where I was the children's pastor, there were 480 adult volunteers. Of these, 320 worked in children's ministry.

DISCIPLESHIP AND CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Discipleship of children is one of the goals of the Children's Ministries Agency. We desire to prepare children for life and service in God's kingdom. (See sidebar, "Eight Goals of the Children's Ministries Agency.")

The Assemblies of God has a well-coordinated array of children's ministry

THE CHURCH OF NO STRANGERS: SEVEN WAYS TO WELCOME NEW CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

A Web site on the Internet uses the slogan "Where there are no strangers—just friends who haven't met." That slogan can set the tone for welcoming new families with children to your church. Here are seven ways to meet new friends.

1. Greeters of Ages. Pair a friendly adult and child to open the door with smiles and handshakes.

2. Enjoy the Toys. In the nursery, reserve some special toys to enjoy only with new friends. Even little ones will enjoy greeting new friends.

3. Game Friends. In Sunday school, set out games for children to play in teams before the lesson begins. Each time a team welcomes a new friend, they get an extra turn. Play with the children to model how to focus on fun and friendly conversation rather than on winning.

4. Friendship Concentration. In elementary Sunday school classes, give a class greeter a list of six questions to ask each new friend. Write each answer on the back of two cards. Mix them and lay them face down on a table. Number the backs and play concentration.

5. New Friend Packets. Help early childhood Sunday school classes assemble colorful nametags, fun stickers, simple snacks, and small toys in resealable sandwich bags. Give the first child who spots a guest two packets to explore with his or her new friend.

6. Church Guides. Recruit friendly adults, teens, and children to guide guests to Sunday school classes.

7. Make Friends With Gifts. Keep a supply of simple gifts available for first-time guests.

—Sharon Ellard is early childhood consultant in the Sunday School Promotion and Training Department, Springfield, Missouri.

programs. Sunday school is one of our main discipleship arms. In Sunday school, children are taught doctrines of the Bible. Sunday school's success is based on a small teacher-to-student ratio. Sunday school also provides an environment where children can ask questions as their faith in Christ grows week by week.

Children's church has become the proving ground for the faith of our children. There they can put into practice their Pentecostal experience. On Sunday morning, children gather in their own service where they lift their hands in worship, pray for the sick, are baptized in the Holy Spirit, pray in tongues, respond to biblical preaching, and gather around the altar to seek God.


Royal Rangers and Missionettes are programs that reach into the community. Each week more visitors gather in these groups than in any other ministry of the church. Many young families with children who joined our church first visited the Wednesday night adult Bible study while their children enjoyed these clubs.

Missionettes, with its newly revised program, reaches girls and disciples them into young ladies. Royal Rangers is a strong program where men mentor boys. In today's society with single families and fatherless homes, it is

important to have men investing in boys' lives.

Coupled with these programs is Junior Bible Quiz and Boys and Girls Missionary Crusade. JBQ teaches God's Word to children. BGMC teaches children to care about the world, pray for the world, make faith promises to missions, and seek God's call for their lives. Together the teachers, pastors, and leaders of our children's ministry of the Assemblies of God are raising up a generation of kids who will live for God.

Pastor, invest in the children of your church. Support the children's ministries financially. Invest in your leadership by training them. Ensure you have quality materials and equipment. Make your church a church where children are welcome, safe, and well cared for.

Join with the Children's Ministries Agency as we, "Reach Kids...until He comes!" 

David Boyd is Children's Ministries Agency/BGMC coordinator, Springfield, Missouri.



E N D N O T E S

1. Leith Anderson, "Children Are #3," *Enrichment* journal, Spring 1999, 24.
2. Ibid.

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"Will the children please come up for the children's sermon?"



PAST

**TWENTY-SIX YEARS OF PASTORING
HAS TAUGHT ME THAT AN
EFFECTIVE PASTOR NEEDS THE:**

- WISDOM OF AN OWL.
- TENACITY OF A BULLDOG.
- DARING OF A LION.
- VERSATILITY OF A CHAMELEON.
- STRENGTH OF AN OX.
- ENDURANCE OF A CAMEL.
- MEMORY OF AN ELEPHANT.
- JOY OF A NIGHTINGALE.
- MEEKNESS OF A LAMB.
- LOYALTY OF A DOG.
- BOUNCING ENTHUSIASM
OF A KANGAROO.
- HIDE OF A RHINOCEROS.
- DISPOSITION OF AN ANGEL.
- FAITHFULNESS OF A PROPHET.
- HEART OF A MARTYR.
- FERVENCY OF AN EVANGELIST.
- DEVOTION OF A MOTHER.

BEING A OR/COACH

BY JOHN M. PALMER

TO YOUR

CHILDREN'S

MINISTRY

LEADER

Today's effective pastor also needs the skill and heart of a coach. A successful athletic coach leads, motivates, teaches, and corrects. One of America's all-time greatest coaches is John Wooden. He coached the UCLA men's basketball team to 10 national championships in 12 years. Wooden, who is 91 years old and a committed follower of Jesus, was the consummate coach.

One of his best players, Bill Walton, said, "John Wooden taught us how to focus on one primary objective: Be the best you can be in whatever endeavor you undertake. Don't worry about the score. Don't worry about image. Don't worry about the opponent. It sounds easy, but it's actually very difficult. Coach Wooden showed us how to accomplish it."¹

The pastor/coach will do the same. An enthusiastic, visionary, loving, Spirit-anointed pastor/coach is the key to effective local church ministry. And one of the most vital ministries in the local church is children's ministry.

The pastor/coach has three primary responsibilities in providing effective leadership to a local church's children's ministry.

FIND THE RIGHT PERSON TO LEAD THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEAM.

I've had two vastly different pastoral experiences. Immediately after graduating from Central Bible College, Ty Silva and I planted New Life Assembly in Athens, Ohio. God gave me the privilege of pastoring that church for 11 years. Our children's ministry, thanks in large part to the leadership of my wife, Debbie, was very effective. She and I, though young and inexperienced in pastoral leadership, led an equally young and inexperienced group of new believers who were committed to ministering to children.

For the past 15 years I have pastored a church that has the financial resources to employ a full-time children's pastor. I have been privileged to minister with some capable and committed children's pastors.

The key to an effective, growing children's ministry is the leader.

Whether paid or volunteer, male or female, young or old, full or part-time, it doesn't matter. The leader makes or breaks the ministry.

And just as the basketball coach needs to find the right person for each position on the court, so the pastor/coach must seek God's wisdom to identify the person(s) to lead the children's ministry. The ability of a pastor to build a ministry leadership team is as crucial as his or her ability to preach God's Word. While great preaching will draw a crowd, it takes an effective discipling ministry to grow and maintain a solid, soul-winning church.

What kind of person should the pastor-coach look for to lead an exciting, spiritually alive children's ministry?

Spiritual qualities

The children's pastor should be a person:

- who loves Jesus and is filled with the Holy Spirit.
- whom God has called and anointed to minister to children.
- who is submissive to spiritual authority.
- who has a burning passion to see children saved and discipled.
- with a Christlike servant's heart—that is, a person who is not looking for a position of ministry but an opportunity to minister.

Personality and character traits

The children's pastor should be a person:

- who loves children and enjoys being with them.
- whom children love and are drawn toward.
- with integrity.
- who has high energy and a contagious passion.
- with a good sense of humor.
- who has the capacity and desire to continue to grow.
- who can effectively communicate with children and adults.
- who is creative.

Leadership skills²

The children's pastor should be a person with the ability to:

- connect with and encourage people.

- understand and motivate people.
- gather and recruit people.
- equip and empower people.
- develop and multiply people.

While all of the above qualities, traits, and skills are important, few people possess all of them. With the Spirit's anointing, incredible things happen in our ministry, even when we are inadequate. The apostle Paul believed and taught: "Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God" (2 Corinthians 3:4,5*).

You can have an effective children's ministry if your children's ministry leader(s) embodies the spiritual qualities and personality/character traits identified above. However, if you desire to have a cutting-edge, growing children's ministry and one that effectively reaches and disciples a larger number of children, it is essential that you prayerfully seek someone who also possesses or can develop the five leadership skills listed above. Without these skills, an individual, no matter how Christlike and committed, can only minister to a limited number of children. But when a person with the spiritual qualities and the personality/character traits also has these leadership skills, there is no limit to how many children he or she can influence with the love of Jesus.

Finding the Right Person

Whether in a smaller church or a larger one, here are some practical things a pastor-coach can do to find the right person to lead the children's ministry.

- Pray that God will raise up someone in your congregation who already possesses the gifts and passion for children's ministry.
- Pray that God will help you disciple and mentor someone who has the potential gifts and passion for children's ministry.
- Pray that God will help you lead someone to Christ who eventually could minister to children. (Several of our most effective children's ministry leaders have been individuals whom we

led to Christ and discipled.)

- Share your heart with your deacons and other ministry leaders in your church. Ask them to pray with you.

- Ask a neighboring pastor to assist you in identifying and developing leaders in your church. Others are willing to help if we are not too proud to ask.

- Ask help from your district office. Your district leadership will consult with you about your situation. They love you and want to help.

- Call the student ministries office at one or more of our colleges. They will provide names of graduating seniors or recent graduates who have a passion for children's ministry.

- Because leaders attract leaders, develop your own leadership gifts. As you do, you'll find that young leaders will ask if you have a place for them.

HELP EQUIP THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY LEADER.

While the children's ministry leader (either paid or volunteer) has the

responsibility to equip or "prepare God's people for works of service" (Ephesians 4:12), the pastor/coach has the privilege of helping to equip the children's ministry leader by:

Association

Spend time to develop a good relationship with the children's ministry leader. The Gospels record that Jesus called His disciples to "be with him" (Mark 3:14). As He spent time with the Twelve, Jesus poured himself into them, equipping them to effectively do the work He would ask them to do.

All of us are busy. But if we want to be the kind of leader who is developing and multiplying people, we must spend time with those we are leading. If you will spend time with your children's ministry leader and develop a solid personal relationship, your children's ministry leader will begin to flourish.

Instruction

There are things your children's ministry

leader needs to know. Your instruction-investment will reap a big harvest. Coach Wooden was a great coach because he was a great instructor. He taught by example and word. A little bit of instruction each week, over time, will result in an excited, maturing team member.

Demonstration

While instruction is telling them what to do, demonstration is showing them how to do it. This is a powerful way to equip and train. For example, one of the best ways for the children's ministry leader to improve his/her preaching is to watch you preach. Encourage your children's ministry leader to closely observe you and other leaders so they can more readily learn. Jesus not only instructed His disciples concerning prayer, but He showed them how to pray. They learned by watching the Master.

Giving feedback

Positive and corrective feedback is essential in the training process. Your

HIRE A CHILDREN'S PASTOR

Getting the right people in the right position is an important part of pastoral success. I have often been asked what church staff I would hire first. I would begin with a good secretary. He or she can double your effectiveness almost immediately.

Next I would hire a children's pastor. An excellent ministry to children will build a local church. Children are easier to reach and lead to the Lord than teens or adults. Children have the unique ability to bring their friends, parents, and grandparents to church, particularly to special events.

One cannot build an exciting and successful children's ministry without trained leadership, pastoral support, clean and adequate facilities, and a commitment to reaching children, no matter how much it costs. You cannot have a growing church if there are no children present.

My strongest comments would be reserved for the church that does everything first class for the adults, with the teenagers next in line, and the children somewhere after that. That sends a message to children and parents that ministry to preteens ranks low. Most parents will not stay long enough for that to turn around.

In today's market, a clean, up-to-date children's ministry, staffed by trained, caring people, is not an option if you want a growing church. Parents with small children often choose a church based on the care and concern that is provided for their children more than any other reason.

Another question is, "Where do I get good workers?" You have two options: inherit, entice, or proselytize workers whom someone else has trained, or train your own. Many pastors have been blessed by the occasional gift of a mature, seasoned leader, but you cannot build a ministry on this uncertain source. Why not train your own with your vision and leadership style setting the pace? If necessary, start with one.

Jesus chose 12, and none of them were especially impressive. But after 3 1/2 years of training plus being baptized in the Holy Spirit, 11 of them became great men of God.

Jesus also told us to pray for workers. Most of the ones He sends us are diamonds in the rough, not polished gems. What an enriching and fulfilling experience to see people discover their gifts and talents and use them to build the local church.

Jesus said He would build His church, and He has the resources and workers to get the job done. He calls pastors to lead the way.

—Charles E. Hackett is executive director of Assemblies of God Home Missions, Springfield, Missouri.

children's ministry leaders need to know when they have done well and when they could improve. And while corrective feedback is absolutely critical for growth, positive feedback is even more important.

A word of caution: Some pastors have strong perfectionist tendencies; we expect a lot of ourselves and of others. While that quality is good, it can be a source of discouragement for leaders.

I have discouraged several young assistant pastors. In the past, my tendency has been to point out the areas in which improvement is needed rather than giving positive feedback for a job well done. I deeply regret having done that.

As I change and grow as a leader, I am learning the value of giving much more positive feedback than corrective feedback. Positive feedback is a great way to equip and train.

Provide Resources

Provide as many resources for your children's ministry as your church can afford. Resources could include:

- *Budget.* Whether it's \$500 or \$50,000, provide finances for the children's ministry. Money is needed for training materials, retreats for the children, puppets, appreciation dinners, and curriculum.

- *Seminars and conferences.* An effective children's ministry leader needs to master skills: administration, leadership, recruiting and training, dynamic preaching, puppets, storytelling, balloon animals, and illusions. It is money well invested when you provide opportunities and encourage your children's

ministry leader to attend local, regional, and national conferences. An alert and growing leader will benefit greatly from them.

Here are three practical notes about seminars and conferences:

1. If possible, provide the money to send your leader with his/her spouse.

2. Ask your leader to research the various seminars and conferences that are available and put together an appropriate budget. Then the two of you decide together which opportunities would be best for that individual.

3. Many districts conduct annual training conferences. Encourage your children's ministry leader(s) to participate and support them.

You may ask, "Why invest all that money in training? They'll become effective and some bigger church will hire them away from us." That may happen. But which do you prefer—a well-trained leader who is with you for a while, does a great job of evangelizing and discipling your children, then leaves for another place, or an untrained non-leader who stays with you forever? I'll take the former every time.

- *Assist with recruiting volunteers for the children's ministry.* In nearly every church, the largest cadre of volunteers are those who minister to children. It takes several committed people to provide ministry through Sunday school, children's church, Royal Rangers, Missionettes, Junior Bible Quiz, and well-staffed nurseries. You and your children's ministry leader are teammates, so do all you can to help him or her succeed in building a strong children's ministry team.

EMPOWER THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY LEADER.

Turn your children's ministry leader loose to do what God has called him or her to do. One of the most frustrating things for an assistant pastor or a lay volunteer ministry leader is having responsibility but no authority—being given a task but not the freedom to do it.

Some pastors are good at asking someone to do something, but not good in letting him or her do it. Let's face it—they probably won't do it like we would, or as well as we could (at least at first). But if we insist on monitoring their every move, we will stifle their enthusiasm, creativity, and desire to do what God has called them to do.

Here are a few practical things about empowering others to minister:

Establish boundaries.

Discuss with your children's ministry leader what you expect. Let him/her know if there are some things he/she is not permitted to do.

Discuss lines of accountability.

To whom is the children's ministry leader accountable? With whom will he/she meet on a regular basis to discuss the ministry?

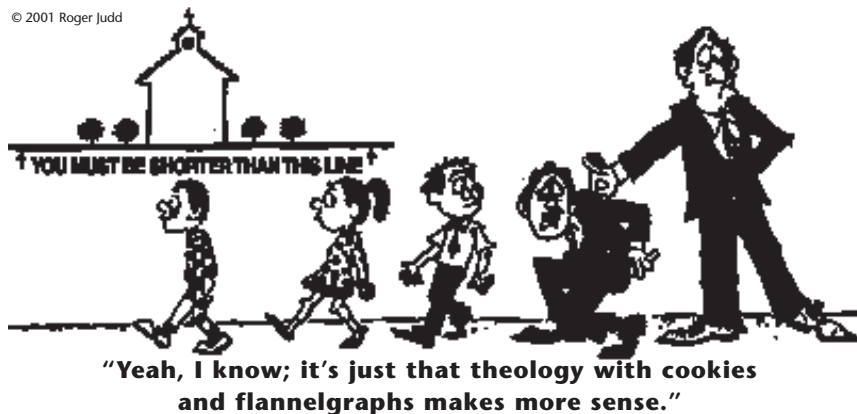
Discuss compensation.

Is this a totally voluntary ministry position? Is there part-time pay? If your children's ministry leader is full-time, how much will he/she be paid? Are there other benefits such as health insurance, vacation, mileage or ministry expense reimbursement? To avoid misunderstanding later about the compensation package, spell out the details of it in writing when you hire your children's ministry leader.

Communicate.

When bringing in a new children's ministry leader, be sure your church leadership, children's workers, and congregation are made aware of his or her responsibilities and expectations. While specifics of compensation are certainly not to be shared with the congregation, it is important for them to know

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RAISING UP YOUNG LEADERS THROUGH SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday school provides some of the greatest evangelism and discipleship opportunities available to the church today. Senior pastors who recognize this wisely invest time and resources in their Sunday school staff and facilities. They realize that Sunday school provides an ideal training ground for the future leaders of the church.

Each week in Sunday school, children learn how to be disciples and Christian leaders as they participate in classes specifically designed for their age level. In a classroom setting, children can receive the personal attention they need. They discover spiritual truths by asking questions, discussing Scripture, and through active participation in enjoyable learning activities. Skilled teachers help children develop their inherent and spiritual gifts in an atmosphere of acceptance and encouragement. In a friendly, evangelistic Sunday school, children can make friends and be assimilated into the church in a short period of time.

Furthermore, as children grow in their faith, they learn to evangelize, serve their community, and begin to make a difference in their world. Adults sometimes underestimate the potential of children. Take 11-year old, Ashlee Vann, who runs a food pantry called the Kids Café, in Springfield, Missouri. Every day after school Ashlee helps cook and serve free dinners to approximately 75 needy children. She says, "I stepped in where I saw a need." A busy girl, Ashlee stays involved in her church and is a straight-A student. The mayor presented her with the key to the city at a school assembly.

Although an example like this is unusual, it illustrates what can be done through a child who is motivated to serve others. It is important that those who work with children see their potential and inspire them to prepare themselves for ministry.

The senior pastor is the key to providing the encouragement and resources teachers need to evangelize and equip these younger saints for ministry. Here are some ways senior pastors can lend support and express confidence in their teaching staff.

1. Be a voice for Sunday school. Be involved at some level in recruiting and training workers. According to a recent study, the senior pastor's involvement is a key factor in growing effective Sunday schools. (*High Expectations*, p.172.)

2. Invest time in the lives of your Sunday school teachers. Visit with them, send notes of encouragement, and attend training meetings when possible. Have a teacher dedication Sunday and an annual appreciation dinner for your Christian education staff.

3. Visit the children's department occasionally. Greet the children and the teaching staff. Make arrangements for a special visit from the pastor during the Sunday school hour.

4. Reserve time on the church calendar for staff training and planning meetings. Send your workers to training conferences.

5. Provide a teacher resource library. This allows teachers to study, plan together, and make creative teaching materials for their classes. Bring in a guest speaker at least once a year to train and inspire your workers. Provide childcare and refreshments for staff training meetings.

6. Provide funds for creating a cheerful learning environment for the children. Visiting parents will evaluate the quality of your children's program based on their first impression of the children's area.

Your investment in Sunday school will pay dividends in the years to come as young leaders are evangelized, trained, and launched out into the harvest field as a result of the training they've received in your Sunday school.


—Verda Rubottom is children's ministries consultant for the Sunday School Promotion and Training Department, Springfield, Missouri.

whether this person is full-time or part-time and what his or her individual responsibilities are. This communication benefits everyone.

From time to time, give your children's ministry leader an opportunity to speak to the adults for a few minutes during the Sunday morning service, or let him or her preach on Sunday morning. When you allow your children's ministry leader to share his or her heart with the adults, you are empowering that person and making effective children's ministry more possible and probable.

Encourage and expect your children's ministry leader to try new things, be creative, and make mistakes. You may have a burn mark on the new gym floor (as

we do) when an illustration didn't go exactly as intended. But that's not the end of the world. Maturing disciples—not having a stain-free floor—is our goal.

As pastor-coaches, the members of our team may sometimes disappoint us. But let's not forget the many times they have made us proud. If we will do our best to prayerfully and wisely select the best individuals to lead our children's ministries teams; if we will do our best to equip our children's ministry leaders to do the best possible job they can do; and if we will empower them by turning them loose, we will have many joyful experiences and positive memories. 

John M. Palmer is senior pastor, First Assembly of God, Des Moines, Iowa.



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PREPARING
FOR A
Spirit-Filled
CHILDREN'S
MINISTRY

THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT'S FUTURE

LEADERSHIP IS NOW SITTING IN OUR
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY. IT IS

IMPERATIVE THAT OUR CHILDREN
LEARN TO BE SENSITIVE TO THE
HOLY SPIRIT'S PRESENCE.

B Y B I L L Y B U R N S



As a child growing up in a small South Texas Assemblies of God church, I witnessed the early days of children's ministry. In those days, children's pastors and Christian education directors were nonexistent. The ministry methods were primitive by today's standards. Puppets often had a missing eye or a mouth that wouldn't open. Bible stories were told using small pictures recycled from outdated Sunday school curriculum. Who can forget the children's church booster band with maracas, bongo drums, triangles, and tambourines (with most of the metal pieces missing)?

During my 21 years of full-time children's ministry, I've witnessed an evolution that has catapulted many of today's children's ministries into a high-tech, multimedia extravaganza. In some churches, the children enter a theme-park environment each Sunday. Today's children's pastors and Christian education directors are striving to reach today's child with today's methods.

In an age where children's leaders feel driven to produce high-energy,

sophisticated productions each week, it is important for us to evaluate the effectiveness of our ministries. Are we impacting a generation of children with a Holy Spirit-given, heartfelt message, or are we just tickling the five physical senses? If we are honest, some reading this article will admit that their desire to draw big crowds and have great programs has replaced their desire to allow the Holy Spirit to be in total control of their services.

After being a children's evangelist for 10 years, and then becoming a children's pastor in 1989, I thought I had all of the answers. I could produce a good, fresh service each week. I changed our children's church name to *Pneuma* (the Greek word for *Spirit*) Force to reflect a new image. Things were going great until the day I had a heavenly interruption.

While I was driving back from a conference, the Holy Spirit spoke words that changed my life and ministry: "Change your actions or change your name." What was He referring to? My first reaction was to challenge Him. After all, I had been in this ministry for 15 years. People were coming to observe

and study our ministry. Was He talking to the right person? Then the Holy Spirit crystallized His instructions: "If you call yourself a *Pneuma* or Spirit-Force church, then the Spirit has to be in control." The Spirit was telling me to back up our name with the proof of His presence. I began to make major changes in my life and ministry to facilitate the Holy Spirit's work.

HOLY SPIRIT-EMPOWERED MINISTRY

The above story doesn't apply only to my ministry. Many Pentecostal children's ministries are Pentecostal in name only. Occasionally, the Holy Spirit is allowed to move if time permits. If your church is a part of a Holy Spirit movement, then there should be a movement of the Holy Spirit. It isn't an "adults only" concept. Acts 2:33 tells us that the Holy Spirit has something He wants to do and say every time we come together. Like the apostle Paul, we should anticipate and prepare for a "demonstration of the Spirit and of power" (1 Corinthians 2:4, KJV). Many children's leaders have settled for good services with good lessons when God is calling them to allow His Spirit to have freedom to move as He desires. We can no longer settle for just being good. We must strive for a move of the Holy Spirit.

We need to desire a children's ministry where the Holy Spirit moves freely because:

1. It is biblical.

God's Word promises that the Holy Spirit will move on our children.

- "This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy' " (Acts 2:16-18*).

- "Peter replied,... 'And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off'" (Acts 2:38,39).

God wants to make this a reality, not just a promise.

2. It is historical.

What God has done before He can do

SECRETS OF A SPIRIT-FILLED CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

1. You are the catalyst for a Spirit-filled children's ministry. It all begins with one person, not a committee. It always begins with one person wanting to see God move.

2. You must be desperate. Desperation is dissatisfaction in motion. This will cause you to do whatever it takes to get what you so passionately desire. Desperation will drive you to your knees, crying out that His touch upon you and your children means more than your very next breath.

3. You must be daring. Daring people become vulnerable and go into areas they've never been before. Your passion will cause you to go after God in worship while the children are watching indifferently; or, to begin to pray aloud in your heavenly prayer language while the children are silently watching this newfound boldness. Your sensitivity at times will cause you to put the lesson aside to follow His prompting. Take courage in this truth—children will go where they see you go. Your first steps might be lonely, but soon a room full of children will have tears of joy rolling down their faces as they follow your example.

4. You must be determined. Don't let go until you get what you want. This is a journey, not an experience. It takes time and faith.

The key word in these secrets is Y-O-U. As *your* hunger causes the Holy Spirit to saturate *you* with His presence and glory, the overflow will change the classroom into a Spirit-filled, *Pneuma-Force* church.

—Billy Burns, Lake Worth, Florida

again. Here are examples of the Holy Spirit touching and flowing through children.

- *Cane Ridge Revival, Kentucky, 1801.* "Little children, too, were brought visibly into the kingdom of God, like the 7-year-old girl, sitting on her father's shoulder, who exhorted the crowd for a time and then slumped down in weariness."¹

- *Maria Woodworth-Etter, St. Louis, Missouri, 1890.* "One day, a helpless little girl was brought to me. She could neither talk nor walk. After I prayed for her, I told some of the folks to take her out and let her try to walk.... After a while, they brought her back. She was walking and talking, but they couldn't understand a word that she said. Praise the Lord. She had the use of her whole body; she was walking and talking in a strange language or tongue. She was filled with the Spirit and was bold as a lion. I stood her on the platform, and she began to walk about and preach. With hands uplifted...she preached to the astonished multitude, showing what great things the Lord had done for her."²

- *Welsh Revival, Evan Roberts, 1904.* "While this was a revival of youth, children were so taken up with the things of God that they held their own meetings in homes, barns, yards; many from about the age of 10 would exhort, sing and pray with great power. Many young children took part in public meetings as well."³ "Children began to pray and sing for hours."⁴

- *John G. Lake.* "I was sitting one day in the home of the DeValeras in Krugersdorp, South Africa, when a man arrived who had...been following me from place to place, trying to catch up with me. He...had developed a large cancer. He came into the house and...in a little while a 6-year-old child who had been sitting near me went across the room, climbed on the man's knees, put her hands on his face, and prayed. I saw the cancer wither. In half an hour, the thing had disappeared."⁵

3. It is essential.

The Pentecostal movement's future leadership is now sitting in our children's ministry. It is imperative that our

children learn to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's presence and know how to flow with Him. It is critical that they be allowed to *see* and *hear* Him work in *their* services. During these foundational years, it is our responsibility to create an atmosphere where children echo the psalmist David's words, "I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory" (Psalm 63:2). This ensures that future generations will desire to flow with the Holy Spirit.

How can the typical children's ministry change into a Spirit-filled children's ministry? It is not a matter of what you know as much as who you know. No curriculum or Spirit-in-a-box methodology will produce a Spirit-filled children's ministry. No conference will produce this type of ministry. It comes from what I call the "know and glow" principle. After Moses had been alone with God, his countenance was changed. After spending time on our faces in His presence, we won't be able to contain His glorious presence.

I readily admit that I don't have all of the answers. While I acknowledge that our children's ministry isn't where I want it to be, I'm thankful that it is not where it used to be. We are changing, one child at a time, into a *Pneuma-Force* church that allows the Holy Spirit to flow freely. Children are learning how

to go after God in their worship and how to allow the Holy Spirit to flow through them during times of prayer. While I strive each service to have excellent ministry techniques and methods, I continue to strive to be sensitive to His leadership. All preservice plans and curriculum are subject to His promptings. We want to see demonstrations of the Spirit and of power and be a *Pneuma-Force* church in name and action. **e**

**Scripture references are from the New International Version, unless otherwise noted.*

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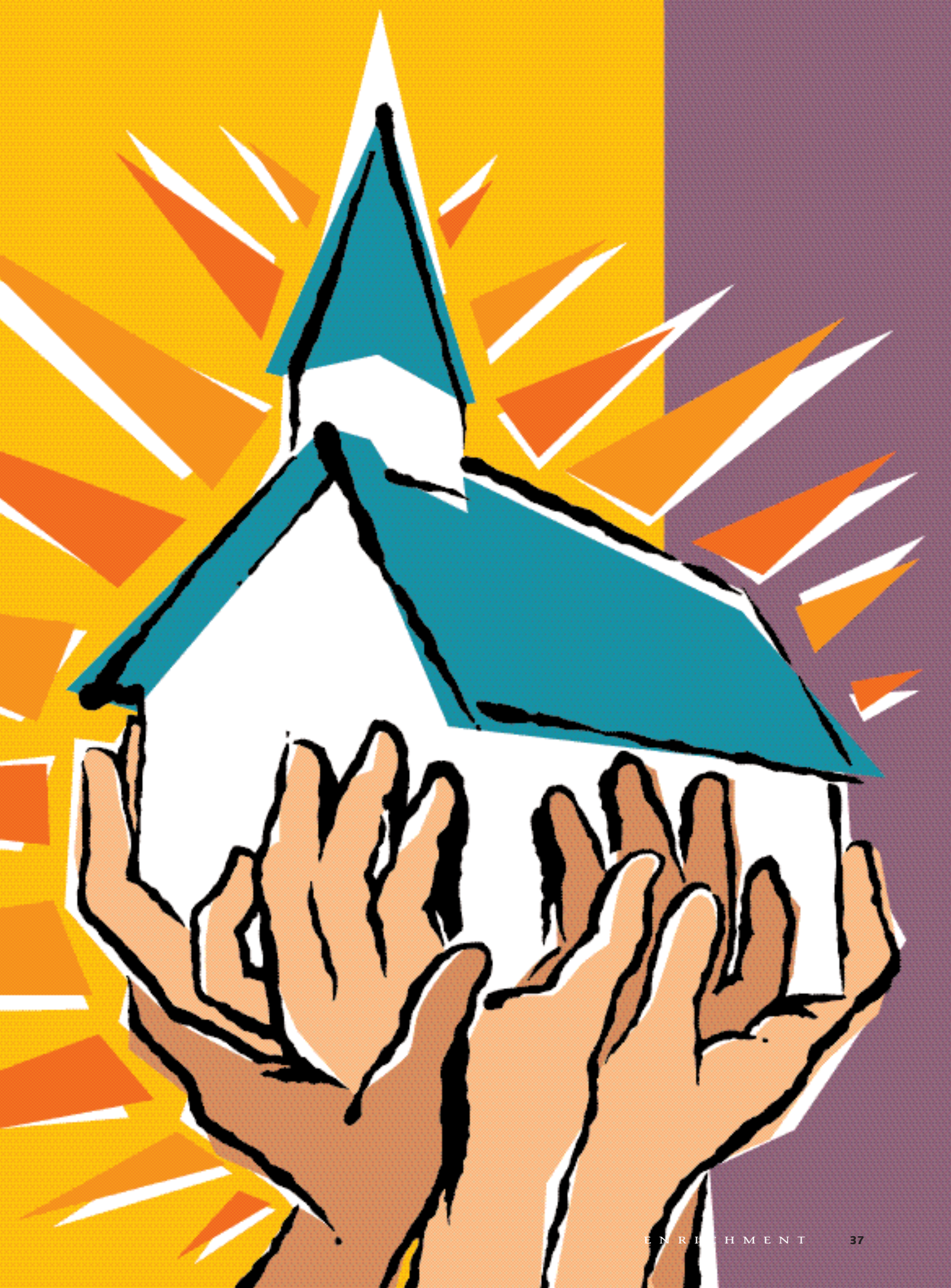
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BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEAM IN THE SMALLER CHURCH

Some pastors may depend on a paid staff to help fulfill their vision, but the pastor of a smaller church depends on his or her ability to implement the vision through volunteers.

B Y J O E Y E L L I S



VISION

"Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). "Record the vision and inscribe it on tablets, that the one who reads it may run" (Habakkuk 2:2, NASB).

Building an effective children's team begins with vision. Some pastors may depend on a paid staff to help fulfill their vision, but the pastor of a smaller church depends on his or her ability to implement the vision through volunteers. Teams in any size church are built around the leader's vision. The question is: What do you want to see happen in your children's ministry?

Vision is a great communicator.

People do not simply want to fill a need; they want to be a part of a mission. What greater mission is there than raising children to serve Jesus? It is easier to build boys and girls than to repair men and women. Pray for a God-sized vision and then recruit based on your vision.

Vision is caught, not taught.

Vision is communicated in casual settings as well as preplanned, formal settings. Speak of your vision in the hallways of the church as you are walking alongside your church members. Talk about it over lunch with a board member. Communicate it through statements of purpose: "Our nursery team has the unique privilege of being some of the first people to introduce babies to Jesus. Because we know that the concept of God is developed in the mind of a child before age 6, we view our nursery as a critical element in the foundation of a child's spiritual development. Would you like to be a part of a ministry that is first in line to say to these precious boys and girls 'Jesus loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so?'"

Have a vision for your size of ministry.

Build on the strengths of being small. Not all parents are interested in large programs. Some parents feel more comfortable leaving their children in the care of a teacher who has fewer

students. Smaller churches can offer more individualized attention to children. Promote and publicize according to your strengths. New families and the volunteer core in your church are interested in being a part of a winning team, not necessarily a large team.

RECRUITING

"We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:3,4, NIV).

Pray for God to place the spiritual needs of your children on the hearts of your adults. Pray for God's team. You do not just want adult bodies in classrooms; you want people who sense your vision and have a heart for children. The church will take on the heart of the pastor.

Those closest to the leader help determine that organization's level of success. Building a team is more than simply unloading responsibility onto someone else. It is giving them your heart and investing in them. We use the acronym TEAM—Together Everybody Accomplishes More.

Secure leaders surround themselves with people who are better than they are in certain areas. This is the beauty of the diverse ministry gifts God has given to the church. Building a team can happen many ways.

Cast your vision publicly.

Recruit through casting your vision from the pulpit. Let your congregation know you have a vision and are acting on it. During sermons based on your vision, you can lead people to commit to ministry. Have them respond in writing on a response card. This method gets the quickest exposure to the biggest audience. Call everyone who responds. Not everyone who responds will fulfill his or her commitment. Some who respond should not work with children. Have other areas of ministry available for those whose personalities and giftings do not fit children's ministries. Before beginning a recruiting campaign, have a method of conducting

background checks on each person.

Recruit one-on-one.

Observe those in your congregation who love Jesus, are faithful, and love you as pastor. Contact them about joining you in your pursuit of God's vision for your church. This is the most time-consuming way of recruiting, yet it can prove to be the most effective way to produce long-term ministry teams. Why? Because you, as pastor, have personally asked them to help you carry out your vision.

Appoint a director of children's ministries.

This person gives overall coordination to children's ministries. This individual may be someone presently involved or a parent of a child in the church. The director will help shoulder the responsibility so departmental leaders will not need to go to the pastor with their concerns and questions.

Establish a children's ministries council.

A children's ministries council is another avenue to approach when building your team. If one individual is not readily available for the director's position, create a council. It can be composed of each ministry team leader and serve directly under the leadership of the senior pastor. This can be effective but it requires more time. And you may find that one member of your council may be capable of handling the director's position.

Beyond the director's position, ministries can be divided by function and responsibility: nursery, preschool, children's church, Missionettes, Royal Rangers, Junior Bible Quiz, children's choirs, puppet and drama teams, Sunday school, and outreach. Each of these ministries needs one key leader or overseer. Do not try to fill all of these positions at one time. Start with the position that seems easiest to fill and then train its leader. Some people may be able to oversee more than one area. But make sure that the people you select to lead children's ministries positions

also have the opportunity to be ministered to themselves.

Recruit with a plan.

Before you begin to build your team, make a list of every position where you need a volunteer. As you fill these positions, write them down. This will build your faith when you see what God is doing. Develop job descriptions for each ministry position. It is much easier to recruit when you can hand volunteers descriptions of what you are asking them to do. Job descriptions communicate to your volunteers that you have put thought into the positions you are asking them to fill, and they enable your leaders to minister with greater confidence and direction.

KEEPING

"I thank my God every time I remember you" (Philippians 1:3, NIV). "Teach them the decrees and the laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform" (Exodus 18:20, NIV).

After you have rallied people around your vision, keeping them is important. The more consistent you can be in your leadership team, the more effective you will be in ministering to your children. Change creates insecurity in children and in their parents. Seeing the same face in the classroom week after week breeds familiarity and trust.

Keeping your volunteers involves two important areas: appreciation and training. If you show your people you appreciate them, they will try to do their best for you. If you provide training, they will also try to do their best.

The pastor and leaders of the church need to understand children's ministry. Volunteers need to know you are aware of what they are doing. The pastor needs to visit the nursery during a Sunday morning service. At the beginning of the service, have your adult service leader announce: "Good morning. Welcome to church. Pastor is visiting our nursery and preschool areas this morning and encouraging our lay ministry team who faithfully minister to your children each week. He will join

us later in the service." This lets your congregation and visitors know you care about children and adult volunteers. From the pulpit the following week accentuate the positive things you saw. This will also help you know what areas need improvement.

Appreciation

One of the most effective ways of showing appreciation for children's ministries is financial support. We put our money where our priorities are. Look at

your financial records.

Sincere, public praise is invaluable. Compliment your team in public. From the pulpit, praise your children's ministries team. Use various opportunities to give verbal praise. This lets your team members know you have confidence in them and are aware of their ministry to children. If you have nothing about which to praise them, then it may be time to rebuild your team. Use statements like: "It thrills me when I hear that our children love coming to

DEVELOPING A VISION STATEMENT FOR YOUR CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

A vision statement should express where your church fits into the mission of the Church—God's unchanging plan and direction for His church. You also need a clear-cut strategy to implement your vision.

Your vision statement should be easy to read and comprehend. It needs to be written in relevant terms that clearly communicate your end result. It also needs to connect all five purposes of the church: evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and worship.

Following are some examples:

1. We will lead people into a growing relationship with Christ by creating environments in which participants are encouraged to pursue intimacy with God, community with insiders, and influence with outsiders.
2. We are dedicated to seeing people grow upward in worship, inward in commitment, and outward in evangelism.
3. Our vision is to make disciples of Jesus Christ in a contemporary, Spirit-filled environment that emphasizes relationship, relevant ministry, spiritual growth, celebration, and giving.

With this intentional, focused purpose in mind, develop a vision statement for your children's ministry.

Example:

We will lead children into a growing relationship with Christ by creating environments in which children are encouraged to pursue friendship with God, make friends with good people, understand their God-given gifts and begin to use them, and positively affect their friends who do not know Jesus.

A strategy for fulfilling this vision statement would include:

From birth, children are exposed to teaching that reinforces our vision statement. They are:

- given opportunity to experience God's love and forgiveness.
- taught how to make good friends.
- taught about spiritual gifts and how they can use theirs.
- instructed in how to relate Christ to their friends in everyday situations.

Once you have established a vision statement, let it direct everything you do. This may mean a change in some of your programs.

Be intentional in developing your plan. It will affect the life and vitality of your church.

—Joey Ellis, Springfield, Missouri.

church. Parents tell me their children get them out of bed on Sunday mornings and ask 'Is it time to go to church, yet?' Our dedicated and trained staff of men and women welcomes your children to their classrooms. Each week our teachers share with their classes the good news that Jesus loves them and has a plan for their lives."

Not only have you given your children's ministries team a positive shot in the arm, but you have communicated your vision of reaching children for Jesus. Praise your teachers when they are in the adult service. Much of the time your children's team is with the children. They will never hear of your compliments unless someone tells them.

A handwritten note of thanks is powerful. Take 15 minutes each day and write notes of thanks to your leadership team. Encourage key leaders to write their team players. Three short sentences of praise and thanks will boost their morale and their sense of accomplishment for the kingdom of God. When you take time to thank them, it will endear them to you forever.

Have a children's ministries team appreciation dinner. If finances prohibit the

church from covering the entire expense of the meal, then provide what you can and make the rest a covered-dish event. Most people in small churches understand financial limitations. Give out awards so every leader gets something. At the close of the evening, tell your workers how much you appreciate their ministry and that the church could not make it without them. People need to feel needed. They will walk away from an appreciation dinner or event recharged, ready to do more for the children.

Ways of showing appreciation are only limited by your creativity and sincerity.

Training

When people catch the vision and commit to ministry, they sincerely want to do a good job. Yet in many cases they have never received any training for their ministry. Training builds confidence. There is nothing more frustrating than spending an hour with a group of kids in a classroom and not knowing what you are doing. So often, volunteers find themselves teaching a class but not being properly equipped. This is discouraging

for your leader and your children.

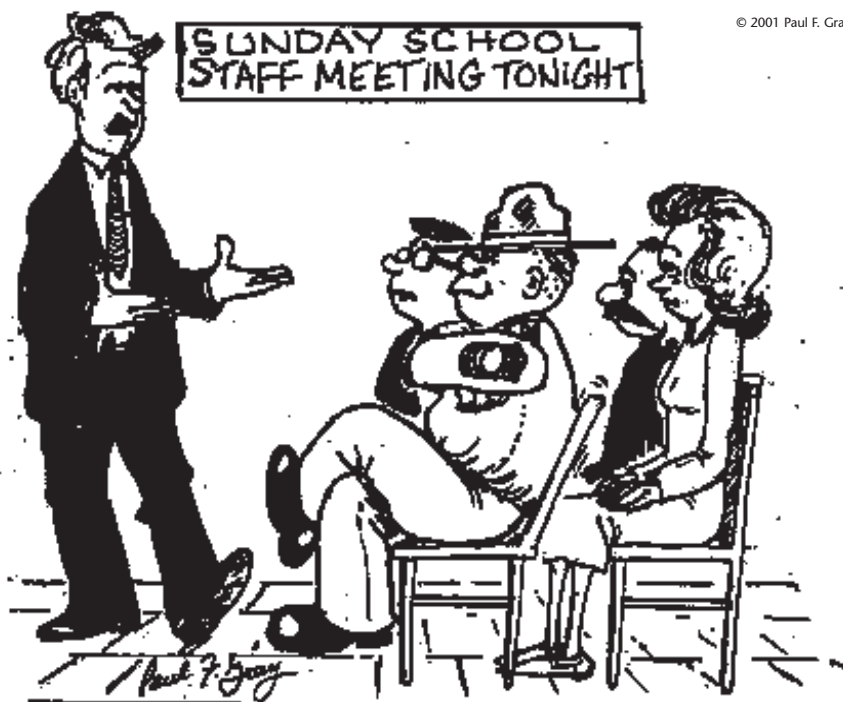
Training is essential to the long-term growth of your children's ministry. When a young man or woman joins the armed forces, he or she is sent to basic training to be trained for battle. We are training our children's leaders to do battle for the spiritual lives of our children.

Training events can be as easy as having one of your experienced teachers conduct several classes on creative teaching techniques. Send your team to a training event at another location or invite an outside ministry into your church to help train your leaders.

Invest in your team. Most districts have Christian education conventions. There are several children's ministries conference held each year. Be willing to invest financially in your teachers. In a small church, finances may not permit paying for everyone to go to a conference. When you meet with your key leaders, explain your desire for training. Communicate the financial limitations of the church. If there is a church vehicle they can use, have the church cover the vehicle expenses. Maybe the church can only pay the registration fee or one-half of the registration. When teachers sense your desire to help them minister to children by providing training, they will love you for it and will make an extra effort to attend training events.

Building an effective children's ministry team is critical for any church that desires to reach this generation for Christ. Small churches have opportunities for growth that are unique to their situation. Your team of volunteers can be built around a safe, sanitary, loving, and creative children's ministry. By using these principles, you can build a children's ministry team that will effectively teach and train your kids in their walk with Christ. **e**

Joey Ellis is Children's Ministries Agency/BGMC ministry development coordinator field representative, Springfield, Missouri.



"Sarge, we're privileged to have a drill instructor teaching the junior boys. But please cease from addressing them as 'maggots'."

interview

WITH ROD BAKER, DAVID BOYD,
AND GILBERT CEBALLOS

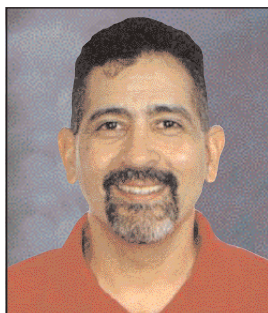
Impacting Inner-City Kids for Christ



ROD BAKER



DAVID BOYD



GILBERT CEBALLOS

Many churches are impacting their cities by reaching the children in the inner city with the gospel. Enrichment interviewed three children's pastors who shared their burden for inner-city ministry to children. Rod Baker is children's pastor at Victory Christian Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Under his ministry, the church has created 16 departments focusing on reaching the children of their city.

Gilbert Ceballos and his wife, Maritza, are children's pastors at New Life Assembly of God, Pembroke Pines, Florida. People from 40 different nationalities attend New Life Assembly.

David Boyd is the Children's Ministries Agency/BGMC coordinator, Springfield, Missouri. Prior to coming to Springfield, David was children's pastor at First Assembly of God, Fort Myers, Florida.

These men provide practical suggestions that all churches, both large and small, can use to reach their inner cities for Christ.

IN WHAT WAYS HAVE SIDEWALK SUNDAY SCHOOLS BEEN EFFECTIVE IN REACHING YOUR COMMUNITY WITH THE GOSPEL?

BAKER: Sidewalk Sunday schools are a great concept because any church can conduct them. A sidewalk Sunday school will bring new life to a church because it brings in new families. Initially, a church does not need to make a large investment in capital or personnel.

Our sidewalk teams share the gospel using music and puppets along with Bible stories. We have sidewalk teams that visit families the day before the meeting. We tell mothers, "Come and hear the gospel with the boys and girls. After our program we will give you a box of groceries." Through our sidewalk Sunday schools we saw the need to start parenting cell groups. Most of the families we are trying to reach don't know how to be good parents.

CEBALLOS: Jesus spent much of His time in the streets and in people's homes, not in synagogues. Sidewalk Sunday schools take us out of the four walls of the church and into places where people need to hear the gospel.

Through our sidewalk Sunday schools, we are also able to minister to physical needs. Many single mothers who are on fixed incomes come to our outreaches. Many of them feel life has passed them by. When their government subsidy runs out at the end of the month, we bring them food and clothing. By feeding and clothing low-income families, we are following Jesus' command.

Through our sidewalk Sunday schools, we have been able to reach and soften the hearts of parents as well as reach their children for Jesus.

HOW CAN CHURCHES DEVELOP SIDEWALK SUNDAY SCHOOLS?

BAKER: Pastors must share their vision with the leadership and the congregation. We took pictures of the government complexes. We then placed an announcement in our bulletin: "There is a man who wants to pay for a mission trip for you. Will you go? More information will be available next week." People were excited and ready to go overseas for a short-term mission trip. The next Sunday we showed slides of the housing complexes. We said, "Our mission field is right here,

trucks. People who see what you are doing to reach the community with the gospel will donate money and materials.

If pastors want their churches to explode, they need to go after the greatest resource in their community—the children.

BOYD: Pastors who want to start an outreach may not know where to start. Tell your board that you would like to plan a day to give food and clothing to the community. Have one board member contact businesses and ask them to

To start a sidewalk Sunday school, pastors do not need a children's pastor or somebody who is exceptional in children's ministry—children appreciate whatever you have. Set up a cardboard box as a puppet stage, tell stories using Sunday school material, and give away freezer pops. This shows the community you care about their kids. You might only pull in kindergartners and first, second, and third graders. But they'll get saved, and their mothers will come.

The next step might be to get a flatbed trailer to use as a stage. The

**Through the outreach
programs of our church,
someone is visiting chil-
dren three times a week.
We bring food, counsel
parents, and win families
to the Lord.—Baker**



and Jesus is the One who paid the price for us to go."

The materials to accomplish a sidewalk Sunday school are available. If pastors will start with a Bible club, back-to-school bash, a 3-day VBS, or backyard VBS, it births what God has for the future.

Many pastors are looking for revival. Revival is here, and it is with the children in their communities. Jesus said if you receive a little child in My name, you receive Me. God will supply the resources for your outreaches. Some businesses that use panel trucks will donate them when they buy new

donate food. Assign another board member to contact clothing stores to see if they will donate clothing.

On the day of the event, have a children's evangelist minister to the children; a youth pastor to do a youth revival; and the senior pastor can preach to the adults. Pastors may want the children's evangelist to stay several extra days.

Pastors can also train the people in their church to minister. So many people will be saved, they will be busy with follow-up for months. The pastor and congregation will catch the burden.

stage and a sound system help you become more mobile. Eventually you can get a box trailer and cut the side out.

CEBALLOS: An outreach starts with a vision and passion to reach the kids in your community. Jesus said in Mark 10:14, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (NIV). We should try to bless every child we meet.

You don't need a lot of equipment to start a sidewalk Sunday school. Jesus sat on a hill or in a boat and told

stories, and everyone sat down to listen. If you tell stories, have illustrations, color posters, and puppets, you will draw a crowd. We started with nothing—just a cardboard box with some curtains taped on it and a bunch of blow-up puppets. If you're faithful with the little you have, the Lord will give you more. As our ministry grew, the Lord blessed us with a truck. When people outside the church heard what we were doing, they donated money and equipment.

Simply tell children about Jesus and love them. Each child is important in God's eyes. That's what the kids need; they need love, and they need to hear the truth.

WHY IS FOLLOW-UP AFTER A SIDEWALK SUNDAY SCHOOL IMPORTANT?

CEBALLOS: Follow-up and visitation are important parts of our ministry. We can conduct several sidewalk Sunday schools; but unless we go to the homes to see how families are doing and meet their needs for food and clothing, we're not doing all that we should. Besides taking a flyer telling them what's coming on Saturday, we ask if they need prayer. This is the reason families are coming to church and to Christ; they know we care.

BAKER: A few years ago I was over-seeing the third largest bus ministry in America. I felt something was amiss. I picked up children once a week, loved them, and then sent them back home. But I wouldn't see them again for a week. I determined that I needed to have contact with these children more than once a week. We decided to disciple them. In addition to our bus ministry (we bus in about 1,500 kids a week) and sidewalk Sunday schools, we started kids clubs. Our kids clubs are cell groups in government-subsidized apartment complexes where kids can be disciplined throughout the week.

In the immediate Tulsa area, there are 50 government-subsidized

apartment complexes. We are in 46 of them. Through the outreach programs of our church, someone is visiting children three times a week. We bring food, counsel parents, and win families to the Lord.

DESCRIBE HOW YOUR CELL GROUP MINISTRY WORKS.

BAKER: We call our cell groups Victory Kids Clubs. These kids clubs are like a Cub Scout den meeting. We provide a cassette tape of worship music and an agenda for a mini-children's church in homes.

Kids clubs can go anywhere—to the government complex or the suburban neighborhood, to homes or apartment complexes. Kids clubs become a mobile-children's church. Every week about 160 clubs meet throughout the immediate Tulsa area. We are reaching thousands of children with the gospel through our Victory Kids Clubs.

The kids clubs also provide opportunities for trained laypeople to minister. For instance, there may be a grandmother who loves children, has taught them in the past, and may believe she is no longer useful. By giving her a packet and letting her use her home to share the gospel with the children in her neighborhood, the church is not only utilizing a valuable ministry resource, but it is also discipling children in the process.

I write the Sunday school lessons. We also have a theme for the month, and each lesson revolves around that theme. Once a month we have a 2 1/2- to 3-hour mandatory meeting for our teachers where we review the lessons. We provide props and visuals and share with teachers the theme for the month. During this meeting, we also discuss certain situations in the neighborhood.

We want to do more than just win boys and girls; we want to win families. We put signs in the yards—"Victory Kids Club Meets Here." We give each host teacher door flyers that identify him or her as a cell leader, and list his or her phone number and address.

We also have back-to-school campaigns where our church members open their homes for an hour and bring in neighborhood kids. We provide resources for them. These are inexpensive ways to reach unchurched children with the gospel.

HOW DO YOU ACQUIRE RESOURCES SUCH AS FOOD AND CLOTHING TO GIVE TO THESE FAMILIES?

CEBALLOS: Many businesses and organizations are looking for places where they can donate food and clothing, but most churches don't ask for donations. I ask, and I mail letters to businesses. This year we prepared book bags for students. The schools gave us information concerning what children needed for school supplies. We then asked Wal-Mart and other places for discounts or to help us supply the needs of the kids. One of our hospitals was planning an immunization clinic. They asked us to provide a sidewalk Sunday school. We told them we would be preaching the gospel, and they said that is fine. We pray, and the Lord opens the doors.

BAKER: Last year I received \$3 million worth of goods. Proverbs 14:22 says, "A sinner's wealth is stored up for the righteous." But the righteous are not going after it. Billions of dollars of goods are being thrown away. I received 30,000 pounds of groceries today. It's there for the asking. If people know you are aggressively fulfilling the Great Commission, it doesn't matter what size church you have or what size community you're in; they will donate. You have not because you ask not.

HOW DO YOU DISCIPLINE INNER-CITY CHILDREN?

BOYD: When children register, give them a membership card to ride the bus. This means you have to meet with the parents before the child can attend. This limits the number of

visitors being brought because you first meet the parents and get their permission for their children to ride your bus. Then, if children fight on the bus, you pull their card. He or she must earn the card again after a certain length of time. It makes them members of something, and they realize that membership has its privileges and its responsibilities.

who fight, “Nobody’s going to hurt you here. If they hurt you, they’re going to have to hurt me.” We bring the love of God to them.

Certain people need to handle discipline. If an ex-marine sergeant starts jerking the children around, you’re going to end up with a lawsuit. You need someone who has the heart and compassion of God, and who can say

groups in America in the last church where I served. We bussed in 900 teenagers and children every week. These children are looking for identity, so we started soul-cell clubs because Proverbs 18:1 says a man that isolates himself seeks his own desire. We presently have 20 cell clubs.

We need to give inner-city kids a reason to be faithful to the gospel.

You don’t need a lot of equipment to start a sidewalk Sunday school. Jesus sat on a hill or in a boat and told stories, and everyone sat down to listen.—Ceballos



CEBALLOS: If children want to come to our sidewalk Sunday schools, they must obey our rules. If they continue to misbehave after a warning, they can’t come to church. We teach that coming to church is a privilege.

Once you develop meaningful relationships with the children, they will listen to you. Most of our bus kids are better behaved than many of the church kids because of the discipline, rapport, and respect we have built with the kids and with their parents.

BAKER: It’s best to start by bringing the bus children in on a Saturday because these boys and girls are from a world we can’t comprehend. Bus children want to be disciplined and loved. The Bible says whom God loves, He chastens. We talk about the rules. I tell kids

to the child, “Look me in the eye.” We need to realize that most of our bus children have been beaten and abused.

WHAT IMPACT ARE GANGS HAVING ON THE CHILDREN IN YOUR COMMUNITY?

CEBALLOS: Most of the gangs we see are in schools and are made up of kids. Most of these kids are starved for attention. That’s why they join gangs. Also, there’s no male presence in the home. The only male they see is the gang leader, so they want to be like him. Until we show what a real father or man looks like and what God expects a man to be, they’re going to follow that example.

BAKER: We’ve dealt with gangs a lot. I had one of the largest inner-city youth

Recently we started a junior leadership core group. Once a month I take 14-year-olds and older and put them through a training and discipleship series. They become leaders on the bus and in the ministry. My goal is to develop a group of people who will reach their community. I take them bowling, roller-skating, or to dinner.

Most children’s pastors need help. Pastor Tommy Barnett says help is in the house. The very ones to whom they are ministering can minister to others. We must give the children ownership and responsibility, or we’ll lose them. Giving without accountability leads to trouble. Instead of saying we’re going to simply rescue them, I’m giving them a desire, a passion, and a purpose. **e**

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES TODAY

Encouraging Male Involvement

IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES



BY GENE RONCONE



So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, and said to them, ‘Go over before the ark of the Lord your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the Israelites, to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, “What do these stones mean?” tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever’ ” (Joshua 4:4–7, NIV).

Too many American children are mentored in a feminine world. They grow up in homes, schools, and churches led and taught by women. Children have more than a 98-percent chance that their primary schoolteachers, babysitters, and day-care givers will be women.¹ The situation is no different in the church. Most Sunday school teachers, nursery workers, and children's church leaders are also women. We may wonder how society would be affected if children had more experiences with men as teachers and spiritual mentors.

Physiologists and psychologists say, generally speaking, that each half of the brain performs specific functions. The right brain specializes in creative things: painting, writing, innovation, and imagination. The left brain deals with cognitive and logical functions: language, numbers, and scientific concepts. The key to mental effectiveness is maintaining a balance between the two extremes of logic and creativity. Although neither of these functions can be fairly assigned to any one gender, their interdependence and balance illustrates our children's present need for both male and female Christian workers. Just as we would never desire to be wholly dominated by either left- or right-brain functions, so the discipleship of our children must also be balanced between the unique contributions of both male and female workers.

How can one address the need and unique contribution of male teachers without implying that men are more effective, desirable, or capable than female teachers? Clearly, we need both men and women in the discipleship of children. However, anyone who is involved in church work can attest to the shortage of men who are committed to discipling children. Men are not more effective; they are just more needed. It is time for men to overcome the obstacles and observe the outcome of involvement in children's ministry.

OVERCOMING THE OBSTACLES

Stereotyping is probably the most formidable obstacle that discourages male involvement in children's discipleship. Men often view ministering to children as women's work. Anyone can do it with little or no training. This view has boomeranged. Some women now feel that men are not capable of working with children. This female-dominated workforce has at times failed to recognize men as significant contributors in the spiritual lives of children.

Image consciousness is another hurdle for men. The rewards, recognition, and respect for children's workers are not as high as they are in other areas of ministry. One pastor told about a man named David in his church who overcame this obstacle. The pastor said, "One of the greatest blessings of my pastorate was a man in my church who surprised us when he said he and his wife wanted to work together in the nursery. I'd walk by and see David on the floor playing and talking with the children. He was just loving the children, and they were loving him. After a couple of years, he was elected to the church board. But he is still serving in the nursery because he has his Kingdom priorities figured out."²

Isolation can also become an obstacle to men. Because male workers are in a minority, they may feel awkward and isolated by the absence of other males.

A lack of challenge often faces men when their involvement is limited to either disciplinary roles or those associated with physical and manual aspects of the ministry rather than spiritual nurturing.

Fear is currently the greatest stumbling block to male involvement in children's discipleship. Society's hypersensitivity to pedophilia has caused men to feel apprehensive about having any interest in children or in showing affection toward them.

The most important thing to remember about these obstacles is that they are easily overcome once men understand that the rewards of their involvement far outweigh the cost of overcoming any of the hindrances. The rewards bring us to

the second reason why children need men involved in their discipleship.

OBSERVING THE OUTCOME

Children's ministry needs Christian men. Males bring a unique contribution that cannot be successfully substituted by females. Only men can serve as male role models and communicate the fatherhood of God in the female-dominated world of children.

The church may be the only place some children experience positive male role models.

Manhood is learned. In today's culture many children grow up in single-parent families. Children tend to think that what they experience at home is the way things are and should be. The church may be the only place where children have an opportunity to interact with men who model the loving, caring, and nurturing values of manhood.

The Scriptures make it clear that men are to be actively involved in the discipleship of children. In Joshua 4:4-7, after the Israelites crossed the Jordan River, the Lord instructed Joshua to charge the men with the duty of teaching God's faithfulness to the next generation. Joshua instructed 12 men to take stones from the bottom of the Jordan and build a monument that would serve as a vivid reminder of God's faithfulness and assist the Israelite men in teaching their children about Him. Other examples of male responsibility for teaching children about God are found in Exodus 12:21-27; 13:8,14; Deuteronomy 6:7,20,21. Nothing has changed. Children still need to be around Christian men who are actively involved in ministry, possess spiritual passion, and are faithful fathers and husbands.

The educational system recognizes the reality of needing male role models. In one study about male influence, Patrick Lee found that the presence of father substitutes in the classroom could eliminate some of the negative effects of father absence and low father availability for both boys and girls.³

The former White House Administration even perceived the significance of a male presence in children's lives. Al Gore and a vice presidential committee recognized this need in a consortium report that stated, "It is difficult for a boy to understand the responsibilities and expectations of fathering when there is no father or male role model present in his life." The same report said, "Role models are needed for young men and boys to understand what constitutes a healthy marriage and a healthy relationship between a father and child."⁴

Sunday school teachers have understood this principle for years. Kids need a male perspective of faith. Everyone seems to understand the increasing need for male role models except the majority of Christian men. By molding masculine Christianity for the next generation, we are building a new army of future leaders who will be better equipped to pass on faith to their own children.

Men make critical and unique contributions to a child's learning.

The National Education Association Research Division found that less than 2 percent of teachers at third grade and below are men. However, men can make a unique contribution to the lives of children. A distinction made between male and female teachers is not determined just by the depth of their voices, their physical sizes, or by other noticeable differences. Certain characteristics describe most men who are in a teaching role.

First, men are seldom passive and rarely allow children to be idle in their growth and learning. Men approach problem solving in a direct way. They tend to be more aggressive and physical in how they interact with children. Men allow children more independence and freedom to investigate.⁵ One author says that men's practical priorities more closely resemble those of children than do those of women. "The men in the day-care center have priorities that are closer to the young child's priorities

than are the priorities of most women teachers. It is rarely too cold, too hot, too wet, too windy, too late, or too early for men and children. Wearing hats, washing hands, listening quietly, sitting still, and staying clean are rarely valued by children or their male teachers."

Second, male teachers are able to bring out the best in young boys. A study entitled "The Effects of Teacher Sex and Student Sex on Classroom Interaction," in the *Journal of Educational Psychology*, reported the following:⁶

Self control. Young boys exercise a greater level of self-control when taught by male teachers.

Patience. Male teachers are less likely to use harsh or angry tones with boy students.

Achievement. Young boys receive higher grades than their objective scores on achievement tests would merit when taught by male teachers. When taught by female teachers, they did not perform according to their ability.

Another study of the effects of male teachers on young children revealed that male teachers were able to provide boys with much more leadership experience than female teachers. When females are teaching, class leadership is made up of two times as many girls as boys. However, male teachers were able

to increase young male leadership by four times.⁷

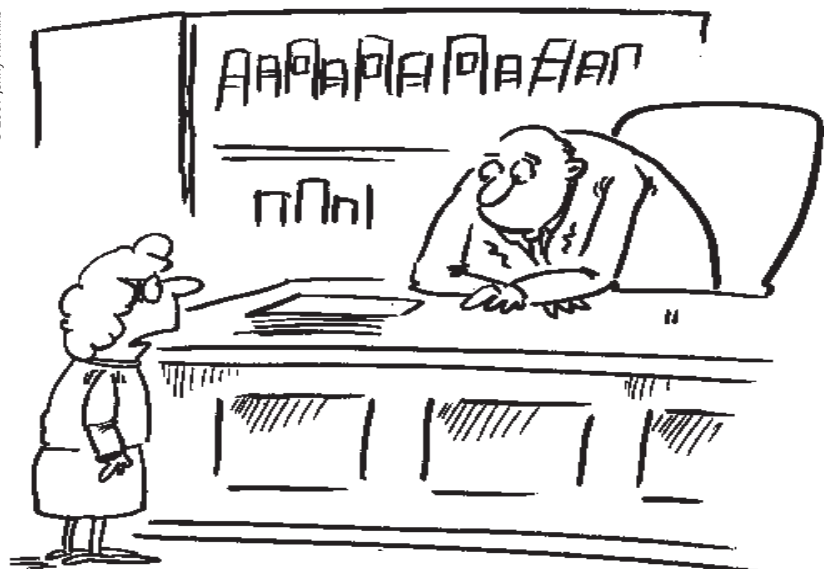
Third, masculine awareness relates things in sequential order while gradually building a complete picture. Studies show that males tend to employ a perspective that relates one part of a concept to another until a proper understanding of the whole is accomplished. Females, however, begin by intuitively taking in the whole picture and gravitating toward understanding the parts.⁸ These differences result in males possessing unique values, priorities, and interests that prove to be a positive contribution to the learning process. As a result:

- Male teachers were more likely to give process feedback following correct and incorrect answers by students.⁹

- Male teachers behave more optimally in failure situations than do female teachers. They were much more willing to work with students to improve their responses, while female teachers behaved more optimally in success situations by following correct student responses with feedback and praise.¹⁰

- Male undergraduates preferred to work with children labeled as underachievers, while females preferred to work with children labeled as overachievers.¹¹

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"Rev. Jarvis, have you ever been impeached?"

Only men can provide children with a spiritual understanding of God as Father.

The word *metaphor* comes from two Greek words, *meta*, meaning “across,” and *pherein*, meaning “to carry.” Together these words mean “to carry across, to transfer.” A metaphor is a verbal transfer of meaning that connects two seemingly unrelated things and creates from that union a new understanding. For example, when people talk about half-baked ideas, they’re comparing ideas to food. The Bible uses metaphors to communicate spiritual meaning as well. Metaphors, such as marriage, fruit, doors, and shepherds, are used to communicate spiritual concepts concerning our relationship to God, actions, will, and God’s caring nature.

Perhaps the most important metaphor in the Bible is one God chose to help us understand His desired role in our lives. When God wanted to communicate His commitment, love, and dedication to us, He selected a word from the human language that best described His nature. Over and over God revealed himself to us as Father. The number of times the word *father* is applied to God in the Gospels is more than double the number found in the remaining books of the New Testament. In the Gospel of John, God is referred to as Father 107 times.

Our society, however, is becoming increasingly fatherless. About one-third of all children in the United States are born outside of marriage. In most of these cases, the place for the father’s name on the birth certificate is left blank. In at least two-thirds of every case of unwed parenthood, the father is never legally identified.¹² Before today’s children reach the age of 18, more than half of our nation’s children are likely to spend a significant portion of their childhood living apart from their fathers.¹³

Author David Blankenhorn says, “Fatherlessness is the most harmful demographic trend of this generation. It is the leading cause of declining child well-being in our society and the engine driving our most urgent social problems from crime to teen pregnancy to child sexual abuse to domestic violence

against women. The most important absence our society must confront is not the absence of fathers but the absence of our belief in fathers.”¹⁴

When God revealed himself to us as our Father, He wanted to capitalize on the images we associate with that concept—nurturing, responsibility, commitment, provider, and of the One who gives us a future and life itself. However, in our society, the word *father* is associated with images of unfaithfulness, abandonment, irresponsibility, and a lack of commitment. Children’s workers face the realities of this sorrowful dilemma on a weekly basis.

Bob Bringham, a children’s pastor in California, recently told about a time when he had a few extra moments in children’s church. He asked the kids, “If you could ask God anything, what would you ask Him?” Two of the first three children wanted to ask God if their dad was ever going to come home again or if they would ever meet their father in person. Bob then asked how many others in the room had similar requests. Seventeen hands went up. Brokenhearted, Bob called the children forward and prayed for each one.

Bob later said, “There are so many single-parent homes without fathers. We need our men to step forward and give these kids a view of what our Heavenly Father is like. Most of our kids have a distorted view of God as Father.”

Christian men can help children understand the intended meaning of the metaphor of God as Father. Their lives can stand as a testimony against the winds of abnormal normalcy. Only men can validate the divine metaphor of God’s character and self-revelation found in the word *father*.

CONCLUSION

I have explored the obstacles that keep men from contributing to the spiritual growth of children. Most of these obstacles are understandable, but all of them can be overcome. We have also explored the tremendous outcome resulting from men who are engaging in the discipleship of children. Role models breathe life into the dry bones of social despair and make

needed deposits into a generation of children who are bankrupt of masculine spirituality. Through male Christian role models God is understood, received, and anticipated as a Heavenly Father who is faithful and forever true. Children experience the wonderful and unique contributions that men make to their discipleship process. **e**

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SPECIAL-NEEDS CHILDREN— Reaching Families No One Is Reaching

BY LARRY SAUTER

Where are the children with disabilities? According to the National Office of Educational Research,¹ there are approximately 26,138,000 children enrolled in grades K–6 in the United States. Approximately 3,300,000 of these children are receiving special educational services. These figures might seem irrelevant until we understand that approximately 12 percent of elementary children in public schools have some type of disability. (No statistics are available from Christian school associations.)

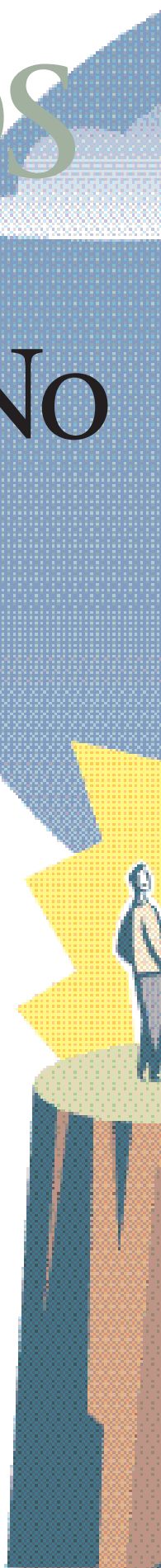
Most of these 3,300,000 children do not attend evangelical churches. A survey of our Sunday school classes, children's church, midweek children's club, or kids camps will probably reveal that 12 percent of the children in our churches do not have disabilities.

The church is the perfect place for children with disabilities and their families. Where else can families find unconditional love, unconditional acceptance, and hope for tomorrow? Why are these families and their children not flooding our congregations each week?

FAMILIES AND DISABILITIES

Families are introduced to disabilities in four ways:

- At birth—cerebral palsy, cognitive delay, autism, visual/hearing impairment, Spina Bifida, Down's syndrome.
- Accident/abuse—traumatic brain injury, para and quadriplegia.





- Physiological conditions, sickness or disease—polio, infection, muscular dystrophy, stroke, and cancer.

- Temporary disability—broken limbs, surgical recovery.

Raising children today is a full-time responsibility. Factor in the complications associated with disabilities and we begin to understand that the difficulty is exponentially compounded. Families dealing with disability need what the church has to offer because:

- four out of five marriages that either produce a child with a disability or include a spouse who becomes disabled through accident or disease end in divorce.

- children with cognitive problems are subject to 10 times more abuse than typical children.

- the incidence of abuse in families with a disabled child is twice that of typical families.

- nine out of 10 women who find through amniocentesis that their unborn child has Down's syndrome choose to abort.

- siblings of a child with a disability are four times more likely to be maladjusted than their peers who have typical siblings.²

Most people and families need to come to grips with the compelling question—"Why?" We need to avoid clichés, even biblical ones. But we can

be the conduit of God's mercy, love, and salvation. Perhaps we will never help families answer the why, but we can love and assist them into the kingdom of God.

MINISTERING TO THOSE WITH DISABILITIES

Here is a scenario that involved my wife, Penny; our senior pastor, Gary Allen; our church, First Assembly of God, Elgin, Illinois; and myself. This is an example of how God used a church to make a difference in a family.

Chuck and Debbie began praying for their neighbors. They did more than pray; they became friends. As their relationship developed with their neighbors Carin and Mark, they became aware of the mental and physical disabilities of Emily, Carin and Mark's daughter. This family was unchurched and unsaved. They had tried several churches in Elgin but never felt they fit in. None of the churches were willing to accommodate Emily's needs.

Chuck and Debbie enlisted our church to pray for Carin, Mark, and Emily. Because I was minister of Christian education, Chuck and Debbie contacted me. I presented the case to senior pastor Gary Allen, who empowered me to do whatever it takes to win this family.

As the pastoral staff began to pray for

this family, we waited on the Lord for direction and timing. I called the family to arrange a home visit to explain about our church and to evaluate Emily's needs. (Professional training and an M.A. in special education were useful, but the success of this story did not depend on my professional skills.) After meeting with Carin and Mark, I visited the school where Emily attended and learned what I could from her teachers. We then presented the needs of this family to our Christian education staff as an opportunity for evangelism.

With the support of our staff, we developed a plan that included extra aids assigned to Emily, visits to the classroom with Carin, training for her teachers, and Penny was to be on call for emergencies. What we saw was miraculous. Carin and Mark accepted Christ as their Savior, a younger sister enrolled in our Christian school, and an entire family was reached.

Now, under senior pastor Larry Bradshaw, First Assembly of God has recently received the Caring Church Award by the Christian Council on Persons With Disabilities (CCPD). First Assembly of God has two buses equipped with power lifts for transporting people in wheelchairs. The church is also affiliated with Special Touch Ministry.

Emily taught us more than we taught her. We learned about compassion and were blessed because we were willing to do whatever it takes.

In 1984, my wife Penny, and I attended our first Special Touch Summer Getaway—a Christian retreat/vacation for people with disabilities. As caregivers, we learned the hard way the most important lesson in disability ministry—never presume. Penny and I were introduced to an unreached people group that we had never noticed. We did not know that people with disabilities lived with such pain and rejection.

At this retreat I had the privilege of caring for Buck. He had sustained extensive damage to his spinal cord and had quadriplegia. I was taught how to take care of his daily needs (dressing, personal



"He said my sermon was 'double-click worthy'."

hygiene, feeding), and we became friends. I purposed in my heart to return the next year and spend another week with Buck.

For the next year, our church and friends prayed for Buck's healing. We fasted, proclaimed, petitioned Christ to bind Satan, and praised God for what He was able to do. I was so excited. I knew God would heal. We would give God the glory and would rejoice in the miracle. As the week progressed at the next year's retreat, my faith grew. I felt like one of the men who lowered their friend through the roof for healing (Mark 2:1-5). Thursday night arrived, and I asked Buck if he wanted to be healed. I wheeled Buck forward. As we anointed him with oil, I prayed and expected Buck to walk. When nothing happened and tears began to drip from my cheeks, I heard that still small voice of the Lord ask, *Why didn't you ask Me what Buck needed?* I presumed Buck's need was healing, when what he needed was a right relationship with God.

A few years later, Buck told me that if God had not spared his life, he would have died and gone to hell. Buck said that a lifetime in a wheelchair could not be compared to an eternity with his Lord.

Many people in the church today make the same wrong assumption. It is disastrous if we assume that people with disabilities only need physical healing. They also need a right relationship with God.

The General Presbyters of the Assemblies of God in August 2000 adopted a position paper entitled, "Ministry to People With Disabilities, a Biblical Perspective." The first two paragraphs give us tremendous insight into disability ministry.

"Pentecostal evangelicals, believing that miracles still happen today, sometimes have difficulty dealing with people with permanent disabilities and with those who are not healed after much prayer. But does our theology include, along with our belief in supernatural miracles today, a

biblical explanation for those who are not immediately healed or made whole? We accept death by old age and even by accident; but constant reminders of many with mental and physical disabilities, who are not restored to full health and activity, seem to suggest that our belief or our faith is faulty.

"Our theology makes place for pain and suffering, because we have hope for healing and an end to pain. But how does our theology, our faith, and our practice handle the person who may never walk again or the mentally challenged child who may never participate in normal social interaction? A proper understanding of the gospel must boldly proclaim, even though we do not have all the answers, that the God who created the universe and all human life in it is aware of the tension His children feel. He expects us to be people of compassion as well as people of power."³

What do I do if God does not heal me? The church must be ready to answer this question if it is to minister effectively to people with disabilities.

In 1993, Assemblies of God minister, Ken Dignan, published, *'Til Healing Comes*. Ken deals with the result of polio.

"I am very thankful for the grace of God and for the promise that either here through a miraculous healing, or when I get to heaven, I will be able to run, jump, and smack a home run. All the inconveniences in my life cannot take away the joy of that promise.

"Yes, I went from polio to praise. But along with my praise to God for His wonderful gift of new life, many questions still linger about healing. In the chapters that follow, I wish to take you on a journey through the Bible and share the insights and truths I've gained that assist me to live productively, joyfully, and peacefully *'til healing comes*."⁴

Every parent of a child with a disability and every child who has a disability needs to know God loves them and the church loves them, too. Some children are more easily loved into the kingdom of God than others. The little boy or girl who has Christian parents, is being raised in a Christian home, and attends church regularly might be relatively easy to disciple. These children will confess faith at an early age, be baptized in water, filled with the Holy Spirit, attend camps and retreats, and move into the youth group. These kids are a joy to minister to and fun to watch as they mature in the Lord. They make ministry easy and fun. But are we willing to work hard at ministering to kids who will require a lot of work?

SPECIAL TOUCH MINISTRY, INC.

When Charlie and Debbie Chivers began ministry after graduating from North Central University in the mid-1970s, little did they realize the impact their ministry would make in the obscure and almost forgotten field of disability ministry.

God has used the Chiverses in disability ministry since 1982. As Assemblies of God evangelists, they sponsored their first disability-oriented camp known as a Summer Getaway for people with mental and physical disabilities.

Charlie and Debbie are now in full-time disability ministry as founders and directors of Special Touch Ministry, Inc. They have been nationally appointed missionaries to people with disabilities in Assemblies of God Home Missions since 1993.

Charlie serves as the representative for Disability Ministries for the Assemblies of God. Special Touch Ministry is a recognized ministry of Assemblies of God Home Missions.

Visit their Web site at: www.specialtouch.org, or E-mail them at: ministry@specialtouch.org.

Most churches are ministering to the children they already have. Most need additional Sunday school teachers, children church workers, nursery workers, and workers for midweek clubs. Some will ask, "What more can we do?"

My former pastor and good friend answered that question years ago when he said, "Do whatever it takes."

REACHING THOSE WITH DISABILITIES

Assemblies of God Home Missions is raising an army of well-trained missionaries who are being sent into the vast subcultures of the United States. Realizing that subcultures have unique needs, languages, customs, beliefs, and values makes evangelizing them separately more effective. Most churches are good at ministering to people like them. But they have not been very successful at ministering to people who are different.

Children with mental or physical disabilities are part of a huge unreached people group. They are a unique subculture, but one that is within reach of most of our children. This subculture has its own language (at least vocabulary), needs, customs, and values. Like

any unreached people group, successful evangelism and discipleship depend on understanding the culture and a willingness to accommodate the children and their families who deal with disabilities.

Since 1975, with the passing of PL94-142 and its expanded version PL101-476 in 1990, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), children with disabilities have been mainstreamed whenever possible. Society pledged to do whatever it takes to provide a free, appropriate education for all children with disabilities.

The philosophy of mainstreaming, or inclusion, puts this people group into daily contact with the children of your church. According to the Disability Statistics Center,⁵ at least 70 percent of school-age children with disabilities spend most of the school day in classes with nondisabled peers. This makes it easy for our kids to invite them to church.

We must be ready to receive these kids with the attitude that we will do whatever it takes to win them to the Lord and reach out in love to their families. If we welcome them into our church, accommodate their special

needs, and show unconditional love and acceptance, we will be on our way to fulfilling the Great Commission.

The Assemblies of God Position Paper on Disabilities concludes with these statements:

"People with disabilities are essential to the wholeness of the Christian community. In a culture that worships physical perfection, devalues human life, and takes pride in disposability, the church must protect the helpless, vulnerable, disenfranchised, including people with disabilities. They are people created in God's image, possessing dignity, value, and purpose.

"The church must extend open arms of invitation and fellowship. Those with mental disabilities can respond to the presence of the Holy Spirit. Paul reported the answer he received when he asked that his thorn in the flesh be removed: '[The Lord] said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness"' (2 Corinthians 12:9, NIV). We can trust God to reveal His power through the weakness of those with disabilities."⁶ e

Larry and Penny Sauter are nationally appointed home missionaries to persons with disabilities and works with Special Touch Ministry, Inc.



"Fred, you need to learn that when children's church is dismissed, you must get out of the way."

E N D N O T E S

1. National Office of Educational Research, 800-424-1616.
2. Jim Pierson, James O. Pierson, Rodney Pate, *No Disabled Souls* (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1998), 90.
3. Assemblies of God Position Paper, "Ministry to People With Disabilities, a Biblical Perspective" (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 2000).
4. Ken Dignan, *Til Healing Comes* (DeBary, Fla.: Longwood Communications, 1993), 17.
5. Steven Kaye, "Education of Children With Disabilities," Abstract 19, Disability Statistics Center, July 1997.
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ES TO



MMER 2001

BGMC: Impacting the World and the Next Generation

B Y M A R Y B O Y D

Imagine a young African wanting to become a pastor, but he doesn't have money for schoolbooks. Imagine a missionary holding a crusade, but he doesn't have money to buy tracts. Imagine children living in the streets, yet nothing can be done for them. These images are real, but they are changing, with the help of Boys and Girls Missionary Crusade.

BGMC is touching the world by supplying missionaries with the supplies and tools they need to reach the lost through evangelism and discipleship. Missionaries desperately need Bibles, tracts, Sunday school literature, library books for Bible colleges, computers, printers, copy machines, video tapes, puppets, costume animals, materials translated into various languages, and sound systems.

BGMC also helps fund organizations such as: International Media Ministries, Global University, Christian Training Network, Generation XXI, Resource and Development Ministries, STAR radio, Advance, Center for Muslim Ministries, HealthCare Ministries, and Teen Challenge International.

Missionaries testify:

"Thank you, BGMC, for the much needed books for the Bible school

library in the Czech Republic. BGMC also helped us put important training books into the Czech language. Czech pastors often tell me how much they enjoy reading the books that BGMC helps to put into their language."—*Jim Sabella, missionary to the Czech Republic.*

"I wanted to say thank you to BGMC and the incredible tools for the work we are doing here in Poland. Our latest project was the translation and production of Bible study small group materials for University Ministries. Thank you and all the kids who stuff those Buddy Barrels so we can impact lives in our countries of calling."—*Brad Schaffner, missionary to Poland.*

"The lives of Albanian children have been richly blessed with the good news of Jesus Christ because of BGMC. We have used these funds to purchase evangelistic Albanian children's magazines, books, tracts, as well as ICI comic books. The Albanian kids are hungry for God's Word and BGMC has helped in a great way to fill their hunger."—*David and Sue Hartmann, missionaries to Albania's children.*

"Thank you for providing us with money to print the first ever Philippines Assemblies of God Philippines Children's Curriculum. This book is 400 pages and is filled with fun and exciting

ways to learn about God through the Bible. The boys and girls here in the Philippines are so excited to have lessons that have been especially made for them."—*Harold and Kaye Cole, missionaries to the Philippines.*

BGMC also provides supplies to our home missionaries and organizations: Chi Alpha Campus Ministries, Institutional/Occupational Chaplaincy, Intercultural Ministries, Military Chaplaincy, Teen Challenge International USA, and Church Planting.

Each new church receives \$400 from BGMC for supplies. New churches also receive \$75 each quarter for the first year to purchase Sunday school materials. A percentage of BGMC funds is given back to districts to use for district home missions projects.

While BGMC is the missions program for children in the Assemblies of God, adults need to support BGMC. Raising money for BGMC can involve the whole family. Moms and Dads can do projects with their kids to help them earn money. Adults can make pledges and give offerings to BGMC.

Last year, children in the Assemblies of God gave more than \$3 million to BGMC. As more missionaries are

WHY BGMC IS IMPORTANT TO MISSIONARIES

Assemblies of God missionaries and Boys and Girls Missionary Crusade have had a creative partnership for more than 50 years.

Hundreds of missionaries each year identify evangelism and discipleship opportunities in their nations. BGMC then helps provide the resources they need for reaching the lost, planting churches, training leaders, and touching the poor and suffering.

Since this partnership began in 1949, the number of Assemblies of God believers overseas has grown from 14,889 to 32,002,437, and the number of churches has increased from 411 to 200,467.

Every year for 50 years, BGMC giving has increased. In 1950, boys and girls gave \$21,022.73. Ten years later the giving increased to \$100,000. BGMC giving totaled \$3,328,421.39 in 1999. Since BGMC's inception, the children have given \$43,966,970.04 to missions.

BGMC's partnership with missionaries not only provides them with tools and helps promote worldwide church growth; it provides workers for the harvest. BGMC helps educate children about missions and prepares their hearts for God's call.

Many Assemblies of God missionaries who have served during the past 50 years collected change in their BGMC Buddy Barrels as children. Many other children who have participated in BGMC have become leaders in our churches. They now continue the BGMC partnership with missionaries by teaching their children to give.

Your faithful support of BGMC today will enable this partnership to continue to fulfill the task of worldwide evangelism and discipleship.

Below are six areas of need, chosen by Assemblies of God Foreign and Home Missions as specific projects where you can impact children globally.

If you are interested in targeting a special offering to one of these projects, please contact the BGMC office for more information.

BGMC—Southern Asia's Children (Eurasia). Poverty-stricken boys and girls in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka are in need of compassion, food, clothing, and education.

BGMC—The Gypsy Children (Europe). Gypsy children across Europe live in orphanages, camps, slums, or on the streets. They need to be reached through evangelism, education, and compassion by our orphanages, schools, and churches.

BGMC—America's Ghettos. About 350,000 children are crammed into New York City ghettos. These children and many others in ghettos all across America are dying of AIDS, violence, and preventable accidents. They need to be reached through feeding programs, outreaches, and crusades.

BGMC—KIDSQUEST (Asia). KIDSQUEST targets Asia's 1 billion children. This ministry trains and mobilizes teams led by U.S.-based children's pastors. These teams conduct crusades and help train Asian workers to minister to children.

BGMC—COBO (Children of Brazil Outreach). COBO provides food and education daily to more than 4,000 Brazilian children.

BGMC—Burkina Faso Schools. More than 7,500 children are attending Assemblies of God schools, with approximately 2,000 children accepting Christ each year. These schools are in need of ongoing funds.

—L. John Bueno, executive director of Assemblies of God Foreign Missions, Springfield, Missouri.

appointed, needs increase. We need every church to become involved in BGMC. In 1999, only 39.9 percent of Assemblies of God churches gave to BGMC.

BENEFITS OF BGMC

BGMC is a missions education program. It is equipping children to know about, care for, pray for, give to, and reach the lost.


As you expose children to the needs of the world, you create a compassion that reaches out and helps those who are less fortunate. BGMC is the perfect place to start. Missions education also helps kids to be less me-centered as they realize that others in the world are less fortunate.

Regular, systematic giving to missions creates a giving heart and spirit in children. Kids who learn to give to missions grow into adults who give to missions.

As children hear about and meet missionaries and learn about the call of God and the miracles that are taking place around the world, they may develop a burden for a particular area or people group. As a result, they will pray for those missionaries, countries, and people.

Kids who have hearts open to missions and the lost will also have their hearts open to the call of God. Eighty-five percent of Assemblies of God missionaries were called to missions when they were between the ages of 9 and 13. Many of our missionaries say they gave to BGMC when they were children.

BGMC provides free missions curriculum. Order a free resource catalog (item number 715-076). You can also order a free report on where BGMC was used around the world and in America last year (item number 715-057). If you would like more information on starting BGMC in your church or need some ideas, call the BGMC office at 417-862-2781, ext. 4016.

Thank you for investing in missions and investing in the lives of the children in your church. 

Mary Boyd is assistant coordinator for BGMC and the Children's Ministries Agency of the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri.





B Y M A R K R U T L A N D



I Saw What I Saw

**WITHIN A SOLIDLY CONSTRUCTED HOUSE OF
SOUND DOCTRINE MUST BURN THE FIRE OF A
WITNESSABLE PENTECOSTAL EXPERIENCE.**

THOSE WHO WOULD REDUCE PENTECOST TO THE STATUS OF TREASURED RELIC DENY ITS GREATEST REALITY AND THE APOSTOLIC PRIORITY.

I am an eyewitness to Pentecost. I saw the fire fall; I heard the wind blow. Nothing can dissuade me, confuse me, or convince me otherwise. I am no mere ideologue, ferociously paddling my fragile little theological canoe upstream against the prevailing current of modern dispensationalism. *I saw what I saw.*

"How old are you?" you may ask. I know my own age, and you have no need of the data. I make no claim of being 2,000 years old. In fact, that is the point. If the pyrotechnics of the Upper Room were a once-and-never-again historical fluke, Pentecostal theology—subject to the ravages of time—would stare forlornly at its own headwaters through the glass encasement of some ecclesiological Smithsonian. But we are not.

I saw what I saw, not in a rented upstairs banquet hall in first-century Jerusalem, but in a small, tidy living room in a colonia of Monterey, Mexico. I saw and heard Pentecost as an experience—not confined to antiquity—but alive in stunning fullness.

Having visited house to house all day with a group of about 30 Mexican seminaristas, I gathered them into a passionate, prayerful knot barely able to fit into the house of the only believer we could find. As those young people prayed, the Holy Spirit fell in stunning power. They began weeping and praying in tongues, some even collapsing on the floor in wracking, soul-wrenching sobs of intercessory grief. Someone produced the inevitable guitar and a worshipful chorus floated gently above the outburst.

After only a few minutes, the children who had followed us in naked curiosity filled the screenless windows. Shocked at the utterly inexplicable scene in the tiny parlor, they dashed away to fetch their parents. Soon the little yard, every window, and the cracked sidewalks out front were packed with the curious and the convicted. Eddie Rivera, Adrian Garcia,

several of the girls, and I saw the ad hoc gathering and went out to answer their questions. Before the night was over, dozens had come to Christ. *I saw what I saw* there in Monterey; before that in my own life; and since, in thousands of Upper Rooms.

Those who would reduce Pentecost to the status of treasured relic deny its greatest reality and the apostolic priority. That reality is this: He who came in power in the Upper Room has not since left us to our own devices. He is still the Holy Ghost, and He still does what He did. The apostolic perspective was that every believer be filled personally, not in theory. That conviction, that holy priority, is at the epicenter of the Pentecostal earthquake that has shaken the church and the world for these last 100 years.

What Peter almost certainly could not have foreseen or even dared to imagine were the results that would be realized across the next two millennia. These results were of such global significance—by the last century of the second millennium, a Pentecostal expression of Christianity would be the religion's historical dynamic. Nor did he ever dream those living, worshiping, and ministering under that same power—unbroken and undiluted by time—would be called Pentecostals. Did it ever occur to Peter, even years after the Upper Room, that the chamber experience was optional, or that the body of Christ would become a bicameral house vivisectioning itself into non-Pentecostals and Pentecostals? Certainly not.

That the significance of the spiritual affluence in the Upper Room far transcended its immediate effect upon the recipients gathered there for the Jewish Feast of Weeks seems to have been clear even to them. Peter straightway identified the remarkable event along with its concomitant phenomena as being the effecting in time of that which Joel had

forespoken. Peter's economical phraseology, "This is that," frames the event prophetically.

A non-Pentecostal Christianity would have been no more imaginable to those first 120 than a nonelectrified city is to modern Americans. A defining Power and Light had descended upon them; and that believers in a millennium and continent far, far away might, for whatever reason, eschew such pneumatic inducement would have been utterly unimaginable to them.

AN HISTORICAL BRIEF

Amidst the bankrupt rubble of "religionized" Christianity at the end of the 19th century—encouraged at first, then fearfully laid aside by the Holiness movement—quivered the ragged, fibrillating heart of the very faith that had been breathed, not noted, into existence in Roman-occupied Jerusalem. Luther had not envisioned a Protestant church, but a biblical one. Likewise, John Wesley had not hoped to create Methodism in England, but renewal in its church. Even so, those touched by the flame ignited at Azusa Street and the virtually simultaneous bonfires elsewhere did not immediately envision a new Pentecostal church, but the church newly empowered and sanctified.

It is important for the several Pentecostal denominations to realize they themselves are not the harbingers of a new revelation, but merely the reminders of the primal blaze unextinguished by formalism, corruption, and the ecclesiastical pride that opted for form over power. We Pentecostals are not so much pioneers but stewards of the forgotten necessity without which the Church in every age becomes hardly more and frequently less than a glorified Kiwanis Club.

We dare not forget for even the blink of an eye that 20th-, and now 21st-century

EVEN BEFORE ACTS WAS CLOSED, IT WAS
CLEARLY AN APOSTOLIC PRIORITY THAT ALL BELIEVERS
SHOULD HAVE A PERSONAL PENTECOST.

Pentecostals, are but the “wild branch” reminders that the power poured out in the Upper Room is not optional equipment, but utterly indispensable. The rambunctious, joyful, rollicking fact of us; the exponentially exploding, exuberant growth of us, is a prophetic sign to the wider church that there is power for ministry today. It is not so much what we believe or what we say about ourselves that the church and the world will regard, but the visual image of us. Peter and John were fresh from the Upper Room and in the midst of an antagonistic religious environment. They were about to work their first post-Ascension miracle. They did not say, “Listen to us”; they said, “Look on us.”

HOW THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH VIEWED PENTECOST

Flabbergasted at the sudden deluge in the Upper Room, the empowered church—scattered across the world by the hand of God—operated out of a discernable paradigm of Pentecost. Some liberal writers have made much of the scarcity of apostolic writings on baptism in the Spirit as an experience. They have missed the point. How we talk and do not talk about what we do reveals much. For example, the fact a handbook on carpentry spends little time talking about hammers may not imply that they are unimportant, but rather obviously indispensable.

SPIRITUAL EMPOWERMENT ON APOSTOLIC PRIORITY

In Dr. C.I. Scofield’s dangerously misguided footnotes on Acts 2, he suggests that after Pentecost “no Christian need seek the Holy Spirit,” because now the whole church is somehow automatically filled. Nonsense. Not centuries later, but even before Acts could be closed, it was clearly an apostolic priority that all believers should have a personal

Pentecost. Witness Acts 8. Peter and John arrived at Samaria and immediately prayed for a city full of new converts to “receive the Holy Spirit.” That is a wasted prayer if all new believers are filled by virtue of what happened in the Upper Room.

Even years later in Ephesus, Paul is still asking a question that must arise out of the same apostolic priority: “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” (Acts 19:2).^{*} That is a superfluous question if Scofield was right. But he was not, and the question must be asked of all believers until the rapture of the Church.

An even more important view of how vital this was to the apostolic community is Acts 10. That the Romans at Cornelius’ house were truly born again had to be proven to Peter’s Jewish entourage. When they heard the Gentiles speaking in tongues, evidencing to them Spirit baptism, the Gentiles’ salvation could no longer be questioned. Why? Because Spirit baptism and salvation are the same? No, because Spirit baptism can only come, should come, must come, to believers.

The indispensable gift of God’s power and its physical evidence would never, in Peter’s view, have been given to unbelievers. That was the point to Peter’s group, at least. To us it means that Peter expected it for his converts, even as we must for ours. If baptism in the Holy Spirit was of such importance to the apostles, how can it be any less so to us?

THE APOSTOLIC CONCEPT OF PURPOSE

When Peter returned from Cornelius’ house to face the first Council at Jerusalem, one great question lay under the epidermal issue of baptizing Gentiles in water (though that was certainly issue enough for a good church

fight). That hidden question was: If these Romans received the same Holy Spirit we did at Pentecost, did He do the same thing in them? Peter answered, “He [God] made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:9).

The promise of the Lord in Acts 1:8 was, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.” The power ministry—gifts, signs, wonders, and evangelistic anointing—all rained down at Pentecost. The apostles clearly viewed power in ministry as a Pentecostal work.

Just as clearly, however, they saw holiness of heart as equally a miraculous result of Spirit baptism. The Holy Ghost is at once the power element for ministry and sanctifying fire for the heart. Power and holiness, holiness and power—not one and then the other—were the twin blessings of Pentecost in the apostolic paradigm.

When inviting 21st-century converts to seek the great second blessing, we must tell them why: that, “Ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49, KJV), and, “Be holy, because I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

AN EXPERIENTIAL REALITY

The Church, its *Kerygma*, and its writings did not produce Pentecost; Pentecost produced the Church and all its doctrines. The doctrinal writings of the apostolic community did not bring down power from on high. Men full of the Holy Ghost and fire spent the rest of their lives trying to explain, articulate, and invite others into the power they had found. They were not mere Pentecostal apologists defending creedal positions out of a sense of duty to the prophet Joel. They were souls on fire whose doctrinal utterances on Spirit baptism had never had the pure punch packed into their lives and their ministries.

To the apostles, the issue was not

who and how many agreed with them on their pneumatology, but upon whom and how many the Holy Ghost rained down like fire.

Doctrine is good. We are admonished to preach sound doctrine. But there are whole denominations sinking like pathetic dinosaurs in the La Brea tar pits whose doctrines on paper are right—dead right. Destined to become nothing but fossils of former revivals, they go gently into that good night with their doctrines, but are not radically altered.

It is their experience that is wanting.

Experiential, not doctrinal Pentecost, is more the apostolic model. In Acts 19 at Ephesus, Paul didn't ask, "Do you believe there is a Holy Spirit (*ruach*)?" They could have answered that right enough. He asked, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

That is where we also must be renewed. Pentecostal preaching that only pounds the *dunamis* of doctrinal purity may well make us feel connected to the early 1900s. Pentecostal preaching that makes men hungry for holiness and power today will put us in touch with the first century.

Would that all Pentecostal churches were solid in their doctrine on tongues, for example. But if everyone agrees on initial evidence and no one ever speaks in tongues, what good is there in it? A *believed-in* Pentecost is good, but it was a *received* Pentecost that turned the world upside down.

WELCOMING AN UNWELCOME POWER

By the late 19th century, a thoroughly Americanized church had in many ways been too invaded by the culture's individualistic self-sufficiency to accept its contemporary need for the power of Pentecost. The liberal denominations sanitized their theology of the miraculous for one reason and the fundamentalists for another, but the result was the same.

The promise of Christ that "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you," was hardly appetizing to either camp. A burgeoning Holiness movement under leaders like A.B.

Simpson, at first reclaimed elements of "power ministry," especially healing. These groups were later to draw back from other gifts, however, most particularly tongues. This vacuum created an atmosphere ideally conducive to a freshly awakened interest in supernatural ministry. Azusa Street was the spark that lit the dry tinder.

We modern Pentecostals, while being cautious to remain biblically sound and theologically balanced, dare not be reticent about the gifts—any of the gifts. Even as we cherish tongues both as gift and evidence, we ought also to anoint the sick, despise not prophesying, and remember that authentic deliverance in a demonic world must not be ignored. Pentecostal churches where the gifts are absent are not mature, but rather, deficient. Even worse, they play into the hands of charlatans and manipulators and hyper-spiritual nitwits.

The 20th-century Pentecostal movement that welcomed the power of Pentecost so long denied by both liberals and evangelicals must welcome again the grace of miracles in perhaps the most morally bankrupt and spiritually confused generation since the Dark Ages.

TESTIMONIES ON FIRE

When Peter spoke of the Gentiles he baptized at Cornelius' house, he did not tell what they believed, but what had happened to them. Our testimony of the full blessing of the full gospel must shine in our eyes, blaze in our hearts, and be ready on our tongues.

Within a solidly constructed house of sound doctrine must burn the fire of a witnessable Pentecostal experience. We must recapture how to tell what happened to us. For this, after all, is what the world really wants to know.

MY WORD

In 1975, as a depleted, demonized Methodist pastor with a proper academic pedigree and the weight of generations of Wesleyan tradition deeply implanted in me, I found myself hopelessly mired in guilt and suicidal depression. At a


pastors conference organized by several charismatic Methodist ministers I saw—not just heard—but *saw* power in ministry for which I had no supporting intellectual framework.

An unspeakable longing within me for holiness and power was suddenly munificently met by a work of grace I had discounted, denounced, and denied. Everything I had preached against for several years was suddenly gloriously mine. My doctrines were eventually—indeed, quickly changed; but first my heart was. *I saw what I saw.*

For example, the issue of initial evidence for me was not settled by persuasion, but by experience. The first person I ever heard speak in tongues was myself.

My soul on fire, my depression scattered like midnight by the dawn of a righteous sun, I began to search for explanations, insights, and yes—thank God—doctrines.

The freedom, holiness, happiness, and power I have known and seen since that day a quarter century ago remain undiminished and unalloyed by time and so-called maturity. The full blessing of Pentecost, which fell on me like fire from heaven, compels me yet to ask with the apostles, "I know what you believe. I know what your tradition, background, culture, and doctrine say. My question remains unchanged by these. It is this: 'Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?'"

There are third-generation Pentecostals in the pews of Assemblies of God churches who fully understand our Pentecostal distinctives but stand apart from them experientially. Dare we be content for them to say only that they know what their Movement teaches? Surely not. We must pray and preach for them to say, "*I saw what I saw!*" 

Mark Rutland, Ph.D., is president of Southeastern College of the Assemblies of God, Lakeland, Florida.



*Scripture references are from the New International Version unless otherwise noted.



CHECK LIST

- ☐ ALLOW TIME TO GRIEVE
- ☐ EXPECT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF REJECTION
- ☐ BE SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF YOUR FAMILY
- ☐ ATTEMPT TO TAKE EXTENDED TIME OFF
- ☐ ASSUME THE POSTURE OF A LEARNER
- ☐ STRETCH YOUR MINISTRY BOUNDARIES
- ☐ SPEAK WELL OF YOUR PREDECESSORS
- ☐ LEAVE THE HOUSE IN ORDER
- ☐ PROPERLY PREPARE THE LEADERS LEFT BEHIND
- ☐ AVOID TRANSPLANTING WITHOUT PRUNING

B Y L E S W E L K

THE CLASSROOM OF MINISTRY TRANSITION

Two ministers attending a conference were standing in the hallway engaged in an obviously intense conversation. One of them exclaimed, "It's just that in all of my formal training we simply never talked about it." They were not debating doctrine nor were they discussing church polity. Rather, they were involved in the same conversation that hundreds of ministers have every month with trusted confidants. One of them was facing a ministry transition with all of its attendant joys and challenges.

Every year, thousands of ministers from all denominations come face-to-face with a ministry transition. Some of these changes come as a result of the minister's own choosing. A redirection in ministry focus or a planned retirement leads the list of reasons for ministry transition. Some ministers will transition for reasons that are not of their own choosing. Each month, hundreds of ministers face forced terminations. Twenty percent of them will never return to a ministry career again. Properly facing and dealing with a transition can spell the difference between future success or failure.

In a musical composition, a transition is a passage connecting two sections or themes. It often takes the form of a modulation. Though brief, the modulation becomes the bridge between what has been heard before and what will be heard after. A poorly written or performed transition can ruin the whole musical selection. The average minister faces numerous transitions during the course of a ministerial career.

How we face transition not only says a great deal about the kind of people we are, but it serves as passage between the past and the future. Transitions are important to the overall composition of our ministry.

Over the course of my ministry, I have experienced several transitions, each with its own personality. From serving as college intern to my

present role as assistant district superintendent, I have witnessed dynamic change. I am still enrolled in the transition classroom. Perhaps my growing list of lessons I have learned will assist you in facing transitions of your own.

ALLOW TIME TO GRIEVE

As a minister, you soon learn that transitions will be accompanied by a sense of grief. Grief is the human response to loss. It happens whether you are leaving under positive or negative circumstances. You, your family, and the church or ministry family you leave behind will experience grief. When leaving a positive situation, you may grieve over losing security, leaving warm friendships, and being unable to fulfill ministry goals and vision. When leaving a negative situation, you still grieve. If nothing else, you grieve over what might have been. Ministers and congregations must expect and allow time for the grieving process.

EXPECT A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF REJECTION

For some congregation or ministry members, your announcement to transition to another ministry is interpreted as a form of rejection. This is especially true for people who have dealt with rejection throughout their lifetime. As a spiritual leader, you may have become one of the few constant and trustworthy people in their lives. To them, your resignation is nothing short of abandonment. Unfortunately, a common reaction is to reject you in turn. It hurts at the time, but with your reassurance and uninterrupted love, the rejection usually turns to acceptance once again.

BE SENSITIVE TO THE NEEDS OF YOUR SPOUSE AND CHILDREN

The day of our oldest son's birth was the same day I accepted a new ministry role that would span the

next 18 years. The church we moved to was the only church our firstborn son and his two siblings would ever know until the present. Our children were blessed with a great sense of security and continuity in being in the same church all of their lives. Transition was a threat to that. We have worked hard to maintain a sense of normalcy in the midst of change.

As a conscientious minister, you have the task of displaying extra sensitivity to the security needs of your spouse and family during a time of transition. One way to help your family members is to include them in the discussion and decision-making process leading up to a transition.

ATTEMPT TO TAKE EXTENDED TIME OFF BETWEEN POSTS

A transition affords an opportunity that may not be available at any other time in

transition when you are between posts. You have left the old responsibilities behind and have yet to assume the full burden and schedule of a new post. If

How we face transition not only says a great deal about the kind of people we are, but it serves as passage between the past and the future.

the course of your ministerial career. How often do you have the chance to enjoy an extended time away from the demands of ministry? This is especially true during the buffer provided by a

the circumstances will allow it, plan extra time off for rest, relaxation, and renewal. Transition may afford you the only sabbatical you will ever see in your ministry.

MAKING THE TRANSITION FROM ASSOCIATE TO SENIOR PASTOR

For some ministers, associate ministry is a life calling. For others, it is a mentoring time that provides vital training for effective ministry as a senior pastor. Are you waiting in the wings for this transition to occur in your life? Consider these points:

1. Faithfully carry out your present ministry. Your senior pastor and congregation are important. Remember, God does all things well and works in the best interests of everyone. Develop a relationship of trust with your senior pastor so there will be no surprise or disappointment when the transition occurs. Make it easy for your successor to assume your position. And when you leave, never meddle in the affairs of your former church—be a team player and speak well of your senior pastor.

2. Sharpen your ministry gifts. Learn all you can from your senior pastor. Pay attention to leadership style and how people are treated. Broaden your ministry perspective beyond the boundaries of your duties. Develop your pulpit ministry. While you may not have many occasions to preach in the main services, take advantage of other opportunities. Remember that Solomon said a man's gift will make room for him (see Proverbs 18:16). So strive for proven, effective ministry.

3. Remember God uses people to affirm ministry. Sending bulk résumés to churches seeking a pastor seldom works. God uses people to affirm His callings and purposes. District leaders and veteran pastors can open doors of opportunity by their recommendations only if they know you and you have a ministry record they can recommend. Be faithful to your fellow ministers so they can truthfully commend your ministry.

4. Allow God to open the right door. The same God who called you into ministry will be faithful to lead you during this transitional time. Seek God for guidance and believe He will lead you in His perfect timing. Don't limit God by having prerequisites for salary or size of congregation. He will provide for you just as He has for others, though it may mean taking a smaller salary or ministry.

5. Adjust to your new ministry position. As an associate, you had a focused ministry to a segment of the church such as youth or Christian education. Your new position as a senior pastor will move beyond that. Broaden your horizons and prayerfully assume the responsibility to shepherd all of the flock of believers.

—Milton E. Dykes, Lakeland, Florida, is a minister with the Peninsular Florida District Council of the Assemblies of God.

ASSUME THE POSTURE OF A LEARNER

One of the traits I have observed and admired most often in effective leaders is the ability to lead and teach others while still maintaining a learner's posture. This posture allows you to make adaptations that are inevitably necessary during transition to new surroundings. Although you may be accustomed to being in command, a learner's posture enables you to submit to the authority of others when called upon to do so. Transition has its own way of calling upon your willingness to learn, to submit, and to adapt to new relationships and surroundings. Only if you are committed to a lifetime of learning will you achieve all God has in store for you. Ernest Hemingway expressed it this way: "There are some things which cannot be learned quickly, and time, which is all we have, must be paid heavily for their acquiring."

STRETCH YOUR PROFESSIONAL AND MINISTRY BOUNDARIES

As long as transition urges you toward the posture of a learner, use the opportunity it affords to be innovative, creative, and even daring. Starting fresh in a new role in a different place can provide just the freedom you need to breathe new life into a stagnant ministry.

SPEAK WELL OF YOUR PREDECESSOR AND YOUR SUCCESSOR

You may accept a new role only to be immediately challenged by the congregation's fond recollections of your predecessor. It is at this point in transition that you must do everything possible to speak well of those who came before you. To tear down a predecessor, especially one that was well liked, will hardly endear you as the new leader to a church body already struggling with the grief of their own loss. Blessing a former leader is a key to your success as the new leader. Equally important is the assignment given you if you are leaving a ministry post soon to be replaced by your

cleansing for both the minister and the church body. During the transition, you can lay down excess baggage that may otherwise be carried into the future.

PROPERLY PREPARE THE LEADERS TO BE LEFT BEHIND

Another important aspect of leaving your house in order is preparing church leadership to adequately deal with transition after you are gone. In some cases, where there is antagonism toward an exiting minister, this will not be possible. However, in many cases no one is better suited than you to direct and prepare staff, board members, and other church

AVOID TRANSPLANTING THE PAST WITHOUT PROPER PRUNING

A successful minister left a long-term ministry to fill a new role elsewhere. Immediately, he faced challenges. Members of the church and even other staff associates seemed to sense a general lack of enthusiasm and freshness. The problem only seemed to worsen, and the new minister was sensitive to being questioned about it. He had attempted to transplant the past without proper pruning and had failed. He ultimately left. Both he and the church were in turmoil. While principles remain constant, methods and approaches must be adapted to fit the new environment.

A small child was instructed to put on different clothes if he was going to go outside to play. He muttered to himself all the way up the stairs until his mother asked him if this was going to be a problem. The boy answered and said, "I don't mind wearin' different clothes. It's the changin' I don't like." The classroom of transition can be rigorous, yet there are few learning environments more profitable. May God give us strength and resolve to be responsible agents of change during transitions in our lives and ministries. **e**

Les Welk is assistant superintendent of the Northwest District, Mountlake Terrace, Washington.



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Transition has its own way of calling upon your willingness to learn, to submit, and to adapt to new relationships and surroundings.

successor. Your pledge must be to do and say all you can to ensure the future success of the new leader.

LEAVE THE HOUSE IN ORDER

As a conscientious leader, you should do everything within your power to leave a church or ministry in good order for your successor. A minister recently reported that he went to a new church and discovered numerous routine bills unpaid and past due. It was not for lack of funds, because the checking balance was adequate. Rather, the oversight was due to a conscious decision on the part of the predecessor to leave it for the next guy. A responsible steward will make sure the house is in order before leaving.

In moving out of my pastoral role, I assembled a transition notebook for the board and interim leadership. The notebook contained up-to-date information on finances, church leadership, membership, policies, philosophy statements, and other pertinent facts about the history and present ministry of the church.

Transition is also a great time to clean the slate spiritually. Asking for and extending forgiveness for unfulfilled expectations and offenses affords

leadership for transition. The critical role of church leaders is magnified during transition. While some staff members and boards unwisely spurn input from an exiting minister, many recognize and welcome it. Avoid abdicating your leadership role prematurely by exerting your leadership right up to the point of walking out the door. This includes properly preparing and training leaders who will handle matters in your absence.



"You were right, Pastor Gjeffe. When witnessing, always be aware of the subtle signs."

Your Sons and Daughters Will Prophecy

B Y S T A N L E Y M . H O R T O N

Did God have children in mind when He inspired the prophet Joel to write, “Your sons and daughters will prophecy” (Joel 2:28*)? Looking at the context we see the passage begins with the promise, “I will pour out my Spirit on all people (Hebrew, *kol basar*, “all flesh”). Then God identifies first, sons and daughters; then old men and young men; then His servants, both men and women (Hebrew, *ha'avadim* and *hashsh'phachoth*, “the male slaves and the female slaves”). Clearly, the intent is to show that the promise of the Spirit and the impartation of prophetic gifts is for all people without regard to race, sex, age, social status, or national origin. These manifestations of prophetic gifts were important from early times, for they were and are evidences of the presence of God in the midst of His people (see 1 Corinthians 14:24,25, where prophesying will cause visitors to exclaim, “God is really among you!”).

The word “prophet” (Hebrew, *navi'*) comes from an old word meaning “a speaker,” but it came to mean “a person who spoke for God, or for gods,”

God used Samuel to speak His word to Eli when Samuel was still a child. It is true that the Hebrew by which he is called, *hanna'ar* (1 Samuel 3:1), can mean a boy or a young man. However, the Bible says, “The Lord was with Samuel as he *grew up*, [emphasis mine] and he let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord” (1 Samuel 3:19,20). This indicates that he was indeed a young boy when he began to prophecy and that he continued to speak for God “as he grew up.” That he “did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him” (1 Samuel 3:7) also shows that he was still a child who had not yet come to know the Lord in a personal way when God first spoke to him.

Another who began to prophesy when he was quite young is Zephaniah. His genealogy in verse 1 of his book shows he was descended from King Hezekiah and that he prophesied in the days of King Josiah. Josiah was 8

not more than a teenager when he began to prophesy.

On the Day of Pentecost, when the 120 received the promise and spoke in tongues (Acts 2:4), Peter said, “This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel” (Acts 2:17). Then he proceeded to manifest the gift of prophecy, glorifying Jesus Christ, calling those who were gathered to repentance, and warning and pleading with them by the gift of exhortation. He followed his call to repentance with the promise that after they repented and were baptized in water, they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. He emphasized, “The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call” (Acts 2:39).

The promise of the baptism in the Holy Spirit would continue to be available to them, to their children, to the Gentiles (see Ephesians 2:17 where those who are far away are the Gentiles). More than that, the promise would continue to be available to all whom the Lord would call to be saved.

Does the mention of children in Acts 2:39 mean young children? That, as we have just seen, was not the point Peter was making. He wanted them to see that the promise was for the next generation—and the next and the next without limit. However, if we go back to the story of Samuel, the fact he did not yet know the Lord in a personal way tells us that God was bringing him into that personal knowledge so he could give God’s message and speak for God. If children are to be used by the Holy Spirit, they must be old enough to come into the personal

We should encourage children and young people to be open to the Holy Spirit, not only to be baptized in the Spirit, but to be used by Him.

since there were pagans who claimed to be prophets, such as prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:19). In most cases in the Old Testament, those who prophesied (spoke for God) were mature men and women. But God also used children. Samuel is an example.

years old when he became king and he reigned 31 years in Jerusalem. But Zephaniah’s genealogy shows there was one more generation between him and Hezekiah than between Josiah and Hezekiah. Because of this it seems probable that Zephaniah was a child or

knowledge of Jesus as Lord and Savior, so they can open their hearts and minds to God the Holy Spirit.

In the Azusa Street revival in 1906 in Los Angeles, California, my mother was 11 years old when she was baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. People were coming from all over the world to that meeting. An African-American woman from one of the French-speaking islands told her she was speaking in French. When my mother was older she found the same woman who remembered and confirmed that to her. Other children were baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. My sister was baptized in the Spirit when she was 8 years old and had a marvelous experience.

On the Day of Pentecost, Peter took speaking in tongues as the equivalent of the prophesying promised in Joel. Today many children are receiving the Holy Spirit in our Sunday schools, churches, children's revivals, and children's camps. If they are old enough

to understand what it means to come to the Lord and be saved, they are certainly old enough to seek and receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

How else can children prophesy (other than speaking in tongues)? We must remember that prophecy in the Bible is speaking for God to people "for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort" (1 Corinthians 14:3). It is not primarily a matter of prophesying the future. It is forthtelling, rather than foretelling. A good example is found in Acts 15:32 where "Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers."

We should encourage children and young people to be open to the Holy Spirit, not only to be baptized in the Spirit, but to be used by Him. He can use them to encourage and strengthen one another spiritually, as well as to give comfort and encouragement in the midst of the difficulties

and temptations of the world around them. Remember, too, the Spirit comes to make us Christ's witnesses (Acts 1:8). Children and young people are most open to receive Jesus as Savior and Lord. Statistics show that the majority of Christians come to Christ when they are young. Children can be encouraged to let the Holy Spirit give them the wisdom and the words to win others to their Savior. If they are taught the Word of God, and memorize the Word of God, the Holy Spirit can make the Word His sword to cut through opposition and become His effective tool to win others through them. **e**

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**Scripture references are from the New International Version.*

The Worship No One Sees

BY PAUL FERRIN

From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise” (Psalm 8:2, NIV). Giving praise through music, and praise flowing from children to the throne of God, has been ordained by God.

In other Scripture passages are phrases such as, “Let the little children come to me,” and, “Unless you...become like little children.” Our Lord loved infants and children. He saw in them an innocence and sincerity often lacking in adults. When toddlers are taught to worship and love God, they do it without pretense and with complete trust. Their minds have not yet been contaminated by the filth of this world. It is easy for them to praise the Lord with purity of heart, soul, and mind.

A minister in a fashionable church had a dream in which he saw himself standing by the throne of God. As

heartfelt praise—anything less is lost on the way up.”

As the minister looked more closely, he saw that the solitary voice reaching heaven was that of a little boy—who was not even in the choir—as he sang the praises of God with utter delight and sincerity.¹ It is important to teach the smallest children that they can worship and love God with all of their heart.

GRADED-CHOIR MINISTRY

Children’s choirs are an excellent vehicle by which children can be taught not only music, but also how to worship and love God. This also prepares them for worship in Sunday school, children’s church, and adult worship services. I am not referring to the occasional children’s Christmas or Easter presentation, but to an ongoing time of teaching. If your Sunday school has classes for

first undertakings was to develop a graded-choir program. Over 500 registered that first year. The focus of the graded-choir ministry is to train young people to have a heart for worship, a love for music, and the skill to be effective singers. After 8 years, the graded choirs fed the youth choirs to the point of having a junior high choir of 100 members and a senior high/college choir of 100 members. These students had grown up in the graded-choir program, and it was natural for them to keep singing to the Lord as they reached their teens. Of those graduates of that first program, five are now music majors in college—giving a total of nine collegians majoring in music from Capital Christian Center.

Several years ago, I arranged 10 familiar hymns and gospel songs for a major publisher. This project included a recording of these arrangements by a well-known church choir in Houston, Texas. When I was made aware that this choir had recorded these 10 choral numbers in 2 nights, without seeing the music previous to the recording sessions, I was astounded.

When I asked the minister of music how this could be possible, his response was, “Paul, almost all of my sanctuary choir members have come up through our graded-choir program and they are all wonderful sight readers.”

Stability, musicianship, and commitment were demonstrated in that sanctuary choir. What had been taught in those early, formative years was producing tremendous results many years later.

Musicianship and commitment to choir are certainly important. However, stability was demonstrated in something

Children’s choirs are an excellent vehicle by which children can be taught not only music, but also how to worship and love God.

he looked down on earth, he saw his congregation and the 100-voice choir at Sunday worship. Although he saw the lips of the choir and congregation move in song, the only sound that rose to heaven was that of one solitary voice.

He asked the Lord, “Why is it, Lord, that out of a congregation of many hundreds and a choir of 100 highly trained voices, I can hear only a single voice?”

The Lord replied, “The only sound that reaches heaven is the sound of

various grades, you can have a graded-choir program. The Sunday school, children’s church, and graded-choir program can all work hand-in-hand in equipping children to love, worship, and praise the Lord, along with teaching them the basics of music.

In 1989, Randy Quackenbush, who is now minister of music at James River Assembly of God in Springfield, Missouri, assisted me in the music department at Capital Christian Center, Sacramento, California. One of Randy’s

far more important. These singers had learned to praise God with their voices and to serve Him with all their hearts. Perhaps, as they faced temptations and trials, the Spirit of the Lord brought back to their hearts the words learned in a primary or junior choir years ago.

CHILDREN'S MUSIC MATERIAL

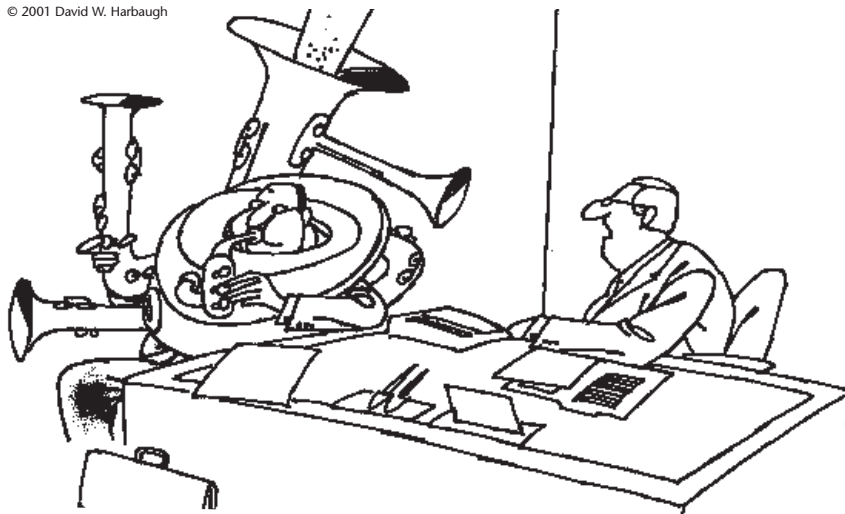
A wide variety of materials is available from almost every publisher. Look for varied styles and subjects, but don't forget to include some contemporary choruses along with hymns and gospel songs. Here are some ideas to help you in your search:

1. Top contemporary Christian songs arranged for and sung by children.
2. Christmas music using many different characters to tell the familiar story.
3. Fresh and exciting arrangements for hymns and gospel songs. Some include stories of how these songs were written.
4. Material that will make learning music fun. They usually include games that assist in the learning process.
5. Nonseasonal musicals based on Bible stories. This will encourage

additional involvement with sets, scenery, and drama.

Involving your children in services, whether a musical or only one song, is a wonderful way to reach unchurched parents and family members. When children tell the Christmas story, bring life to a Bible story, participate in a missions theme, sing contemporary choruses, or present the timeless hymns of the church, their lives will never be the same, and neither will the lives of

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"We have a church music supplier, and at the moment, we have no need for whatever that is."

their family members.

This also instills the need and privilege to worship God in the hearts of our children. **E**

Paul Ferrin is director of the national Music Department, Springfield, Missouri.

E N D N O T E

1. Selwyn Hughes, *Born To Praise*, (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000).

CHILDREN EXPERIENCING WORSHIP

Kids cannot worship or experience God's presence. While few would agree with this statement in principle, many agree with it in practice. As a senior pastor, when was the last time your children's church director told you the children had a powerful move of God in their worship time? If you can't remember, then let's explore a few ways to make it happen:

1. **Acknowledge that kids can worship God and experience His presence.** God desires an intimate relationship with all human beings, regardless of age or mental and spiritual development. Jesus said not only to feed His sheep, but to feed His lambs as well.
2. **Allow children's worship to differ from that of adults.** One of a child's primary learning vehicles is playtime. Use playtime activities to reinforce worship behaviors like sharing, showing kindness, being generous—a cup of cold water. A child's world also revolves around movement. Kids love to worship the Lord with hand motions. As kids participate actively in worship, we set the stage for them to participate actively as adults.
3. **Accommodate their needs in worship.** Children think and respond to concrete ideas. The more abstract a concept, the less a child will relate to it. Rather than saying, "Let's all worship," instruct the children: "Each person say 'Thank You' to God for something." Children need to be taught appropriate forms and expressions of worship. Model the behavior you want imitated. At first they will merely copy you. Gradually their understanding will grow until it becomes their own expression. The key is to teach children along the way. Do not wait until you think they are ready; let that be a work of the Holy Spirit.
4. **Affirm their attempts.** Let them know you are happy with them and God is pleased. Stress the importance of worship as a lifestyle, not just an event. When we choose to worship, He is blessed and we are enriched. It's during worship that the channels of communication are most open between the Lord and the worshiper.

The pattern and practice of healthy worship is best started early. As spiritual leaders, let's proactively teach our children to worship.

—John H. Morton is kids music/worship technologies consultant for the Assemblies of God Music Department, Springfield, Missouri.

Creating “False Memories” of Childhood Sexual Abuse

BY RICHARD R. HAMMAR

Most churches offer some form of counseling services. The most common example would be counseling of church members by a minister. Many churches also offer lay counseling services. Some limit these services to members of the congregation, while others target the general public and promote their counseling ministry in the local media and telephone directory. Some churches use counselors or psychologists who are licensed by the state, while others use unlicensed laypersons with little if any professional training. Counseling ministries can provide an excellent and needed service and represent a point of contact with the community. However, there are a number of important legal concerns that should be considered by any church that offers such services, or that is considering doing so in the future. A recent decision by the Wisconsin Supreme Court illustrates one of those risks. *Sawyer v. Midelfort*, 595 N.W.2d 423 (Wisc. 1999).

FACTS

A young woman (Nancy) suffered from a variety of psychiatric problems, including anxiety, panic attacks, and severe depression. On at least one occasion, Nancy required psychiatric hospitalization. When she was 25 years old, Nancy began seeing a counselor who allegedly convinced her that her emotional problems stemmed from the fact she had been sexually abused by her father when she was a young child. Nancy had no memory of having been abused as a child by her father or anyone else. She confronted her father with this accusation, and he categorically denied it.

Shortly after this confrontation, Nancy discontinued all contacts with her parents and changed her name to make it more difficult for her parents to find her. She had

no direct contact with her parents for the next 10 years.

When she was 29 years old, Nancy was referred by her counselor to another counselor, who saw her on more than 50 occasions over the next few years. During the course of this relationship, Nancy came to believe that she had been sexually abused not only by her father, but also by her paternal grandfather, uncle, brother, and two pastors.

Nancy died of cancer at the age of 37. Her parents did not learn of her death until 6 months later. They later sued the second counselor, claiming that their daughter had developed false memories of childhood sexual abuse by her father as a result of the counselor's negligent treatment, and that these false memories permanently alienated their daughter from them.

The Wisconsin Supreme Court concluded that the parents could sue the counselor for damages. It observed:

It is indisputable that being labeled a child abuser is one of the most loathsome labels in society and most often results in grave physical, emotional, professional, and personal ramifications. We are quite confident that negligent treatment which encourages false accusations of sexual abuse is highly culpable for the resulting injury....

APPLICATION

This case illustrates the risks assumed by counselors who create in counselees false “memories” of childhood sexual abuse. When the alleged “offender” is the counselee's parent, this can have predictably devastating consequences, including family alienation and disintegration. In this case, Nancy did not see her parents for the last 10 years of her life, and her parents were

not aware of her death for 6 months.

Pastors and lay counselors who are tempted to create such memories in the minds of others should understand clearly before proceeding that they are exposing themselves and their church to astronomical legal damages in the event of a lawsuit, and may be permanently destroying the relationship between the counselee and his or her parents and family. This highly questionable and destructive “therapy” should be strictly avoided by clergy and lay church counselors, whether licensed or not.

Churches can manage this risk in several ways, including the adoption of a counseling policy that (1) forbids pastoral or lay counselors from engaging in any therapy that creates a memory of childhood sexual abuse in a counselee having no such memory; and (2) requires pastoral or lay counselors who suspect that a counselee may have been sexually abused as a child to immediately refer the person to another mental health professional who is unconnected with the church. The policy should be communicated to all counselors, and counselors should sign a statement agreeing to abide by it.

Pastors certainly can continue to engage in *spiritual* counseling with persons whom they suspect were victims of childhood sexual abuse, but they should avoid any suggestion to a counselee that he or she may have been sexually abused as a child if the counselee has no memory of such abuse. **e**

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Two Buckets on Their Way to the Well

B Y T . R A Y R A C H E L S

Distance runners, I'm told, reach a point where their legs and lungs give out. Runners call this feeling "hitting the wall." This phrase captures in essence their feeling that it's no use to go on because of the physical and mental "splat" against an invisible but horrific barrier. For some, this is quitting time. What began as a race with high hopes closes around their now utter fatigue, broken concentration, and collapsed dream of finishing the race. Some, that is, but not all.

In plowing on through the stages of hurt, wheezing, and anguish, some runners keep picking 'em up and putting 'em down. Somehow (though they may know not how) they keep running.

This reminds me, in a small way, of our work in ministry. I don't know of any who haven't "hit the wall" from time to time and come to the point of giving up because of the pain and/or consequences of keeping on.

The ministry is a selfless calling: "Others, Lord"; "Not my will, but Thine be done"; "Look [out] on the fields"; Jesus came to "seek and to save the lost"; "even so send I you"; and "Go ye into all the world."

Why should I be the one to hit a wall when my call is to be a partner with Jesus Christ in the salvation of people, and to "run with patience (endurance) the race set before [me]"?

One response to this question is that our work is not done alone—it always has relationship added to it. This means that other people are involved. They are involved with us and their opinions impact ours. We sometimes don't like or appreciate

their impact or opinions, and this means we may "hit the wall." From time to time we must be scraped off that wall.

One of the works of God's grace is to help us get past the wall so we can keep picking 'em up and putting 'em down. We're no good to any relationship unless our running is covered with grace and that grace is seen to be effective. This is where daily prayer is vital. You talk to the Father, and He talks to you. Daily prayer is at the core of any healing of our exhaustion in ministry.

Jesus said: "Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest" (Matthew 11:28–30*). That's a great passage for out-of-breath saints.

Often the people to whom God has called us present us with the most acute challenge to our patience (endurance) in the race. Have you heard any of these phrases?

- "We've never done it that way before."
- "We're not ready for that yet."
- "We tried it once, and it didn't work."

When you face these kinds of obstacles, there's really only one place to begin your response: "Strip down, start running—and never quit! No extra spiritual fat, no parasitic sins. Keep your eyes on *Jesus*, who both began and finished this race we're in. Study how he did it. Because he never lost sight of where he was headed—that exhilarating finish in and with God—he could put up with anything along

the way: cross, shame, whatever" (Hebrews 12:1,2).

Relationships take work, and they're never one-sided. Patience and endurance begin with me, not the other guy. My job is not to shape up other people, but to shape up myself. God is big enough to take care of my neighbor. It's amazing how responsive and good other people suddenly become when I'm in spiritual shape and covered with "running grace."

The following illustration encourages us even in difficult times:

There were two buckets on their way to the well.

"You look mighty sad," said one bucket to the other.

"I was just thinking about the futility of what we do," said the sad bucket. "Time after time we go down to the well and get full, but we always come back to the well empty."

"You've got the wrong slant," said the other bucket. "I enjoy what we're doing. The way I look at it, no matter how many times we come to the well empty, we always come away full."

"God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us" (Ephesians 3:20).

Now, that's something worth running for. **E**

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**Scripture references are from Eugene Peterson's, The Message.*

Thoughts From a Pastor/Dad

B Y C . S T A N L E Y B U R G E S S

I have two grown sons. They spent much of their lives in a parsonage. In spite of that, or perhaps because of it, I often wonder how good a job I did raising them. Did I transfer my values, and more important, my faith to them? Are they as well prepared for life as they should be? These are questions many fathers ask themselves. Certainly those dads whose calling is to Christian ministry occasionally have anxious thoughts about their success at parenting. It is difficult enough to raise children today, and this is compounded by the fact 80 percent of pastors polled stated that their ministry made a generally negative impact on their families.¹

My boys were raised in the church. I was their pastor. It is at this point I may have made my greatest mistakes. I fear that I talked to them more about the church than I did about Jesus. In retrospect, I can see that my efforts were directed as much to molding them in the image of the church as to modeling the life of Jesus. If I could retrace the journey, I would teach them to worship

the greatest example of Christlikeness; Christ is.

If I could do it again, I wouldn't complain about the church when my boys were listening. We never served within a congregation that was anywhere close to perfection. There were those who sat in positions of authority in the congregation who had no faith. Others held authority beyond the local level and admonished the pastor: "Have faith; God will take care of you." It didn't help to watch as they drove expensive automobiles and lived luxuriously while our family lived somewhere around the poverty level. I've learned to overlook those people and forgive them for their negative effects on my family. Have my sons? I wonder. Certainly, they observed enough on their own without my contributing to it. But that does not excuse my statements.

If I had the opportunity to go back, I'd pray that they be given a spirit of understanding. I'd ask God to help the oldest understand that when he served as bus captain, it was to let the

heard the prison doors clang behind him as he went with his father to conduct Bible studies for federal inmates, I hope he understood that we were loving social castoffs and telling them that God extends a loving hand to any who will reach out to Him.

I threw myself into the work of the Lord and left most of the nurturing of our sons to their mother. I hope they realize that their father did what he did because God reached him when he didn't deserve salvation, and that his desire was to spread the love of God to others.

My greatest skills have been making mistakes and blunders. Given a new chance, I'd teach my boys that it's OK to be different. I was a difficult child for my parents to raise, and I've been equally challenging to God. I grew up with little self-worth, the product of parents with low self-esteem. Yet God loved me unconditionally. Was I able to convince my sons they could meet any challenge life might bring—and do it in their own uniqueness? I want them to know the truth that God shared with me from Jeremiah, "So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him" (18:3,4*). God (the Potter) fashions us, and we do not all have to conform to the same mold.

I would also like to have the opportunity to go back to the days when they were youngsters, throwing a ball back and forth to their dad, and tell them how to finish well. Paul was concerned over this when he wrote: "I have finished the race, I have kept the faith"

My greatest skills have been making mistakes and blunders. Given a new chance I'd teach my boys that it's OK to be different.

God, not merely to perfect the mannerisms required to meet the standards of church behavior. I would tell them more that there is a personal God who is concerned over every aspect of their lives. I would not allow God to be confined to four walls. That is what we often do to limit God. The church is not

unredeemed know they could have salvation through Christ, even though they were of a different skin color than himself. I'd ask that the youngest would realize that when his dad was pitching softball (even though he was too old) it was to proclaim the message that Christians can have clean fun. When he

(2 Timothy 4:7). My sons are both runners and have won numerous awards and honors. They know how to run well and how to finish well. They need

enthusiasm? When the youngest climbs to the top of a mountain pass at the 80-mile mark of a bike race, and he doesn't see his dad there to encourage

**When they cross the ultimate finish line,
I want them to know they were running the
right course, and they ran it well.**


to know that it is vital to have a personal relationship with God through His Son, our Savior. When they cross the ultimate finish line, I want them to know they were running the right course, and they ran it well.

Someday their dad will be gone. How will they do? When the oldest dribbles down the basketball court and throws a pass out to the wing where his dad always was, how will he react when the ball bounces out of bounds, untouched? When he realizes the "old man" isn't there anymore, will he play the game with increased drive and

him, what will he do? Will he pedal with more resolve and determination to reach the finish line? To each I believe the answer is yes.

My sons are men now. When they were boys, I was always there at the major events in their lives. I watched the ball games, listened to the concerts, went to the races, taught them how to drive. One thing I did not do—I didn't share my feelings. I trusted that they captured my devotion to them through my actions, and not words. This was a mistake. A mistake my father made and I repeated.

Dad, if your little ones are still at home, tell them everyday how you feel. I can no longer influence two little boys as I tuck them into bed at night like I once could. But I can still tell them the things of which I have just written. I guess the best I can do is to let them read this article and say, "Love you, guys."

C. Stan  Burgess is a former pastor and is now training specialist for Focus on the Family. He lives in Peyton, Colorado.

** Scripture references are from the New International Version.*

E N D N O T E S

1. This percentage is derived from Focus on the Family and their contacts with pastors through various pastoral conferences and pastors who have called their counseling line. This statistic may be higher than for the average pastor.

Rehabilitating the Heart: Ministry to Children of Discord

B Y G A R Y A N D D E B B I E P R A T T

Pastor, pictures are just not going to tell the whole story.”

I was caught a little off guard by Bob's comment. Bob had been standing near the altar. It was a Sunday night and numerous people had responded to the altar call, many of whom were young people. Bob's two teenage sons were among those who were praying with others at the altar. Bob had tears in his eyes as I walked up to him, put my arm around him, and asked how he was doing. I'm sure my response to his answer caused him to explain.

“A couple of weeks ago, Clint told me that his mother would like their most recent school pictures. Jokingly, I told him to tell her that she could use last year's pictures because they hadn't changed much. We both laughed.

“Tonight during the altar call, I was on my way to the front, when I saw Craig praying at the altar with another person. I looked around and saw Clint praying at the other end. My thoughts went back to my divorce and all the turmoil involved. I thought of the trouble the boys had gotten into, especially Craig. Then I thought about all the changes in the boys and myself since we became Christians—the new friends and attitudes. The way we all look at life has changed.

“The moment I saw them praying, I thought about their mother's request for new pictures and how irrelevant that was to what is actually going on in her sons' lives. I thought about how much she has missed the last several years since she has been gone. She doesn't truly know her sons. Pictures are so insignificant; there is no way pictures can adequately explain what has happened in their lives over this past year.”

Three years ago Bob, out of desperation, had come to our church seeking help for himself and his two sons. Their lives were devastated by divorce. Bob had called a local government agency; they suggested he contact our church. Neither Bob nor his sons were involved with any church. His oldest son had been involved in gang activity, and the police had picked him up on numerous occasions. Over the next 3 years they became involved in our singles and youth ministry. God did a marvelous work in them. These two boys, who were once struggling with their lives and identities, were now ministering at the altars. But what happens to the countless number of other families struggling with the issues of divorce and discord and who have no church to plug into?

Listen to the silent cry of the following children whose parents experienced divorce:

“When my mother left, I was devastated. I felt it was my fault. After a couple of years of her coming and going, I finally decided it was my time to go. So, I contemplated suicide. Next thing I knew I was kicked out of school and I started using drugs.”

“I felt the divorce was my fault and maybe she couldn't handle the trouble that I caused. I felt abandoned and unloved. I felt that I should change the way I acted. I couldn't concentrate on my schoolwork. I thought I would never recover from the pain.”

“I felt terrible for my whole family and thought we wouldn't make it.”

“I cried during the night so nobody could hear me.”

“I was scared of the financial problems we were having.”

BEING SENSITIVE TOWARD CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

Children from single-parent households not only have the same spiritual and emotional needs as the church kids, they also have identity issues from their parents' divorce. Many churches have programs to help adults deal with divorce, but what about the children? They may have issues that cannot be dealt with through the typical Sunday school class or youth group.

As a result of divorce, these kids are left to deal with issues such as guilt, rejection, shame, and identity. Where do these young people get help?

We are living in a society where one of every two marriages ends in divorce. One out of every three children, before he or she reaches the age of 18, will live in a single-parent household.

Churches should not be asking, “Should we have a ministry to these children?” but, “How do we minister to these children?” We can answer these questions by asking the following:

1. Do you have a Sunday school class for single-adult parents to help them deal with the issues of their children?

2. Do you have a ministry for children of single-parent households? In our church we have a ministry called Lifedare. It is important that the Lifedare children know they are special. These children must receive positive attention and love. They have special needs; and, if we don't meet those needs, the world will.

We must love, care, and invest in their lives. The mission statement of Lifedare is: “To reach the children of the single-parent household and meet their individual special needs through

innovative curriculum, social activities, and involvement in ministry.”

When children come to Lifedare, they are deluged with doubt and disbelief. They may believe their world will never again be good. Satan has an easy mark with these children; the foundation of their family life has been torn apart and left in pieces. They long for security and stability, and the world will fill them with its lies if we do not teach them the truth.

3. Is your youth ministry sensitive to the needs of the children from single-parent households (such as a mentoring program)? Is your youth minister trained to deal with family dysfunction? Is consideration given when youth activities are planned to take into account that the slightest financial stretch for the children from a single-parent family can cause major distress in that family?

4. Is there professional Christian counseling available through your church or community?

5. Does your church provide counseling for second marriages to include counseling with the children? The majority of second marriages involve children who have not dealt with the

emotional and psychological issues of their parents’ divorce. These issues are then compounded in the second marriage.

6. Are single parents and their children receiving love and understanding in your church? Maybe some churches don’t have single-parent family ministry in their church because they are not meeting the needs of those families. What would happen if some of our churches started a singles ministry not because they had to but because they wanted to?

When we, the body of Christ, help families of discord, we help them function the way God intended. Jesus meets them at their point of need.

TRANSFORMING LIVES

Single parents like Bob and their children need not be considered a liability; they can be assets. Bob is teaching our DivorceCare Series on Thursday nights. His boys are actively involved in Lifedare and youth ministries. What would have happened to them if our church had no ministry for them? How many families like this are in your neighborhood with no place to go?

The church has an opportunity to

communicate to these children that they can cast their sadness, fears, worries, and cares on the Lord. Unfortunately, the pain of divorce or abandonment does not heal quickly. Many children who come to you from difficult home situations are wrestling with anger, bitterness, and depression. They feel unworthy of love. Though we may not be able to fix the child’s home, we can share how God heals broken lives.

We need to believe that what we do matters not only to those around us, but to God and the world. Jesus empowered His followers when He sent the Holy Spirit to them and they turned the world upside down. The same Holy Spirit can empower children today.

Many children from single-parent families will limp along for the next several years as they try to work through their family problems. What they need most are loving, caring people to walk alongside and hold their hands and their hearts. Your support and presence in their lives will be a critical part of God’s healing process of rehabilitating the heart. **e**

Gary and Debbie Pratt are singles pastors at First Assembly of God, Lawton, Oklahoma.

HEALING THE CHILDREN OF DIVORCE

Basic principles underlie various programs a congregation can adopt to assist children of divorced parents. These principles include:

1. Listen to the children and encourage them to express their feelings in a nonthreatening atmosphere.
2. Allow the children to express negative feelings toward one or both parents without interrupting the outpouring of these feelings.
3. Encourage these children to develop or continue a relationship with both parents, even though they are no longer living together. A child’s physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual development are directly affected by the quality and character of the relationship with both parents.
4. Seek to reduce ongoing parental conflict, either overt or covert. This may involve additional counseling with therapists and/or clergy. Parental conflict undermines a child’s sense of self-worth, identity, security, stability, and hope. Ongoing parental conflict can fracture a child’s worldview and his or her ability to relate to others.
5. Help break the cycle to protect the adult’s emotional health and to protect their children’s developmental health. A divorcing parent must step out of the conflict, even if the other partner won’t.
6. Emphasize to parents the need for committing themselves to a process of changing, healing, and growing regardless of what has happened in the past.
7. Help each partner in the divorce realize he or she cannot change the past, but can learn from it. This means putting to rest what deserves to be left behind, while concentrating on growing in the future.
8. Counsel divorced parents that, if they continue to live with bitterness, revenge, and disappointment, they are shaping the lives of angry, depressed, sorrowful, and confused children who may never be able to reach their God-given potential.

With a program that faces these issues, the church can be a positive force helping to heal the wounded children of divorce.

—Charles Dickson, Ph.D., is a pastor and college professor who lives in Hickory, North Carolina.

We Build Kids: Strategy for a Purpose-Driven Children's Ministry

B Y L E R O Y R . B A R T E L

So many things in our culture destroy children, either by design or default. The pop heroes of the entertainment industry on television, video, radio, or CD usually do not deliver an uplifting, constructive, spiritually redemptive message. More and more we hear about children who have been exploited, abused, or neglected. Alarm fills our hearts. Who cares? Who will do something to stem this devastating and demoralizing cultural drift?

The church can and must accept this challenge. The local church must provide a counter culture committed to building children. Motivated by love, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and commissioned by God, it must reach out to children with the gospel, lead them to put their trust in Christ, and help them become His devoted followers. If the church will do this, children can be rescued from the destructive power of sin, be transformed by God's power, and become all He created them to be. The local church, as God's redemptive agency in the world, must accept the responsibility of developing ministries that build the lives of children.

We Build People was developed as a total-church approach to disciple-making within the Assemblies of God. It involves everything the church does to reach people for Christ and help them become maturing, obedient followers of Jesus. We Build People is not just for adults—it's for everyone in the church, including children. Consequently, the local church needs to develop people-building children's ministries—We Build Kids.

How can the local church accomplish this? How can the church develop children's ministries that truly build young lives?

EMBRACE VALUES TO DRIVE MINISTRIES THAT BUILD CHILDREN

We Build People has developed and advocated some nonnegotiable biblical values designed to serve as motivators and guides for effective disciple-making in the local church. The overarching value that serves as an umbrella for all the others is, "Every person is valued and is the focus of our ministry." Four other nonnegotiable values are recommended:

1. Every person has the right to a presentation of the gospel at his or her level of understanding.
2. Every person needs a biblical moral compass to guide and protect him or her throughout life.
3. Every believer has unique gifts to be discovered, developed, and used to strengthen the church.
4. Every believer has a purpose in advancing the global mission of Christ and the Church.

These nonnegotiable values not only apply to children's ministries—they provide the inspiration and basis for building an effective children's ministry in the local church.

DEPEND ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

How can we truly see transformation in the lives of children? How can we be assured that the inner resources to resist temptation and overcome sin abide in their lives? Only through the power of the Holy Spirit.

In the Old Testament, after the devastating forces of sin had led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the bondage of God's people in Babylon, only one dynamic was considered adequate to sustain the rebuilding of their lives, their culture, and their worship—

the power of the Holy Spirit (Zechariah 4, especially verse 6).

Nothing has changed—children's ministry that transforms lives is spiritual in nature. Only the Holy Spirit provides the dynamic for people building.

WORK THROUGH THE PROCESS OF BECOMING PURPOSE DRIVEN IN CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

We Build People is built on five biblical purposes: evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, ministry, and worship. Effective children's ministries in the local church intentionally develop a strategy for each purpose. Key questions a church should ask are: "How can we ensure that each of these purposes has a healthy, vibrant expression in our children's ministry?" and, "How can we cooperate with the Holy Spirit to see each of these purposes find appropriate expression in the life of each child?"

The *We Build People Pastor's Kit* (available through Gospel Publishing House, order #26DC0692) includes a section designed specifically to assist the leaders in children's ministries in churches as they seek to develop ministries that are purpose driven and help children become devoted followers of Jesus. Sections are provided for both elementary children and early childhood. Resource lists are included. By following the process outlined in the *Pastor's Kit*, the leadership of the local church is led to:

1. develop a mission and vision statement for their children's ministry and consider how each of the biblical purposes would be expressed in their children's ministry.
2. become aware of and embrace the strategies and values identified in the

We Build People philosophy.

3. evaluate all of their present children's ministries in light of how effectively they fulfill the biblical purposes.

4. develop their own process for building children's lives through the ministries of their church.

INCLUDE THE KEY ASPECTS OF A PEOPLE-BUILDING CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

Each of the five purposes of *We Build People* will be expressed in a healthy, vibrant children's ministry. The following questions can serve as a guide for evaluation:

Include them.

What are we doing to reach the children in our community with the gospel? What processes and procedures do we have to help each child feel included, loved, and accepted by our church? Do children feel like they belong?

Instruct them.

What is the quality of our teaching ministry for children? How effective is our Sunday school for children? Are

children being exposed to the systematic teaching of God's Word? Are they learning the foundational truths of the Bible in developmentally appropriate ways? Are they developing attitudes and habits of life that will help them live vibrant, victorious Christian lives?

Involve them.

Is our ministry to children oriented to producing spectators or participation and involvement? Are those who work with children in our church sensitized to be on the watch for giftedness in children and prepared to affirm and encourage its development? Are opportunities provided at every level to begin involving children in ministry?

Invest them.

What are we doing to engender a sense of divine purpose in the lives of children? Are we helping children who have become Christians know how to share their faith with others? Are we encouraging them to be involved in missions? What are we doing to help children begin to hear and respond to the call of God?

Inspire them.

Are we helping children desire to authentically worship God in spirit and truth (John 4:23,24)? Are we encouraging them to discover how to express their worship through their words, music, giving, and lifestyle? Are we using music they enjoy and relate to? Are they learning to pray effectively? Are they provided opportunities to worship together with other children as well as with their parents and the rest of the church in corporate worship?

We Build People has proven to be a blessing to local churches as they have sought to revitalize and revision their ministries. People have been saved and congregations have grown. God has poured out His Spirit. Lives have been changed. New dimensions of purpose and effectiveness have come to many congregations. God wants these very things to happen in children's ministries across the country. We Build People is not just for adults—it's for children too. **e**

LeRoy R. Bartel is national director of the Division of Christian Education/Commissioner on Discipleship for the Assemblies of God, Springfield, Missouri.

Power of Everyday Disciple Illustrations

BY CRAIG BRIAN LARSON

One of the most helpful types of sermon illustrations you can use with today's listeners is what I call "everyday disciple illustrations." What kind of illustrations are these? Why do you want to use them?

Let me give you an example and then explain. Dave Goetz writes:

"My wife, an experienced nurse, recently switched jobs. The change had been a long time coming. Jana was excited about joining two doctors with whom she had previously worked. She was back with 'family'; she had come home.

"At her first evening at the clinic, a young mother came with her 18-month-old son. He needed his final shot for a routine immunization; his mother came for a physical. Both patients were new to the clinic.

"Jana gave the boy his shot, and his mother took him back to the waiting room where his sister and grandmother sat. The mother then went back to the room for her physical. When Jana went to record the vaccination

completed that series of shots months earlier. Jana told me she gasped when she realized her mistake and then went into shock, physically numbed by the fierceness of what raged within. Here is the sequence of her thoughts, according to what she told me later:

"No one will ever know. No harm done.

"I can't tell the doctor. This is my first day on the job. The doctor will think I'm incompetent.

"It can't hurt him, can it? It doesn't hurt to be immunized twice for the same thing? But he needs the right vaccine.

"What will the mother say? But I will always know, and so will God.

"While, the doctor was examining the boy's mother, Jana weakly paced outside the room. When the doctor walked out of the room, Jana told him her mistake, almost vomiting her confession.

" 'Whoa. Let me think about this for a moment,' he said. After a few moments, he walked back into the room, told the mother what happened,

of how to live the Christian life. These illustrations let people see how to obey a particular Scripture. They flesh out a virtue. After hearing an everyday disciple illustration, a person should think, *Oh, that's how I put that Scripture into practice*, or, *That's what humility is*. The above example illustrates honesty and integrity.

2. This style of illustration doesn't necessarily show someone doing it right, as Jana did. But if the person stumbles, the illustration can show how he or she learned through the experience. In fact, everyday disciple illustrations should not have a hero story feel to them. The story of someone deciding to sell everything and becoming a missionary has a valuable place in preaching, but most people need to see ordinary people living for Christ in everyday circumstances. People have trouble identifying with someone doing everything right, because their own lives are a churning jumble of doing right and struggling and sometimes blowing it.

3. People must identify with your illustration. For that reason, most everyday disciple illustrations will be contemporary, not historical. On rare occasions a historical illustration will work if it doesn't feel dated and is in a setting to which people can relate.

4. For the sake of identification, these illustrations will most often be about a noncelebrity. If the story is about a celebrity, it must be in a situation that normal people face. We can identify with a story about Steven Curtis Chapman overcoming temptation while watching a TV

After hearing an everyday disciple illustration, a person should think, *Oh, that's how I put that Scripture into practice*, or, *That's what humility is*.

on the boy's chart, she noticed that the seal on the vial inside her lab coat was unbroken. Quickly Jana realized she had given the boy the wrong vaccine.

"She had given him a shot from a different vial—a routine vaccination for children. But the boy had already

and asked her to schedule another time for her child's immunization. Jana's anxiety released, she was now free."

Notice six characteristics of this everyday disciple illustration:

1. The essence of this type of illustration is this: it gives an example

show; we identify less with him as he struggles with the temptation to be proud as he sings on stage before thousands of people.

Everyday disciple illustrations are stories that hearers can identify with and flesh out what it means to follow Jesus. Your preaching will gain

Everyday disciple illustrations are stories that hearers can identify with and flesh out what it means to follow Jesus.

5. **Everyday disciple illustrations will be stories, not an image, quote, or statistic.** Stories give the most compelling examples.

6. **The stories will be applied literally, not figuratively as a metaphor.** The story about Jana is a literal one about honesty. It would not be an everyday disciple illustration if we used it figuratively, as in: “Just as Jana knew she had made a mistake when she saw that the seal was broken on the vaccine vial, so life gives us signals that we have sinned.”

power to change lives as you use illustrations that share these characteristics because they will show—not just tell—people how to obey God in ways that are relevant to hearers. **e**

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WHERE TO FIND EVERYDAY DISCIPLE ILLUSTRATIONS

The challenge is to have the illustration you want when you need it. Here are some suggestions.

- **Collect everyday disciple illustrations like a carpenter does tools.** Do not hesitate to retell these illustrations once or twice a year. When you do, introduce it like this: “This is a story that is important to retell in our church every so often because it illustrates _____.”
- **Create indexed folders.** (If possible, store on a computer hard drive for search capability.) These indexed folders can include illustrations on frequently used topics: conversion, baptism in the Holy Spirit, healing, spiritual gifts, financial stewardship, church involvement and ministry, evangelism, forgiveness, Bible reading, prayer, faith, hope, love, joy, trust, obedience, death, marriage, parenting, etc.
- **Record stories from your people.** Be alert during sharing and testimony times in church services and small group meetings, and in personal conversations. You may need to do a brief follow-up interview with a person to get a well-rounded story with enough detail. Preachers who illustrate well have developed some journalistic skills. Request permission to use such stories in a sermon.
- **Find illustrations in Christian publications.** Some of the best magazines for this type of illustration are *Discipleship Journal*, *Christian Reader*, and the *Pentecostal Evangel*. Sometimes we need to rewrite a story. If the illustration is good enough to retell for years to come, it is worth the time to make it ready to use. Train a research assistant to help you find and write illustrations. Even if you do not have a paid assistant, you can often recruit volunteers with journalistic interests.
- **Harvest illustrations from other pastors' sermons.** Buy a sermon tape and have the story transcribed and edited.
- **Use your own stories in which you or someone else in your life learned to live as a disciple of Jesus.** Avoid using personal illustrations that exclusively make you look good. Another failing is *exclusively* telling stories from the clergy world. (“I was at a preachers conference last year talking to another pastor, and....”) Unless you are bivocational, your world of local church, pastors meetings, and counseling sessions is not where your people live each day. They are in the marketplace, and that is what they identify with most. Fortunately, there is a solution: leave out story details that restrict it to the world of clergy.
- **Check out www.preachingtoday.com.** This is an Internet preaching resource that flags everyday disciple illustrations.

—Craig Brian Larson, Chicago, Illinois

Wrestling With the Sumo-sized Church

BY GREG ASIMAKOULOPOULOS

Perhaps you are not the pastor of a mega-church. But you may be ministering in the shadow of one. The landscape of American Christianity is dotted with a category of churches that was unheard of 30 years ago.

While there are many churches that have more than 500 believers in attendance on an average Sunday morning, the majority of churches have fewer than 100 people sitting in their pews on the Lord's Day. If you pastor a less-than-mega-church, you're in good company.

For most of the 2 decades I was a pastor, I preached in churches whose pews were few. I know the familiar sour breath of the green-eyed monster of envy. On numerous occasions he accompanied me to community ministers' gatherings where those with large congregations and large staffs trumpeted God's blessings. As colleagues from other churches shared their victories, my monster companion dared me to rejoice with them. Most of the time I couldn't. How I wished I had a staff

smaller and larger churches in a community are subsets of the same church. My church was like an adult Sunday school class; so was the church down the street and the huge church across town. As pastors, we were staff members of Christ's church in our city. Seeing myself as part of the same staff was a breakthrough. In the same way we expect differences in the size of our adult classes without becoming distressed, so are we free to celebrate the unique size of our church when compared to other expressions of local churches.

Here are several practical ways to give that green monster of envy an eviction notice:

1. Acknowledge your tendency to be envious and confess it to the Lord. Why pretend with God? He knows what's in our hearts. His love for us is not diminished by what we harbor in our hearts. Yet we find it hard to admit that we're being held hostage by a beast the color of Kermit the Frog.

When Jack Hayford began his

being undermined. One day while he was waiting for the light to change at the intersection where the large Baptist church was located, the Lord prompted him to look at the church. He reluctantly obeyed. As he openly admitted his envy to himself and to the Lord, he began to pray for the pastor and congregation. From that moment on, when he passed that church, he asked the Lord to bless them. Hayford recalls a liberation of his spirit that was akin to being set free from an emotional prison.

2. Admit your envy to others. Confess it to those whose ministries of which you are jealous. If they are part of a fellowship group with whom you meet on a regular basis, ask the Lord to give you the courage to be vulnerable in the group setting. Ask the group, "Have you ever thought of us as being staff associates of the Church that Jesus has planted in this community?" Chances are, those you've been intimidated by will be surprised by your estimation of them. They may applaud your suggestion calling for a vision of mutual public ministry. If the individuals whose churches you covet are not part of a pastors' group you frequent, invite them for lunch. Share what's on your heart. They may be willing to accept your invitation, and they may also admit that the green monster has on occasion stolen their joy.

3. Just because you are the only pastor in your church, it doesn't mean you can't surround yourself with a pastoral staff. In addition to whatever local ministerial fellowship to which

**For most of the 2 decades
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whose pews were few.**

with which to eat lunch each day (let alone pray together and plan worship services). For years I complained about having only a part-time secretary.

Fortunately, the sweet breath of the Holy Spirit warmed my heart. While I was attending a gathering of evangelical pastors, the Lord showed me that

ministry at Church on the Way in Van Nuys, California, in the '60s, there were barely 100 people on the rolls. When he drove by Van Nuys First Baptist (a huge congregation down the street), he couldn't even look at the building. He was so intimidated by the competition, his energy and joy were

(the unique challenges of pastoring in the shadow of the larger church)

you may belong, become part of a support group. Larry, Brent, Karl, and I met weekly. We were pastors of small congregations. The thought of staff was a dream. Through candid confession and honest dialogue we became like family. What is more, we became a staff to each other.

This group can become a place where—assured of confidentiality—you can share prayer requests and struggles, as well as bounce preaching and program ideas off each other. If you know of such a group, ask if you can join. If you don't, invite two or three other pastors you respect and enjoy being with to meet with you for 2 hours each week. The accountability, collegiality, personal support, and brain-tank times that pastors of multiple-staff churches enjoy with their associates are just a phone call away.

4. Appreciate what God has given you in the church. I escaped the hold of the green-eyed monster when I started to appreciate what God had given me. I didn't have a staff of paid associates, but I did have gifted laypersons willing to spend time with me. One in particular was a retired Navy captain who was chairman of the congregation.

Steve was 10 years my senior. Experienced in administration, business, and construction (as well as in the things of the Lord), he was more capable than most Bible school or seminary graduates. Had our church been able to afford an additional staff person, we couldn't have matched the expertise Steve offered for free. Steve and I met for coffee every Tuesday

morning. Even though he had spent his military service barking orders to career officers, he honored the office of pastor by deferring to my leadership.

Without doubt, there are individuals in your church whose experience

and discretionary time are available for the asking. Inviting an official leader in the congregation (or one without a title in whom you see ministry resources) to come alongside you is worth considering. Not only will your ministry be multiplied in its effectiveness, your sense of isolation will begin to evaporate.

5. Thank God for each individual in your church. In the last century, Johnson Oatman, a small church pastor, postulated a common denominator for contentment. He taught his congregation to count their many blessings and name them one by one. You've probably sung his advice in church. How about acting on it in your study? If you have a pictorial directory, spend a leisurely morning contemplating and praying over each individual or family. Thank the Lord for who they are and who (by His grace) they are becoming. Ask the Lord to use you in their lives. Pray for whatever needs they have. Write a word or two beside their pictures that suggests the unique contribution they

offer your church. After you've reached the end, take out a sheet of paper and total the words and phrases you've scrawled beside the faces. This exercise will reduce the amount of envy with which you started.

The majority of churches have fewer than 100 people sitting in their pews on the Lord's Day.

As I think of the unique challenges of the pastor whose pews are few, I recall a story about an immigrant sailing to America. This middle-aged Norwegian had emptied his bank account to purchase his passage. Because he had no extra money to buy food on board ship, he packed 10 days' worth of cheese sandwiches and apples. Each day as the dinner bell sounded, he sat in his stateroom eating stale bread and moldy cheese. Only at the end of the voyage did he make the humbling discovery that five-star meals three times a day had been included in the price of his ticket. Similarly, too many pastors whose pews are few sit in their studies starving for fellowship and eating jealousy sandwiches when they are invited to a feast of joy and contentment. Take advantage of the resources God and other people in your church and community are willing to make available to you. **E**

Greg Asimakoupoulos is director of creative communications for Mainstay Ministries, Naperville, Illinois.

Evangelism and Children

B Y R A N D Y H U R S T

I tried to imagine what a crowd of 1.8 million people would look like. The only mental image I could picture was a baseball stadium I had been in that seated 50,000. I tried to visualize 36 of those stadiums.

That mental picture represented the number of people who had signed salvation decision cards in Brazil during 30 years of evangelistic crusades preached by the late Bernhard Johnson, long-time Assemblies of God missionary.

As Bernhard talked with me about his evangelistic ministry, the thought of those 36 baseball stadiums boggled my mind. Then he said something that jolted me. “If I were 25 years old and beginning my ministry in Brazil today, I would not be a crusade evangelist. I would devote my time to working with children.”

“Why?” I asked.

“Because I believe the long-term results would be greater,” he replied.

On February 16, 1995, Bernhard Johnson went to be with the Lord. But in the final years of his life, Bernhard devoted increasing amounts of his time and resources to children’s ministries. Children of Brazil Outreach (COBO), which he founded, has built 12 Christian schools and daycare centers in Brazil that serve a total of 4,000 students. Local churches operate each school. COBO has also provided Bible curriculum for 25,000 students in 110 public schools, produced an AIDS prevention comic book with an evangelistic message for distribution to children and youth in schools, and conducted seven children’s crusades that have seen more than 16,000 decisions for Christ.

Evangelist Dwight L. Moody began his ministry in humble circumstances. In 1857, he roomed and took meals at “Mother” H. Phillips’ house. From Mother Phillips he learned not only the importance of prayer, Bible study, and Scripture memorization, but also the importance of evangelizing children and making disciples.

Moody was moved by the desperate physical and spiritual needs of thousands of poor children who roamed the streets and alleys of the poorest neighborhoods. While doing street evangelism, Moody met J.B. Stilson, who preached to sailors along the Chicago River. Together they recruited children for at least 20 different Sunday schools. Moody boldly went into the Sands, the worst district of Chicago. Most of the children in this area lived in one-parent homes where alcoholism and drug addictions were common. The children rarely attended school because their parents did not make them go. Eventually, Moody established Christian schools for these boys and girls. Though he was best known as a great crusade evangelist, he had a heart for reaching spiritually lost children, especially through Sunday schools.¹

Bernhard Johnson and Dwight L. Moody, two great crusade evangelists, shared a similar perspective and passion. Possibly this was because these men had ministries that dealt with such large numbers of people. They had a special insight and appreciation for the value of reaching children, while many in the church ignored or underestimated this critical ministry.

One missionary once said, “When

an adult comes to Christ, a soul is saved. When a child comes to Christ, a life is saved.” Because children’s hearts are tender and their minds impressionable, children are influenced in many ways. Reaching them for Christ and investing in their spiritual lives will produce lasting results and help shape their spiritual and moral character before a life of sin brings its destruction.

Children today are being targeted by an increasing number of organizations, groups, and movements. Those who are committed to a cause, whether good or evil, recognize that children are the future, and now is the time to reach and disciple them. Critical life decisions are made at very early ages.

Cary Tidwell, personnel and family life director for Assemblies of God Foreign Missions, presents the following statistics concerning the ages at which missionaries received Christ or sensed God’s call to missionary service. In a 1995 survey, more than 42 percent of our missionaries reported they received their call to missionary service between the ages of 5 and 19. Almost 87 percent accepted the Lord as their Savior before their 19th birthday. A child’s capacity to comprehend the truth in an adult service and respond to the Holy Spirit should never be underestimated.

Sunday school is a major force for making disciples, but it also is a means of evangelism. The small-group setting of a Sunday school class offers a highly effective environment for connecting with unbelievers and leading them to Christ. This is especially true of children. Christian children can effectively reach other children. This kind of

evangelism can have an impact on entire families.

In the last 14 years, Book of Hope International, an Assemblies of God Foreign Missions ministry founded by Missionary Bob Hoskins, has distributed more than 100 million copies of an evangelistic Scripture book called *Book of Hope*. Presented in an easy-to-read format with colorful illustrations, the *Book of Hope* is a chronological harmony of the Gospels that includes a clear invitation to receive Christ and instruction on Christian living. The vast majority of books were given to schoolchildren. In many cases, these children have taken the message of salvation to their parents. Entire families have come to Christ, and churches have even been established as a result of this evangelistic outreach to children. In Brazil, part of the strategy of Bernhard Johnson built into the Children of Brazil Outreach is to teach children to evangelize their unbelieving parents.

One day my son, Rolly, introduced me to a prominent heart surgeon. He had heard me speak at a local church. I asked him how long he had been attending this church.

"Just a few months," he replied.

When I asked what brought him to church, he told me that his 11-year-old daughter had visited Sunday school at the invitation of a friend and had begun attending regularly.

"She just wouldn't leave me alone," the doctor said. "She kept saying, 'Daddy, you just have to visit my church.' "

I doubt that anyone from this church could have made the same request and elicited the same response. But the doctor acquiesced to his daughter's pleadings.

Later, I pondered the means God used to reach this man. Evangelism strategists who teach pastors how to reach professionals might recommend joining the Rotary Club or some other social group to gain contacts. But it was this doctor's 11-year-old daughter

who convinced him to attend church. Often children can open doors to reach their parents in ways no one else can.

Evangelizing and discipling children can help a church increase in numerical growth. While a smaller church may be limited in its ability to provide programs and activities for youth and adults, Sunday school teachers and children's church workers can be motivated and trained to make an impact on the lives of children and their families.

The local church that makes a serious commitment to evangelize children effectively will see the results multiplied. Children are not only the future of a church, they are a vital part of its present. **E**

Randy Hurst is commissioner of the Commission on Evangelism, Springfield, Missouri.

E N D N O T E

1. Lyle W. Dorsett, *The Life of D.L. Moody: A Passion for Souls* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1997), 64,65.

Multiple Strategies for Stewardship in the Local Church

B Y R A N D A L L K . B A R T O N

FOUR CATEGORIES OF STEWARDS

On any given Sunday, those in our pews fall into at least one of four categories as stewards.

Drowning in Debt

With credit so available and consumerism so prevalent, 10 to 15 percent of your congregation could be defined as legally bankrupt. If they liquidated everything tomorrow, their liabilities exceed their assets. They spend more than they make. They buy on credit and defer payments. They shift balances from one credit card to another. They give virtually nothing to their local church or any charity with the exception of token offerings. They have accumulated little or no equity in worldly possessions.

Looking Good, but Broke

Thirty-five percent of your congregation are in this category. They drive new cars, perhaps two; give regularly to your

Well Off, but Not Committed

About 35 percent of your congregation are well off, but not committed. They may have been saved later in life and were never taught to give or tithe. They may be young professionals or entrepreneurs with a lot of discretionary income. They always pull something out of their wallets for the offering. They may respond to special offerings, but have never been taught to give systematically or sacrificially. They hold tightly to their worldly possessions.

Fully Committed Steward

Only about 15 percent of your congregation are fully committed stewards. They tithe as a minimum. They support missions, benevolence, and church capital campaigns. They see stewardship as eternal investing, not as giving. They have experienced the joy of stretching themselves to give beyond their means. They hold lightly to their worldly possessions.

Debt-Counseling Ministry

Some congregations consider debt-counseling ministry as critical as other intervention ministries in helping those who are drowning in debt to find their way out.

Christian Financial Planning

Many excellent programs, such as Larry Burkett's Christian Financial Concepts and Howard Dayton's Crowne Ministries, have successful programs that teach people how to reorder their priorities and create the disciplines in their lives to become the stewards God desires.

Stewardship Education

Elective courses on stewardship, membership training on tithing, sermons on giving, planned giving programs, biblically based investment counseling, and other such programs are successful in teaching those who are well off, but not committed to view their wealth and possessions from an eternal perspective.

Stewardship ministry in the local church should address the needs of all members in your congregation.

church, but do not tithe; and have a new home. The kids may go to private schools. They have some retirement savings, but they are one or two paychecks away from drowning in debt. They increase spending and lifestyle to correspond with their most recent raise. They have never learned to save. Their worldly possessions are mortgaged to the max.

STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY IN THE CHURCH

Stewardship ministry in the local church should address the needs of all members in your congregation. It should focus on reaching those in each category and helping them to become God-honoring in their stewardship walk. Examples of successful stewardship emphases include:

Giving Challenges

Missions conventions, capital campaigns, and opportunities to invest in benevolence needs are wonderful ways to challenge fully committed stewards in their stewardship walk and provide continual opportunities to be challenged as God directs them.

ONGOING STEWARDSHIP EMPHASIS

Model Biblical Stewardship

In addition to these specially targeted programs, all members of your congregation will benefit by modeling biblical stewardship in the following ways:

1. At least monthly, have a 2- to

3-minute testimonial from someone who has progressed in his or her stewardship walk.

2. Send quarterly giving statements to every person who attends your church as reminders of his or her level of investment in the ministries of the local church.

3. Make sure your own church gives to missions and invests in other ministries outside the church.

4. Church leadership should appropriately model the example of what it means to be a fully committed steward.

Establish a Stewardship Committee

If you are convinced that your congregation could benefit from a stewardship emphasis, consider establishing a stewardship committee or a stewardship ministry team. Many laypeople in your church would find such an opportunity to serve an outstanding match with their giftings.

Some of the responsibilities for a stewardship ministry team could include:

1. Develop an understanding with leadership that whole-life stewardship is a 52-week-a-year program requiring organization.

2. Help to establish a 12-month stewardship calendar with a variety of weekly stewardship emphases addressing the

ministries and opportunities.

6. Provide opportunities for individuals to support ministries for which they have a special burden.

Stewardship as a ministry in the local church is as different as congregations, pastors, and leaders. Churches would

Make sure your own church gives to missions and invests in other ministries outside the church.

divergent needs of individuals in the congregation.

3. Serve as the planning group for annual missions conventions and advance planning for periodic capital campaigns.

4. Explore resources available in a church and community to support the ministry and mission of the church.

5. Involve and encourage others to become involved in stewardship

benefit tremendously by considering stewardship as an integral part of their church ministry.

Many writers in the financial field have called stewardship the “silent subject of the Christian church.” It is time to break that silence. **e**

Randall K. Barton is CEO of the Assemblies of God Financial Services Group, Springfield, Missouri.

S E R M O N S E E D S



ELIJAH FAINTING

1 Kings 19:1–18

INTRODUCTION:

We may learn much from the lives of others. Elijah's experience provides instruction. Sometimes we enter into a strange and mysterious state of depression, and it is well to learn from Scripture that others have also been depressed. Weary, sick at heart, sorely tried ones are apt to faint. At such a time they imagine that some strange thing has happened to them; but indeed, it is not so. Looking down on the sands of time they may see the print of a man's foot, and it can comfort them when they learn that Elijah was no mere man, but a mighty servant of the Lord.

MESSAGE:

1. Elijah's weakness—"He requested for himself that he might die."

- a. He was a man of like passions as us (James 5:17).
 - (1) He failed in the point where he was strongest, as others have done: Abraham, Job, Moses, Peter.
 - (2) He was strong, not by nature, but by divine strength. He was no unfeeling man of iron, with nerves of steel. The wonder is not that he fainted, but that he stood up in the fierce heat that beat upon him.

- b. He suffered from a terrible reaction. Those who go up, go down. The depth of depression is equal to the height of rapture.
- c. He suffered grievous disappointment; Ahab was still under Jezebel's sway, and Israel was not won to Jehovah.
- d. He was wearied with the excitement of Carmel and his run by the side of Ahab's chariot.
- e. His wish was folly. "O Lord, take away my life."
 - (1) He fled from death. If he wished to die, Jezebel would have obliged him.
 - (2) He was more needed than ever to maintain the good cause.
 - (3) He was never to die. Strange that he who was to escape death should cry, "Take away my life." How unwise are our prayers when our spirits sink.
- f. His reason was untrue. The Lord had made him, in some respects, better than his fathers.
 - (1) He had more to do than they, and he was stronger, more bold, more lonely in witness, and more terrible in majesty.
 - (2) He had more to enjoy than most of the other prophets. He had greater power with God and had wrought miracles surpassed by none.

- (3) He had been more favored by special providence and peculiar grace, and was yet to rise above all others in the manner of his departure: the chariots of God were to wait upon him.

2. God's tenderness to him.

- a. God allowed him to sleep. This was better than medicine, inward rebuke, or spiritual instruction.
- b. God fed him with food and miraculous nourishing.
- c. Elijah received angelic care (verses 5–7).
- d. God allowed Elijah to express his grief (verse 10). This is often the readiest relief. He stated his case, and in doing so eased his mind.
- e. God revealed himself and His ways. The wind, earthquake, fire, and still small voice were voices from God. When we know who God is we are less troubled about other matters.
- f. God told him good news: "Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel" (verse 18). His sense of loneliness was removed.
- g. He gave him more to do—to anoint others by whom the Lord's purposes of chastisement and instruction should be carried on.

—C.H. Spurgeon.

Adapted from Spurgeon's Sermon Notes.

CHILDREN...ARE THEY A BURDEN OR A BLESSING?

Matthew 19:14

INTRODUCTION:

Sometimes even people in the church think children are a burden, often neglecting them to the point of pushing them away. Scripture gives us instruction concerning our responsibility to children.

MESSAGE:

1. We need to train our children in the way they should go (Proverbs 22:6).

- a. We need to train our children in our homes.
- b. We need to train our children in our churches.
- c. We need to impress on our children

the things of God (Deuteronomy 6:4–7).

2. God has ordained that children praise Him (Psalm 8:2).

- a. We need to teach children how to praise God.
- b. We need to give children the opportunity to praise God.

3. We must become like children (Matthew 18:1–6).

- a. Unless we change and become like little children we will never enter the kingdom of heaven (verse 3).
- b. Whoever humbles himself like a child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (verse 4).

4. We need to see children as a blessing from God (Mark 10:13–16).

- a. The disciples saw children as a burden and rebuked those who brought children to see Jesus (verse 13).
- b. Jesus saw the children as a blessing. He took them in His arms, put His hands on them, and blessed them (verse 16).

CONCLUSION:

The disciples saw the children as a burden. Jesus saw the children as a blessing. Whose example will you follow?

—Chris Ness,
Lusaka, Zambia

S E R M O N S E E D S

WHERE ARE HIS DESCENDANTS?

Isaiah 53:1–12

INTRODUCTION:

The importance of ancient family is understood in the first few chapters of Genesis. In chapter 5, a series of begats lists the early patriarchs from Adam to Noah. The intriguing story of Abraham and Sarah and the birth of Ishmael speaks to the high priority of having sons to perpetuate the family name.

The rivalry between Leah and Rachel for the affection of Jacob was accentuated by the fact Leah gave him sons and Rachel was barren.

In Old Testament prophecies, a descendant of David was to sit on the Throne of David forever (2 Samuel 7:16; Psalm 89:3,4; 34–37; Jeremiah 33:20,21).

It is no idle question that Isaiah is asking: Who is going to believe our report? Where are His descendants?

MESSAGE:

1. God's Word declares His Sonship.

- Matthew, the Jewish Gospel, has 10 references to Jesus as the "Son of David."
- The Gospel of John, written to show the deity of Christ, makes 10 references to Christ as the "Son of God."
- Satan himself refers to Christ as the "Son of God."
- Peter was an eyewitness when God the Father spoke on the Mount of Transfiguration. And the Word of God is certain in its revelation of Christ as the Son of God (2 Peter 1:16–21).
- Paul frequently noted the "hidden wisdom" and the "mystery," which none of the wise of this world comprehended.
- The Word shouts it from cover to cover—Jesus is the Son of God.

2. God the Father speaks of His Son.

- On three occasions the Father spoke in an audible voice and declared, "This is my beloved son."
 - At the baptism of Christ by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:17).

- On the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5).
- During the final week of Christ's life (John 12:28).
- God the Father clearly declared that Christ is His only begotten Son.

3. Christ himself makes known His eternal relationship to the Father.

- John 5:43, "I am come in my Father's name."
- John 6:51, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven."
- John 7:28,29, "I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true."
- John 8:16, "For I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me."
- John 8:58, "Before Abraham was, I am."
- John 10:36, "Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"
- John 14:11, "Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me."
- John 14:20, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father."
- Twice in His prayer in John 17, Christ prays that His disciples may be "one, even as we are."

4. Believers are His descendants through adoption.

- "God sent forth his Son...that we might receive the adoption of sons...and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Galatians 4:4–7).
- "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15).
- "Long ago...God chose us though Christ... His unchanging plan has always been to adopt us into his own family by sending Christ to die for us" (Ephesians 1:4,5, TLB).
- Paul uses other metaphors to describe this relationship.
 - We have been grafted into the good olive tree (Romans 11:17–24).

- God has translated us from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His Son (Colossians 1:13).
- Who can claim to be His descendants? Every born-again child of God.

5. Believers are to take on His image.

- Love. Jesus washed His disciples' feet. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35).
- Holiness; separation from worldliness and separation unto Godlikeness. "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation...it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15,16).

6. Believers are to recognize His exalted position.

- Hebrews was written to show Christ as the only begotten Son of God.
 - Christ is more exalted than angels (Hebrews 1:5,8,9,13).
 - "Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).
- "It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:34).
- His descendants recognize His exalted position as Redeemer.

CONCLUSION:

The Word declares Christ to be the Son of God and the fulfillment of prophecy to be the Son of David, who will sit on the promised throne forever. The Father identifies Christ as the only begotten of the Father. Jesus himself spoke of His relationship with the Father. All is but historical record unless this generation knows His descendants. Those who bear His name must bear His image.

—Maurice Lednický,
Springfield, Missouri

S E R M O N S E E D S



SEVEN GREAT MEN

Ezekiel 22:30

INTRODUCTION:

God seeks men He can use. God sometimes used the most unlikely men because they were surrendered to Him. No church, community, or nation can be strong without good, strong Christian men.

MESSAGE:

1. Noah (Genesis 6:9)

- Mature in his attitude. He did not question God.
- Mature in his acceptance. He did what God told him to do.
- Mature in his actions. He obeyed God and the human race was saved.

2. Abraham (James 2:23)

- A friend of God in practice. Note how he practiced hospitality (Genesis 18:2–5).
- A friend of God in prayer (Genesis 18:20–32).
 - The sin of Sodom (verses 20,21).
 - Salvation for the righteous in Sodom (verses 22–32).

3. Joseph (Genesis 37–50)

- Persecution (verse 37). Hated, persecuted, and misunderstood by his brothers. He was sold as a slave to the Egyptians.
- Prison (verses 39–40). Potiphar's wife lied about Joseph. While in prison, he interpreted dreams.
- Plan (verse 41). He interpreted the king's dreams. He was made second in leadership in all Egypt.
- Patience (verses 42–45). He forgave his brothers and saved Israel.

4. Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1–6)

- Personal (1:4). He wept, mourned, and fasted because of the broken-down walls of Israel.
- Plan (2:18–20). Note: "Let us arise and build."
- Persistence (4:6,18,20,23). They worked with a sword at their side. Note: Nehemiah did not waste time speaking to those who opposed him (6:3).

5. Job (Job 1–23)

- Job's fate (1–2). Job lost his riches, family, and health. Note: The Lord gives

and the Lord takes away.

- Job's faith (13:15). Though God slay him, Job wouldn't lose his faith.
- Job's future (23:10). He would come forth as gold.

6. Daniel (Daniel 1)

- Purpose (1:8). Daniel determined not to defile himself.
- Prayer (6:10). Daniel prayed as before, giving thanks to God.
- Protection (6:22). God closed the mouths of the lions.

7. Stephen (Acts 6–7)

- Person (6:5–8). Chosen as a deacon. Did great works.
- Problem (6:9–7:60). His words rejected; he is murdered.

CONCLUSION:

God looked for a man but found none (Ezekiel 22:30). God seeks good men, husbands, and fathers who will surrender their lives to Him and follows His commands.

—Croft M. Pentz,
Waynesboro, Pennsylvania

I SURRENDER ALL THAT I AM

Romans 12:1,2

INTRODUCTION:

A man desperately seeking peace with God came to church and laid a precious possession on the altar. Still he had no peace. At last he threw himself on the altar. Immediately God's peace flooded his soul. He had finally realized that true obedience begins with the surrender of one's self.

MESSAGE

1. Jesus is our example of total self-surrender.

- In His earthly life and ministry (John 17:19).
- In His atoning death (Ephesians 5:2,25; Titus 2:14).

2. At conversion, believers die to Christ (Romans 6:1–19; Galatians 2:20; 5:24; Colossians 3:3; 2 Timothy 2:11; 1 Peter 2:24).

- We surrendered the old self-life to be

crucified (Romans 6:6).

- This death led to a new life surrendered to God—a living sacrifice (Romans 6:4,11–13).

3. Our new life in Christ is a fully surrendered life.

- The believers of Macedonia "first gave their own selves to the Lord" (2 Corinthians 8:5).
- Having surrendered to God, we give ourselves for others (John 15:13; 1 John 3:16).

4. The fully surrendered life is a wholly sanctified life.

- Spirit, soul, and body (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
- Consistent subjection to Christ's lordship (1 Corinthians 9:27).

5. The key to victorious living is to submit ourselves to God.

- Then we can resist the devil (James 4:7).
- We surrender all that we are physically,

emotionally, socially, intellectually, spiritually.

- Victory in any area of our lives begins by surrendering that area to God.
- To find life we must surrender all that we are to God (Matthew 16:24,25). If we do not, we will lose it.

CONCLUSION:

We cannot bargain with God. God's peace terms are unconditional surrender. The first and great commandment is to love God with all our hearts (Matthew 22:37). He says, "Give me your heart" (Proverbs 23:26). When God has our hearts, He has all of us. Once we surrender the heart, all the rest comes with it.

Come to Him now in faith and say,
"Lord, I surrender all that I am."

—J.W. Jepson,
The Dalles, Oregon

S E R M O N S E E D S



KINGDOM CITIZENS

Matthew 18:10

INTRODUCTION:

Said a precious little lad to his father one bright day,
May I come and trust in Jesus, let Him wash my sins away?
Oh, my son, you're much too little; wait until you older grow.
Bigger folk 'tis true do need Him, but little folk are safe, you know.

Said the father to his laddie as the storm was coming on,
Are the sheep all safely sheltered within the fold, my son?
All the big ones are, my father, but the lambs I let them go.
For I did not think it mattered; little ones are safe, you know.

Oh, my brothers and my sisters, have you too made that mistake?
Little hearts that now are yielding may be hardened then too late.
E're the evil day comes nigh, let the children come to Me,
And forbid them not, said Jesus, for such My fold shall be.

—Author unknown

Jesus' disciples asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" (verse 1). It is the humble—the little ones. How then can

we be great Kingdom citizens?

MESSAGE:

1. Kingdom greatness: be humble.

- a. Jesus said the greatest in the kingdom of heaven were the little ones. This speaks of a character of humility.
 - (1) Your character is what you are. Are you like children? (verse 4). They are dependent and trusting.
 - (2) Are you like Jesus? He is selfless and loving.

- b. Kingdom greatness calls not only for a character of humility, but also a ministry of humility (verse 10).
 - (1) It is impossible for the proud to minister to the humble. There is humility in ministering to the little ones. It is saying that my spiritual needs are not greater than the needs of these little ones.
 - (2) Pride cannot minister because it doesn't acknowledge that need exists.

2. Kingdom action: don't neglect it.

- a. The kingdom of Christ can be accepted or rejected (verses 5,10).
 - (1) Don't neglect the little ones (verse 10).
 - (2) Don't neglect the kingdom of Christ. Accepting is humbling (verse 5).

- b. Kingdom work can be neglected.

When we neglect it, we find ourselves in a dangerous place .

- (1) It is sin to model unbelief before their lives (verses 7–9). It is sin to allow unbelief in their lives.
- (2) God's wrath shows that He cares about this (verse 6).

3. Kingdom worth: the little ones.

- a. The humble have representatives in heaven (verse 10).
 - (1) Their rank: Always before the Father. It's dangerous to ignore those who have God's ranking generals assigned to them.
 - (2) Their role: They are ministers and worshipers.
- b. The humble have God's concern (verses 11–14).
 - (1) This was Christ's passion. He gave His life for the salvation of the humble.
 - (2) What then is our purpose? Should we not give our lives for their growth?

CONCLUSION

If you're a down-and-outer, Christ cares for you. Come to Him as a child today. If you're a saint, the work of the Kingdom is a humble work. Come to Him as a child today.

—Chris Hooton,
Faribault, Minnesota

A WILLING BRIDE

Genesis 24

INTRODUCTION:

In the search for a bride for Isaac, Abraham's servant looked for a girl who was willing (verses 5,8). Rebekah demonstrated willingness in her encounter with the servant.

MESSAGE:

1. Rebekah was willing to minister to the servant's needs.

- a. Water for him (verse 18).
- b. Water for his camels (verse 19).
- c. Straw and lodging (verse 25). Note: She hastened and ran (verses 18,20,28).

2. Rebekah was willing to believe the servant's words (verse 30).

- a. She had not seen Abraham, Isaac, the Promised Land, or the servant before, but she believed what the servant said.
- b. The Church must believe and be willing to proclaim the truths of God's Word.

3. Rebekah was willing to receive gifts from the servant.

- a. Gifts of wealth and worth (verses 22,53).
- b. Jesus Christ gives gifts to the Church (Acts 2:38,39; 2 Corinthians 9:15; Ephesians 4:11–13).

4. Rebekah was willing to follow the servant—totally and immediately (verses 55–61).

CONCLUSION:

The servant found a willing bride for his master. The Holy Spirit must find in us, the Church, nothing less as the bride of Christ. He wants Jesus Christ to be lifted up and the Church to be like her Lord. By this, people will come to know, believe, and live by God's truth.

—Michael Pilapil,
Kailua Kona, Hawaii



CHOIR CAMP

Every summer, I direct a weeklong choir camp for children who have completed kindergarten through sixth grade. We learn a 30-minute musical to perform on the Sunday night following camp. My purpose for this camp is outreach/evangelism. As an elementary school teacher, I work with approximately 600 children each year. A majority of these children have no church exposure. Some have never been to church.

I recruit by driving through the school neighborhood and giving out flyers to the kids. They recognize me as their music teacher. We also send flyers to the children who register at our annual Easter egg hunt. The best way to get kids is to have the church kids invite their friends. My attendance doubled when the church also provided transportation.

We meet from 9 a.m. to noon, Monday through Thursday, and from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Friday. We open with prayer and a short devotional related to the songs we will learn that day. We break for snacks and a short game at 10:30. We learn two or three songs each day for the first 3 days and do the blocking and polishing on Thursday and Friday.

I assign the drama parts 2 weeks before the camp to allow the actors enough time to memorize their lines. I rewrite the musical to have 10 to 12 one-liners for several children. I also assign the verses of songs to individual kids to sing as solos. I find enough special parts so every child in the musical is featured in some way—solos, speaking parts, choreography, or pantomime.

The church soundman comes to the rehearsal on Friday so we can use sound, lighting, and props for our final rehearsal. We break for pizza at 11:30 and then have a dress rehearsal before leaving. On Sunday afternoon, the children arrive at 4:45 for a final rehearsal before the evening service.

I have been conducting choir camps for several years. Some of the children who attended previous camps are now my teen workers. I visit a youth service several weeks before camp and ask for volunteers, and I also place a notice in the bulletin. I meet with the workers ahead of time for a short orientation and give them staff handbooks. We discuss how to respond to kids' questions about salvation. The most important part of camp is the workers' relationship with the kids.

Several children have been saved through choir camp. Some parents who have come to watch their child perform (minister) have also been saved. Families have started attending church regularly as a result of their child's involvement in choir camp.

Kids who did not attend church before choir camp have started coming regularly to children's church. Several of our

bus kids who were unable to continue coming to our church have begun attending a church near their home.

—Karen Snyder, *Central Assembly of God, Springfield, Missouri*

A CRUCIAL TRANSITION

Our Sunday morning children's ministry stops at age 12. Students can drop from church quickly at this age if the transition into youth group is not smooth.

Time for adjustment is needed whenever change occurs. To mark this change, we have a graduation Sunday in the adult service. Each grad is presented with a certificate and small gift. We also recognize their families. Both the senior pastor and youth pastor congratulate them. After the service, we take pictures and provide refreshments for the grads and their families.

During the quarter following graduation, we have a grad class that meets on selected Sundays during the time these students normally attended children's ministry. Similar to a new members class, but with a preteen flavor, students discuss what we believe, talk about their concerns, and learn more about prayer and worship. We also encourage them to become involved in ministry: the nursery assistant rotation, puppet team, or children's church worship singers. This extra nurturing is worth the effort as we see enthusiastic participants grow up in the church.

—Anita Douglas, *Ocean City Worship Center, Berlin, Maryland*

PREACHING GOD'S WORD THROUGH COMPUTER ANIMATION

Computers are changing the way we preach the message to children. I use PowerPoint to help me preach my Sunday morning sermon. I outline my message, but I also use pictures, video clips, animated clips, or create my own animation. With PowerPoint, the characters move. I also use pictures of the children in the church.

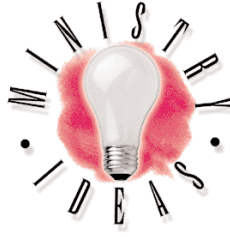
The children never know what is coming next because I only reveal the message point by point. It's interesting, and they remember what they see.

—Bob Gerstenberger, *Crossroads Church, Avon, Indiana*

ADVANCED PARENTING SEMINAR

Conduct a seminar for parents and call it an Advanced Parenting Seminar. People don't want to admit they don't know much about parenting, but they will respond to a seminar promising to teach them advanced skills.

Advertise the class in the church and community. One of the best and most relevant topics is "Keeping Your Children



Safe in an Unsafe World.” This covers practical ways parents can protect their children from dangerous and harmful situations, such as molestation, abduction, and exposure to harmful Internet content. Bring in an expert on child safety, or research various topics and conduct the seminar yourself.

Great resources for this workshop include: *Raising Safe Kids in an Unsafe World*, by Jan Wagner and Seth Goldstein; *The Yellow Dyno Child* safety videos, also from Jan Wagner. (Order from Yellow Dyno Publishing Company at www.yelowdyno.com.) A third resource is Child Safety System, from Protecting America’s Children, Inc., 141 State Street, #246, Lake Oswego, OR 97034; phone number 1-360-944-9636.

—Jeff Miles, *Eastridge Christian Assembly, Issaquah, Washington*

CLOWN SOFTBALL GAME

One of the best and most effective outreaches our church has used is a clown softball game. We have as many adults and teens as possible (especially those involved in children’s ministry, such as the Sunday school teachers, children’s pastor, youth pastor) come dressed as clowns the Saturday before the event and pass out flyers, greet kids, and invite them to play softball with the clowns.

During the event, we have a clown team and a kid team, with coaches for each team. The clowns, of course, don’t play regulation softball. We plan various props and skits in advance.

One year we played noodle ball, using swim noodles for bats and a huge plastic ball. It’s more fun if you soak the noodles in a small wading pool. Even toddlers can play noodle ball safely. We had pinch runners who helped the smaller ones hit the ball, and then picked them up or took them by the hand to help them run the bases.

After the game, ladies from our Women’s Ministries served hot dogs, chips, brownies, and sodas. We ended our event with a short devotional and an invitation to Christ.

—Rita Neve, *First Assembly of God, Booneville, Arkansas*

JESUS AND HIS FRIENDS

After several years of successful children’s ministry in the government housing areas, we began to sense the need to expand our outreach in these areas. We decided to capitalize on some of the existing ministries in our church and combine them with our bus ministry. This produced a far greater impact than any of these ministries could have produced by themselves.

The Christmas season is a difficult time for underprivileged families. We have a Christmas production that has been successful with hundreds responding to the altar calls. We wanted

to use this as we targeted these particular neighborhoods.

We had a special day and called it, “Jesus and His Friends Day.” In Matthew 25, Jesus said, “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.” We decided our outreach would be an effort to give the best day we could to those who needed it the most.

Through the cooperation of local government agencies and our own bus routes, we developed a mailing list of most of the underprivileged families in our city and county. These families were invited to be our guests on this special day. We presented our Christmas production for these families. This performance is not advertised for the community. At the conclusion, we give every family a food basket containing a turkey or a ham and everything needed for a Christmas dinner. Children received a gift for a boy or girl of their age.

In November, we place Christmas trees in the foyer of the church and hang pink and blue paper ornaments on them with an age bracket stamped on each ornament. Church members select these ornaments and purchase and wrap their gifts.

To see the joy on the faces of the children, the gratitude of the parents, and the incredible response at the altar call makes this day well worth it. And our church family has been reminded of what Christmas is all about.

—George Sawyer, *Calvary Assembly of God, Decatur, Alabama*

WEB SITE FOR KIDS

Many parents are inconsistent about bringing their children to church. Some kids visit relatives during the summer months; others only come on their weekend visits with a divorced parent. How can we reach and teach them without them being present?

I started a Web site for kids (www.Kids4God.org). I use the weekly Bible study and convert the puppet/character skits into a story. The kids who miss church can still keep up with our studies. This worldwide media has reached not only the kids who visit my church, but also hundreds of kids and parents from dozens of states and other countries. In 5 months, a support ministry for a church of 20 kids has received 4,000 hits.

—Gene Powell, *New Life Assembly of God, Pell City, Alabama*

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E-mail: You may send your ministry ideas to: enrichmentjournal@ag.org.



LOOKING BACK

On the morning of July 16, 1969, astronauts Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins waited atop their 35-story rocket to take off for their mission that would land the first man on the moon. A crowd of thousands gathered near the launch site at Cape Canaveral, Florida, and witnessed the blastoff of *Apollo 11*. Among those in the crowd was a 67-year-old celebrity camouflaged behind sunglasses. Charles A. Lindbergh, the first person to fly nonstop across the Atlantic in 1927, watched with pen and notebook in hand. As he contemplated the incredible advances in flight his journey set in motion 42 years previous, Lindbergh wrote poetry.

Reflecting on the past breeds gratitude. In Psalm 90, Moses reflected on the lessons life had taught him since he responded to God's call in the wilderness. With pen in hand, he celebrated the fragility of life and God's faithfulness. Looking back helps us look up.

—Source: Peter Jennings, *The Century* television series. Submitted by Greg Asimakoupoulos, Naperville, Illinois.

IMITATING OUR FATHER

The little boy was walking proudly beside his dad because he had just overheard someone say, "Look, that child is the spittin' image of his father. Even the way he walks is like his dad." Every father would be proud to hear someone say that about his child.

Fathers, we need to live in a way so others can say that our lives are following the example of our Lord. This would be the greatest testimony of our faith.

—Ronald Anastase, Burlington, New Jersey

HOW HIGH CAN IT FLY?

Do you remember your first helium-filled balloon? Did you get it at the fair, or carnival, or on the streets of your city, or was it at a parade? You clutched it with joy; maybe it was tied to your wrist. It was fun.

Then...somehow, it slipped out of your hand. Maybe you cried, as it went up...up...up, until it finally went out of sight, taken by the wind. Could it have been your first physics lesson learned the hard way? Now...did you ever wonder how high up that balloon really could have gone?

The answer is provided for us at the National Scientific Balloon Facility located in Palestine, Texas. That little latex balloon could have eventually reached a height of approximately 18,000 feet. As it climbed, expansion would have taken place. At the 18,000-foot level, the helium inside would have expanded to about 80 percent more than its

original volume. This is about the absolute limit of the latex to expand, and that little balloon would have burst.

What if you wanted to sail a balloon beyond that height? How can it be done? There are specially designed experimental balloons that can reach heights of more than 120,000 feet. These specially built balloons have been designed with ducts that vent off the expanding pressure of the gases as the balloon rises.

So what's the difference in a plain, ordinary latex balloon and an experimental balloon that can soar to unbelievable heights? The balloons we cherished as kids have a limited ability to expand and adapt while the others are designed for expansion.

It's much the same thing in life...some of us might be destined to blow apart with only a little pressure. But there are others who have prepared themselves for new heights, and because of the adaptation and design will be able to withstand the pressures of life on the climb.

—Robert Strand, *Moments for Teens*. Used with permission.

RED, WHITE, AND BLUE

Not only are the colors of our flag born in heaven, but the order in which they are spoken and sung finds its origin and significance in the banner of the cross. We do not say the blue, white, and red, nor name them in any other order than the natural one—"The red, white, and blue." And this is God's own method of salvation. First sacrifice, then holiness, then heaven. There can be no inversion of that order. Through the blood of the Lamb comes purity, then paradise.

—T.S. Robie. Reprinted from *Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations*. Used with permission.

POSITIVE MENTAL ATTITUDE

A little boy was overheard talking to himself as he strutted through the backyard, baseball cap in place, toting ball and bat. He was heard to say, "I'm the greatest hitter in the world." Then he tossed the ball into the air, swung at it, and missed. "Strike one."

Undaunted, he picked up the ball, threw it into the air, and said to himself, "I'm the greatest baseball hitter ever." He swung at the ball again, and again he missed. "Strike two."

He paused a moment to examine his bat and ball carefully. Then a third time he threw the ball into the air. "I'm the greatest hitter who ever lived," he said. He swung the bat hard again, and missed a third time.

He cried out, "Wow. Strike three. What a pitcher! I'm the greatest pitcher in the world."

—Illustrations Unlimited. Reprinted from "*A/G Sermon Illustrations*." Used with permission.



AN OLD SOLDIER'S PRAYER

"Build me a son, O Lord, who will be strong enough to know when he is weak, and brave enough to face himself when he is afraid; one who will be proud and unbending in honest defeat, and humble and gentle in victory.

"Build me a son whose wishes will not take the place of deeds; a son who will know Thee...and that to know himself is the foundation stone of knowledge.

"Build me a son whose heart will be clear, whose goal will be high, a son who will master himself before he seeks to master other men; one who will reach into the future, yet never forget the past.

"And after all these things are his, add, I pray, enough of a sense of humor, so he may always be serious, yet never take himself too seriously. Give him humility, so he may always remember the simplicity of true greatness, the open mind of true wisdom, and the meekness of true strength.

"Then I will dare to whisper, 'I have not lived in vain.' "

—General Douglas A. MacArthur. Reprinted from Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations. Used with permission.

FREE GRACE

A ship was sailing in the southern waters of the Atlantic when the sailors saw another vessel making distress signals. They came toward the distressed ship and asked, "What is the matter?"

"We are dying for water," was the response.

"Dip it up then," was the answer. "You are in the mouth of the Amazon River."

Those sailors were thirsting, suffering, fearing, and longing for water. They supposed there was nothing but the ocean's brine around them, when, in fact, they had sailed into the broad mouth of the mightiest river on the globe. Although it seemed they would perish with thirst, there were miles of fresh water all around them. All they had to do was dip it up.

—Adapted from 6000 Sermon Illustrations.

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WWWHD? (WHAT WOULD WE HAVE DONE?)

The story known as "What Would Jesus Do?" has been told and retold as an illustration for daily ethical decisions for years. Unknown, perhaps, is the personal loss and integrity of this story's author, Charles M. Sheldon.

In 1896, Sheldon wrote this story for his youth group. At the same time he was publishing it in a Chicago weekly newspaper. There was a clerical error in the copyright—only one copy instead of two was filed in the appropriate office. Therefore, the story was thrown into public domain.

The newspaper immediately put out a paperback edition of his story. Since there were no royalties to be paid, 16 publishers in America and 50 in Europe published editions that were pure profit. One edition sold more than 3 million copies. The popularity of *In His Steps* has grown immensely.

In the 1935 Broadman Press edition (the source of this information), there is a unique foreword to the publisher. Charles Sheldon simply thanks Broadman Press for paying him royalties as the author. This thank you contains no bitterness over those who profited from his story or of his loss of income. Instead, he writes, "I am very thankful that owing to the defective copyright, the book has had a larger reading on account of the great number of publishers."

This story begs the ironic question, "If we were a publisher, or if we were Charles M. Sheldon, what would we have done?"

—Randy Ackland, Southbury, Connecticut

UNITED WE CONQUER

According to a *National Geographic* article, Argentine ants behave differently in their South American territory than when they are in an outside territory. In their own territory, ant colonies clash and attack each other. However, as they invade new territory, they rarely clash with their own. Instead, they unite to attack and displace the local species they are invading. Because they are not fighting each other, the Argentine ants grow in number and form cooperative supercolonies.

The behavior of Argentine ants is similar to the behavior of Christians in a local church. When churches are invading Satan's territory and rescuing unsaved people, there is little time for petty quarrels and clashes. But when churches are not pursuing the lost, their members pay closer attention to each other, and it is easier to clash. There is no growth and little cooperation when the church is not invading enemy territory.

There is no better way to prevent division than a united effort to go into enemy territory and "preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

—Submitted by Chris Rainey, Leonia, New Jersey. Source: *National Geographic*, July 1999.

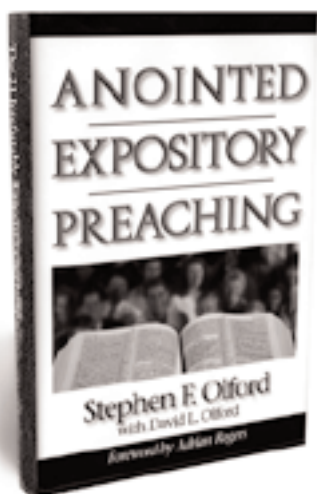
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book reviews



ANOINTED EXPOSITORY PREACHING

Stephen F. Olford with David L. Olford (Broadman & Holman, 370 pp., hardback, \$24.99)

Preaching has always been central in God's plan to communicate His purposes and plan to humanity. *Anointed Expository Preaching* will captivate the hearts and minds of readers. The book is filled with practical pointers and valuable insights on proclaiming God's Word.

The Olfords approach the subject from three aspects. The first section is an inspirational look at the walk that the preacher must pursue. The following section centers on the work the preacher must perform and gives a step-by-step plan for sermon preparation. The third section is entitled, "The Word That the Preacher Must Proclaim" and addresses the essential aspects, implications, and ramifications of effective sermon delivery.

Each chapter is centered around the exposition of Scripture text and reinforces the effectiveness and the art of expository preaching. The material is spiritual and practical. Any preacher will benefit from this volume.

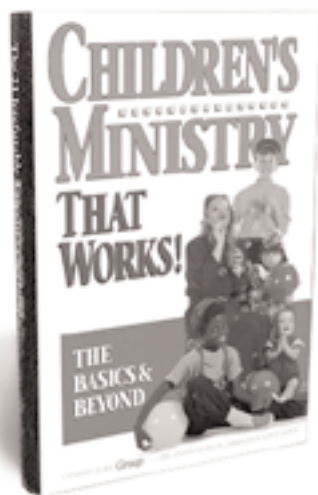
—Reviewed by John Lindell,
senior pastor, James River Assembly of
God, Springfield, Missouri.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY THAT WORKS: THE BASICS AND BEYOND

Compiled by Group Publishing, edited by Jolene Roehlkepartain (Group Publishing, Inc., 223 pp., paperback, \$15.99)

Have you ever been in a quandary as to how to deal with challenges in children's ministry? Do you know how to effectively minister to today's child who is growing up in a tough world? Could you use a few tips on recruiting volunteers? Whether you are a novice or a veteran in children's ministry, this book will be beneficial to you.

Group Publishing has done an excellent job compiling information that deals with children's ministry from prenatal through preteen. It includes a



wide variety of practical ministry ideas from 22 contributing authors writing in their field of expertise and is a resource that will enable you to understand, reach, and teach today's children. These authors know that children's ministry is the key to church growth.

The book is divided into four sections: Children's Ministry Foundation, Teaching Techniques, Age-Specific Ministries, and Children's Ministry Programs. You will find creative ideas within each section to enhance and strengthen your children's

ministry. You'll gain insight into today's children and a better understanding of their developmental needs. The writers deal with the how-to's to make meaningful programs work.

This book would be a great addition to the library of any children's pastor, worker, Christian education director, or senior pastor who has a heart for reaching children.

—Reviewed by Aldin Tinsley, Christian education director/children's pastor, Bethel Temple Ministries, Tampa, Florida.

COME YE CHILDREN, A BOOK FOR PARENTS AND TEACHERS ON THE CHRISTIAN TRAINING OF CHILDREN

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (Pilgrim Publications, 160 pp., paperback, \$6.99)

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, the well-known "prince of preachers," prolific Bible commentator, and pastor of thousands at the Tabernacle in London, personally ministered to young children on a weekly basis in orphanages and boys homes. In this collection of 23 sermons, this man of God gives insight into the importance of ministry to children.

Spurgeon's topics are still relevant to today's church. They include: the importance of the role of teacher; the importance of biblical instruction for



the young; Christ's admonition to "Feed my lambs"; what Christ meant when He said, "of such is the kingdom of heaven"; how to "not hinder the children"; and more. The author's insights are clearly founded through scriptural examples from the Old and New Testaments and also through his practical children's ministry experience.

Many of Spurgeon's analogies and insights will provide preaching material for those who desire to cast vision for ministry to the young. This respected minister shares incredible word pictures as he makes application of God's principles.

This book is a must read, not only for those in ministry to children, but to any pastor who desires to understand God's perspective on this integral part of the body of Christ.

—Reviewed by Randy Christensen,
children's pastor, Bayside Christian
Fellowship, Green Bay, Wisconsin.

DICTIONARY OF BIBLICAL IMAGERY

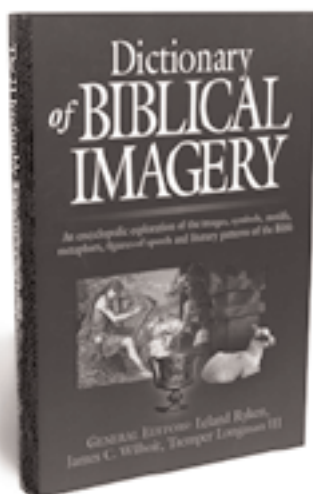
Edited by Leland Ryken, James C. Willhoit,
and Tremper Longman III (*InterVarsity*,
1,058 pp., hardback, \$39.99)

Powerful preachers, like Jesus, excel in the use of images. With too many homiletics texts offering too little instruction in such usage, this dictionary is a step in the right direction. Though the editors claim laypeople as the target audience, its main attraction will probably be to preachers trying to relearn the art of narrative preaching and unforgettable imagery.

Featuring about 850 articles from "Aaron's Rod" to "Younger Child," this volume includes an introduction to the literary nature of the Bible and biblical and topical indexes that make it convenient for sermon preparation.

Pentecostals will be disappointed with the limited treatment of vital

biblical images as Spirit baptism, spiritual gifts, healing, and miracles. Occasionally important theological categories like "Incarnation"—certainly not a biblical term but a biblical concept—are hidden away and inadequately



treated in "Birth Story" or "Nativity of Christ." Many articles are not that different from what one might find in any Bible dictionary. The *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, however, is a useful tool and can take its place alongside the other resources on the preacher's shelf.

—Reviewed by Edgar Lee, academic dean,
Assemblies of God Theological Seminary,
Springfield, Missouri.

FINISHING STRONG

Steve Farrar (*Multnomah Books*, 202 pp.,
paperback, with study guide, \$12.99)

If you are looking for a book that will encourage and exhort believers as they run the race of Christian living, then you must read *Finishing Strong*. Steve Farrar, speaker for Promise Keeper events and author of *Point Man*, presents examples, guides, practical illustrations, teaching points, and biblical references to help men be a better reflection of Jesus.

The author states that men can finish strong even if they have fallen.

Getting back up and continuing the race will strengthen their walk and witness.

Farrar tells his readers to use their staying power: stay—in the Scriptures, close to a friend, away from other women, and alert to the tactics of Satan. To have a strong finish, people need to focus on Jesus, not the finish line. To know God more, believers must listen, meditate, and keep a prayerful attitude.

Finishing Strong is an excellent book with a study guide for individual study or for men's small-group study. It is also useful as a discipling tool and is a recommended read for HonorBound men as they strive to sharpen each other and serve Christ in today's world.

—Reviewed by Charles A. Brewster, director
and coordinator of HonorBound Men's
Ministries for the Assemblies of God,
Springfield, Missouri.



YOU HOLD THE KEYS TO YOUR CHILD'S CHARACTER

Lynda Hunter, Ed.D. (*Servant Publications*,
144 pp., paperback, \$9.99)

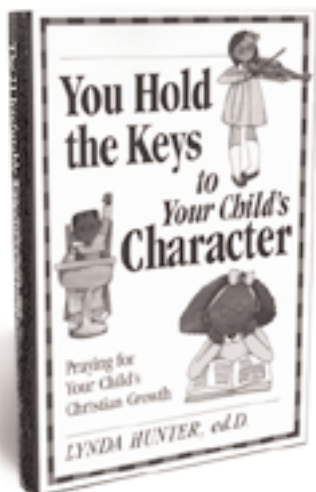
There are a lot of how-to books on Christian parenting. Many are problem solving in their approach. Lynda Hunter's book is not a quick-fix solution book, but takes a long-term approach.



book reviews

The topic of virtues is popular, but the importance of prayer in character development is often omitted. Hunter's premise is that parents hold the key to the spiritual development of their children. That key is prayer. This book focuses on a relationship with Jesus Christ as the basis for moral development. Developing virtues takes time and hard work.

Hunter's book is more of a guide than an instruction manual. Her five-step process of praying for children is based on the Lord's Prayer. To pray for the 31 character qualities Hunter outlines, the process is: revere, release, request, repent, and recommit. Each chapter begins with Scripture, a brief devotional on the topic, the five-step guide for prayer, and action steps that encourage



projects and interaction between an adult and a child. These reinforce the virtue for which you are praying.

If you are longing for an in-depth analysis of character development, you will be disappointed. But if you are looking for a user-friendly guide with substance, this is the one. Hunter will guide you to take the pains necessary for your children in prayer.

—Reviewed by Fred Fay, director of children's ministries, First Assembly of God Life Center, Tacoma, Washington.



REVIVAL FIRE

Wesley Duewel (Zondervan Publishing House, 384 pp., paperback, \$14.99)

It has been said the only thing we learn from history is that we don't learn from history. The church is no exception. Rather than follow the biblical principles for revival or learn from the strengths and weaknesses of previous revivals, we repeatedly try to reinvent revival with new formulas and methods.

Wesley Duewel has done the church a favor with the publication of *Revival Fire*. He chronicles many great spiritual awakenings, giving detailed accounts of the church's condition before the awakening, the price paid to see revival, and the results brought about by the awakening. In addition to many of the well-known revivals, Duewel adds glimpses into many lesser-known revivals.

As a children's pastor, I appreciate the stories spread throughout the book showing how the entire church benefited and partook of God's glory. My bookshelves are filled with books describing fascinating revivals, but few of them list examples of the children's and youth's participation in these revivals. The numerous examples cited in *Revival Fire*

stirs my heart to cry out, "Lord, do it one more time."

Revival Fire is an essential study for anyone interested in revivals. It reminds us of the necessary ingredients for those wanting God's glory and helps us to avoid the mistakes made in previous revivals.

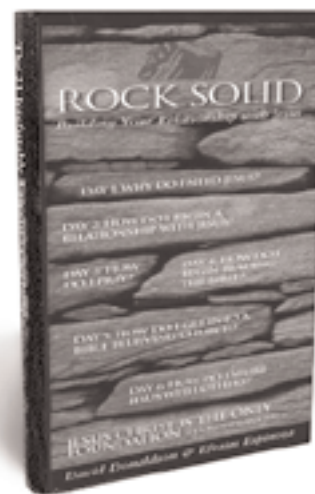
—Reviewed by Billy Burns, children's pastor, Trinity Church International, Lake Worth, Florida.

ROCK SOLID BOOKLET

David Donaldson and Efraim Espinoza (Gospel Publishing House, 32 pp., booklet, \$.69)

Rock Solid is designed to be a first-contact piece of literature for witnessing and for the new babe in Christ. It is written to the unchurched using large, bold lettering and basic language. Although no church terms are found in the main part of the booklet, the booklet does contain a glossary of words such as *confess*, *holiness*, *testimony*, *worship*.

The explanation in the front of the booklet tells a new convert what to do



after becoming a Christian. The rest of the booklet is divided into daily segments that answer the questions: Why do I need Jesus? How do I begin relating to Jesus? Where do I get help in this

new adventure? The answers to these questions are illustrated with symbols, which aid in explanation and memory retention. The *Rock Solid* handout gives new converts enough information to help them in their new walk in Christ until they meet with the person who will disciple them in following Christ.

The booklet can be used with other discipling programs; other resources are listed at the back of the book. It is, however, the initial reading material for the Rock Solid discipleship program that I highly recommend.

I can suggest without reservation that pastors use this booklet as the first-contact piece of literature it was designed to be.

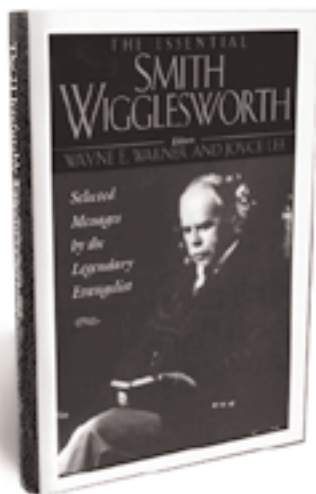
—Reviewed by David G. Watson, pastor,
Central Assembly of God, Springfield,
Missouri.

THE ESSENTIAL SMITH WIGGLESWORTH

Wayne E. Warner and Joyce Lee (*Servant Publications*, 405 pp., paperback, \$19.99) As the Pentecostal church moves into the 21st century, it is most appropriate for the authors to write about Smith Wigglesworth, a legendary evangelist of the 20th century. Even though numerous books and articles have referred to Wigglesworth's dynamic ministry, much has not been written regarding his sermons.

The authors do not analyze the sermons pertaining to exegetical exactitude, but connect the man and his message in his historical context. As one reads the messages, the main focuses—the baptism in the Holy Spirit, the Spirit-filled life, and healing—are prevalent. The personal illustrations in the messages and the various articles about Wigglesworth's ministry allow the reader to further glean insight into the priorities and passions of this man of God.

As one begins the book, it is advisable



to study the timeline of Wigglesworth's life and beyond at the end of the book. It provides an excellent overview of Wigglesworth's entire life.

This book shows that God can use any person who makes himself or herself available to God and His Holy Spirit. We may be too big for God to use, but we will never be too small for God to use.

—Reviewed by James O. Davis, D.Min.,
national evangelists representative,
Springfield, Missouri.

YOUR CHILD WONDERFULLY MADE

Larry Burkett and Rick Osborne (*Moody Press*, 200 pp., hardback, \$18.99)

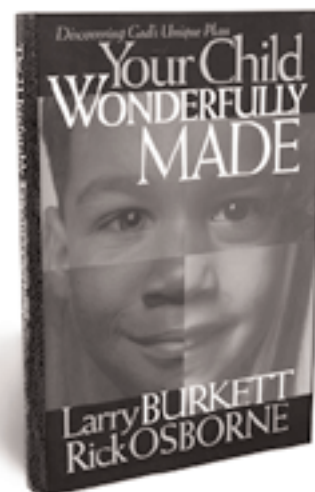
For many years Larry Burkett has offered reliable, biblically based financial advice. Now he has partnered with Rick Osborne to advise parents how to nurture their children.

As Burkett counseled with adults who had made serious career and financial mistakes, he wanted to help parents prepare their children to make good financial and career decisions from the start. Burkett networked his financial background with the family counseling background of Rick Osborne. Together they have written an easy-to-read book "to help [parents] bring out the best in [their] child and prepare him or her for

a career and wise adult choices."

Burkett and Osborne help parents recognize their child's personality type. Three appendices at the back of the book provide brief personality surveys for children, youth, and adults. The authors suggest using these as a starting point for discovering the best training strategy for each child. The authors also deal with character training that goes beyond natural tendencies.

In the area of career choices, Burkett and Osborne address aptitude in the context of God-given talents, gifts, and



spiritual gifts. Christian parents who want to begin early to prepare their children for life choices will find practical, biblical advice in this book.

—Reviewed by Sharon Ellard, early childhood consultant, Sunday School Promotion and Training Department, Springfield, Missouri.

A SERVICE

Enrichment reviews books we feel our readers would like to know about. These books are not always in accord with our point of view, and the reviews do not constitute a recommendation of the books. As a service to readers the Gospel Publishing House will supply any of these books, but books cannot be returned for credit.



news & resources

TRANSFORMING CHURCH MINISTRY FOR THE 21ST CENTURY SEMINAR

The Assemblies of God Theological Seminary and the Division of Home Missions Church Planting are offering a seminar called Transforming Church Ministry for the 21st Century, Aug 6,7, 2001, at the Westin Crown Center Hotel in Kansas City, Mo.

Brian McLaren, founding pastor of Cedar Ridge Community Church, Washington, D.C., and author of *The Church on the Other Side*, *Finding Faith*, and *A New Kind of Christian* will be the featured speaker. McLaren is a nationally recognized leader on how churches can and must change to navigate the cultural upheaval of the new millennium. He will challenge people to bring the unchanging gospel to our rapidly changing world.

Registration is from 11:30 a.m.–12:45 p.m. Monday, Aug 6. Session one begins at 1 p.m.; session two begins at 7 p.m. Session three begins at 9 a.m. Tuesday, Aug 7. The "early bird" registration fee is \$99, postmarked by July 2, 2001. The regular registration fee is \$125. Group discounts are available.

AGTS will offer a graduate credit option of \$536.00 for 2 credit hours with the registration fee waived.

For more information about the seminar, contact AGTS Continuing Education, 1435 N. Glenstone Avenue, Springfield, MO 65802; call (800) 467-2487, ext. 1044; fax: (417) 268-1009; or E-mail: agts-ext@agseminary.edu.

JULY 29 IS BENEVOLENCES CHRISTMAS SUNDAY

On Sunday, July 29, there will be only 149 shopping days till Christmas. It's the right time for your church group to start making your Christmas plans for the boys and girls at Hillcrest, the young women at Highlands, and the retired ministers on the Aged Ministers Assistance rolls.

Your Benevolences Christmas offering, mailed to the national Benevolences Department, or gifts sent directly to the children at Hillcrest, the women at Highlands, and the retired ministers on AMA, will ensure they will be remembered this Christmas.

Christmas needs lists for Hillcrest and Highlands are available on the

Benevolences Web site: www.benevolences.ag.org, or by contacting the national Benevolences Department.

To send a Christmas gift box to a senior minister and spouse or widow on AMA, call the national Benevolences Department at 1-417-862-2781, ext. 2184, for names and addresses.

HILLCREST BACK-TO-SCHOOL DAY IS AUG. 12

Your church can give the boys and girls at Hillcrest Children's Home a great send-off on their first day of school by helping purchase back-to-school clothing and supplies. These children often come to Hillcrest with only the clothes on their backs.

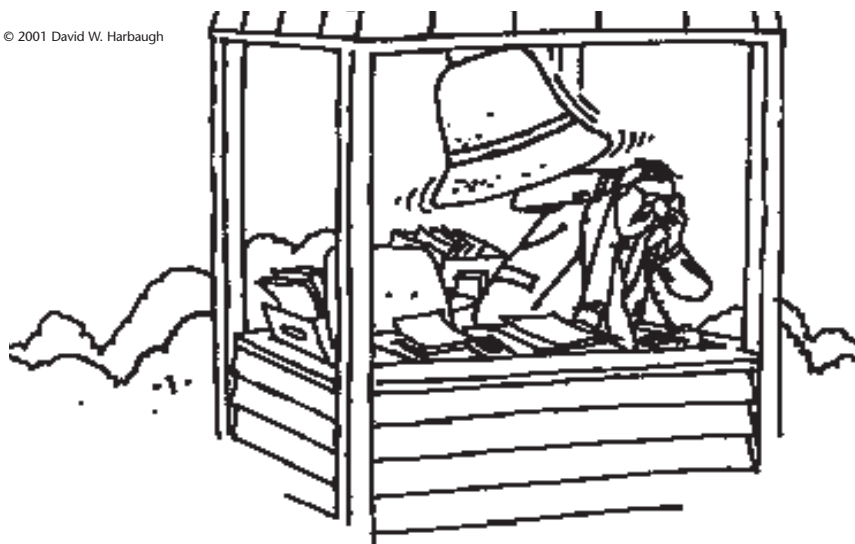
Hillcrest Back-to-School needs lists are available by calling Hillcrest at 1-501-262-1660, or by logging onto Hillcrest's Web site: www.hillcrest.ag.org.

ACTS GAINS ACCEPTANCE TO ACCREDIT PRIVATE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN NEW MEXICO AND OKLAHOMA

The New Mexico Non-Public School Commission and the Oklahoma Private School Accreditation Commission recently recognized the Association of Christian Teachers and Schools as a state-approved accreditation agency for private Christian schools in their states. These state-level certifications are a direct result of each state's Department of Education accepting ACTS accreditation standards and accreditation process as meeting their stringent requirements for educational excellence. Any state university/college or secondary public school will now accept credits earned by students from an accredited ACTS school.

The purpose of accreditation is to establish high, uniform standards among ACTS member schools. Achievement of accreditation status represents a standard

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"Sorry...I just bumped into the bell. My regular office is being renovated."

of excellence recognized by other institutions and the constituency of the local community. ACTS accreditation requirements identify educational and spiritual criteria that establish high expectations of Christian schools.

The Department of Christian School Services within the Division of Education of the Assemblies of God and ACTS provides educational services to 246 ACTS member schools and any other Assemblies of God school located through the nation and world.

WHO'S WHO AMONG ASSEMBLIES OF GOD EDUCATORS FOR 2000

Christian School Services and the Association of Christian Teachers and Schools announce the official nominees for the Who's Who Among Assemblies of God Educators for 2000. This annual award recognizes Pentecostal educators who have dedicated themselves to teaching our children in either the public or private schools. Their respective state ACTS chapter chose this year's recipients. Those selected are: Lila Ellison, Chilton Christian Academy, Clanton, Ala.; Lynne Rains, Vance, Ala.; Jeanie Curtner, Wynne Intermediate School, Wynne, Ark.; Alice Mutton, Abundant Life School, Sherwood, Ark.; Tina Blanden, Fort Myers Christian School, Fort Myers, Fla.; Loraine Mabe, Evangel Christian School, Lakeland, Fla.; Mike Wilson, Wauchula Elementary School, Wauchula, Fla.; Juanita Burk, West Monroe High School, West Monroe, La.; Patricia Stanford, Northside Christian School, Egan, La.; Judy Raynor, Cedar Park Christian School, Bothell, Wash.; Jack Blake, Riverview School, Salem, Wis.; and Patricia Blount, Christian Life School, Pleasant Prairie, Wis.

Each nominee demonstrated classroom excellence as recognized by administrators,

peers, parents, and students. These 12 individuals have exemplary Christian character and have demonstrated the ability to influence others in spiritual growth and personal development. It is an honor to have teachers of this caliber working within the private Christian and public schools.

NATIONAL CHRISTIAN SCHOOL CONFERENCE

Administrators, teachers, pastors, and school board members in Christian schools will find helps and new information at the National Christian School Conference held Monday and Tuesday, Aug 6,7, 2001, prior to General Council in Kansas City, Mo. Attendees may pre-register for the conference for \$45, which includes the dinner and opening rally on Monday evening plus all of the workshops on Tuesday. To register, contact the Christian School Services Office at (417) 862-2781, ext. 4025, or mail your inquiries to: Christian Schools Services, 1445 Boonville Ave., Springfield, MO 65802.

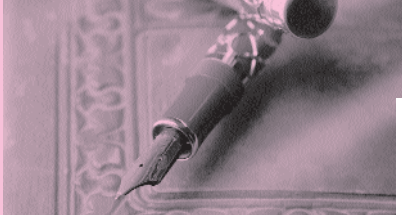
A/G MEDIA MINISTRIES EXPANDING

The Assemblies of God Media Ministries new television and radio broadcasts will target both youth and adult audiences.

Media Ministries is working in cooperation with national Youth Ministries to produce a 30-minute television series called *The Verge*. The anticipated release date of this cutting-edge series is fall 2001. The fast-paced TV program will be hosted by teen reporters and will include stories about overcoming teens, discussions among youth on current teen issues, and live performances by contemporary Christian music artists.

Another program currently offered to TV stations is *ByLine*, hosted by Dan Betzer, former Revivaltime speaker and current pastor of First Assembly of God, Fort Myers, Fla. In this 60-second TV commentary, Betzer uses thought-provoking topics to present a quick gospel message that causes listeners to consider their relationship with Jesus Christ.

Media Ministries also produces two radio programs that are aired across the nation and in a number of foreign



news & resources

countries. *From This Day Forward* is hosted by minister and psychologist Richard Dobbins and co-hosted by Pastor Jerry Qualls. Each 30-minute program, airing on 360 stations, offers direction to listeners on topics such as relationships, forgiveness, depression, parenting, marriage, dating, grief, and divorce.

ByLine for radio is a 2-minute broadcast that provides thought-provoking messages. *ByLine* is broadcast on more than 250 radio stations across the country and has aired daily for over 7 years. Media Ministries offers these programs to churches without charge for airing on their local stations. Host Dan Betzer provides a new program for every daily broadcast.

Media Ministries also offers *Revivaltime Classics* to churches wishing to air the nostalgic *Revivaltime* radio

broadcasts. *Revivaltime Classics* is hosted by Dan Betzer who interviews guests who were connected with the original *Revivaltime* broadcasts. The broadcasts present a historical perspective to world events that occurred during the time of *Revivaltime*. The highlight of each *Revivaltime Classic* is a song by the *Revivaltime* choir and a message by C.M. Ward. For those wishing to build a complete library of *Revivaltime Classics* on audiocassette or CD, contact the Media Center for details.

These programs will enable churches to evangelize and provide much-needed exposure to their communities. Contact the Media Ministries Department for information on how to obtain free broadcasts; or E-mail: mediaministries@ag.org; phone: 417-862-2781, ext. 1330; or visit our Web site: www.mediaministries.ag.org.

RECORD DONATIONS SEND MORE EVANGELS TO PRISON

In 2000, *Light for the Lost* Key Bearers donations reached more than \$100,000 in one calendar year for the first time. Key Bearers funds provide approximately 11,000 copies of the *Pentecostal Evangel* weekly to hundreds of penitentiaries and jails in the United States.

By the end of 2000, giving had surpassed \$128,000 for the year. Nearly \$124,000 of the total resulted from the annual Key Bearers appeal that began in March. The donations covered the cost of more than 500,000 *Evangels*.

"There is perhaps no more effective place for the *Pentecostal Evangel* than in prisons," says Ken Horn, the magazine's managing editor. "Literally thousands of inmates have committed their lives to Christ because they read an *Evangel* just 'to kill time.'

"We are overwhelmed by the generosity of our readers. *Pentecostal Evangel* readers care about souls. This is one of the most proven ways of reaching the lost. We are thankful for the vision of our Fellowship that keeps the donations, and thus the number of magazines in prisons, climbing."

Although the 2001 Key Bearers appeal kicked off in early spring, churches and individuals wanting to help provide the *Pentecostal Evangel* to as many of America's 2 million incarcerated as possible are encouraged to contact Light for the Lost for further information. Every dollar sponsors at least four copies of the magazine. More information can be obtained by E-mailing: lftl@ag.org. Donations or pledges may be made at 1-800-988-0292.

EVANGEL PLANS FOR KANSAS CITY GENERAL COUNCIL

During the 2000 Celebration in Indianapolis last August, visitors to the *Pentecostal Evangel* booth received complimentary copies of the publication and books such as *Family: How To Have a Healthy Christian Home* and *Revival Sermons: How You Can Be a Part of Today's Spiritual Awakening*. In addition, guests met leaders and pastors like Glen Cole, Richard Dobbins, T. Ray Rachels, John Kilpatrick, Alton Garrison, LeRoy Bartel, and Wayne Goodall.

The *Evangel* booth at the 49th General Council in Kansas City will have copies of the *Pentecostal Evangel* and the Spanish-language *Evangelio Pentecostal*. GC attendees will also receive signed copies of the latest in the line of Pentecostal Evangel Books—a volume focusing on the Holy Spirit. Special subscription offers will be available for churches and individuals.

"We had a large number visit our booth during the 2000 Celebration,"

says *Pentecostal Evangel* promotions coordinator Ron Kopczick. "It was a privilege to meet many from around the world. Those who don't receive the *Evangel* were thrilled to be able to take copies back to their homelands."

PENTECOSTAL EVANGEL SALVATION REPORTS REACH 7,000

The *Pentecostal Evangel* began publishing a salvation response form regularly in January 1997. Since then, more than 7,000 new converts have returned the coupons indicating their desire to follow Jesus Christ and requesting follow-up. An average month produces approximately 150 responses.

Managing Editor Ken Horn says, "There was no way we could have anticipated the overwhelming number we have received. We are so thankful for the Holy Spirit's work in the lives of so many."

For the fourth consecutive year, more than 1,700 salvation reports were received by the *Evangel* during 2000. The response forms, with blanks for the

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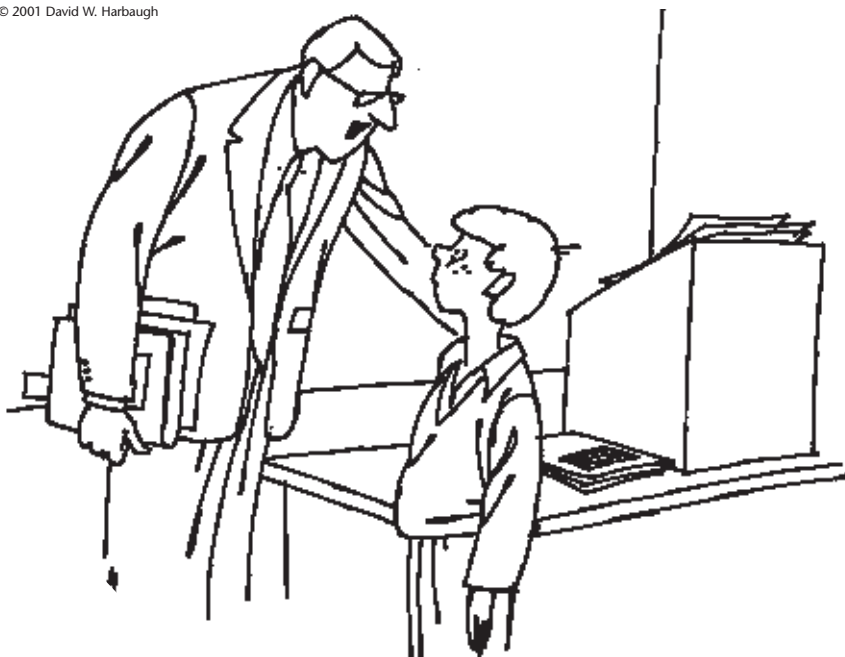
names, addresses, and phone numbers of new converts, give readers a way to respond to the ABCs of Salvation in the *Evangel*.

New believers may also call the Assemblies of God 1-800-4PRAYER line to report their decisions to follow Christ. Those returning a coupon receive a complimentary copy of *Rock Solid—Building Your Relationship With Jesus*, and each name is forwarded to a local Assemblies of God church for follow-up.

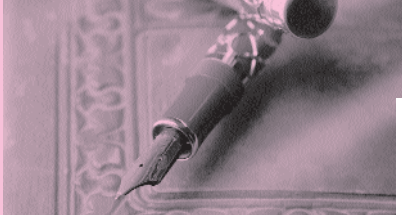
"There is no way to overemphasize the importance of following up as soon as possible," Horn says. "These individuals have already made the commitment to Christ. They must be drawn into a local church."

EVANGELIO PENTECOSTAL MINISTERS TO HISPANIC CONSTITUENTS

More than 250 churches have bundle subscriptions to the new *Evangelio Pentecostal*, the quarterly Spanish-language version of the *Pentecostal Evangel*. And the number is increasing weekly. The results have pleased project



"Gary, we really need you to play Joseph in the Christmas pageant. Don't worry, we'll supply the beard."



news & resources

coordinator Efraim Espinoza, who began the publication as an outreach tool 5 years ago while with the Decade of Harvest office.

"It is evident that in God's timing, *Evangelio Pentecostal* is now an official publication, meeting the need for Spanish resources for our growing Hispanic constituency stateside and around the world," says Espinoza. "We are receiving a steady flow of the salvation response coupons from *Evangelio Pentecostal* from as far as South America."

MAEMPA TO HEAD SSC&L

John T. Maempa has been appointed editor-in-chief of Sunday School Curriculum and Literature. SSC&L is responsible for the production of Sunday school materials endorsed by the Fellowship and releases more than 100 curricular titles each quarter.

Thousands of churches in the Assemblies of God and many other Pentecostal fellowships around the world use these resources.

"We are ministering to every age-level, from newborn to seniors," Maempa says. "Our goal is to give people, young and old, a solid foundation in God's Word. We are committed to producing the very best ministry resources possible to achieve that goal."

Maempa has ministered at the Assemblies of God Headquarters in Springfield, Mo., for 25 years, the first 15 being spent in SSC&L. For the past 10 years, he has served in editorial administration for the *Pentecostal Evangel* and for Foreign Missions publications.

Ordained with the Southern Idaho District, Maempa holds an M.A. in biblical studies from the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary.

"It feels good to come full circle," Maempa says. "I've always had a heart for curriculum. My wife, Jan, and I are actively involved in Sunday school ministry at our church. I plan for that to continue as I rejoin the team at SSC&L. I want to stay in touch with how our resources are ministering to people in the field."

CARIBBEAN THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE ENDORSED BY A/G

Caribbean Theological College of the Assemblies of God in Bayamon, P.R., has achieved endorsement status with the General Council of the Assemblies of God Commission on Christian Higher Education. The college is the newest member of the Commission at the institute level.

CTC received applicant status in the May 1999 meeting of the Commission.

CTC hosted an endorsement-team visit from the Commission, Mar. 27–29, 2000. In May 2000, college officials met with the Commission to review the report of the team's visit and to request candidate status. CTC had completed all of the Commission requirements for candidate status except meeting the FTE requirement, which stipulates a minimum of 25 students. The Commission voted to give candidate status to CTC when they met the requirement. On Sept. 7, 2000, President Doris Rodriguez communicated to the Commission that CTC had met the FTE enrollment requirement, and the college was officially granted candidate status.

CTC was founded in 1936. The General Council of the Assemblies of God purchased property for the school in 1943. The Puerto Rico District Council of the Assemblies of God sponsors and has oversight of CTC. Currently the college offers a 2-year A.A. degree in Bible and a non-college level certificate in Bible.

Caribbean Theological College of the Assemblies of God is one of 19 endorsed A/G postsecondary schools.

A/G COLLEGES ANNOUNCE CLASS START DATES FOR FALL 2001

The following Assemblies of God postsecondary schools have announced class start dates for the fall 2001 semester.

Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Mo.—Aug. 30

American Indian College, Phoenix, Ariz.—Aug. 29

Bethany College, Scotts Valley, Calif.—Aug. 30

Black Hills Indian Bible College, Rapid City, S.D.—Aug. 27

Central Bible College, Springfield, Mo.—Sept. 6

Evangel University, Springfield, Mo.—Aug. 30

Global University, Springfield, Mo.—Open Enrollment

Latin American Bible Institute—California, La Puente, Calif.—Sept. 12

Latin American Bible Institute—Texas, San Antonio, Tex.—Aug. 22

North Central University, Minneapolis, Minn.—Aug. 29

Northwest College, Kirkland, Wash.—Aug. 27

Southeastern College, Lakeland, Fla.—Aug. 22 (tentative)

Southwestern Assemblies of God University, Waxahachie, Tex.—Aug. 23

Trinity Bible College, Ellendale, N.D.—Aug. 30

Valley Forge Christian College, Phoenixville, Pa.—Aug. 22

Vanguard University, Costa Mesa, Calif.—late Aug.

Western Bible Institute, Phoenix, Ariz.—Aug. 27

Zion Bible Institute, Barrington, R.I.—Aug. 27

HOME MISSIONS MAPS DAY IS JUNE 24

"Every year workers, under the direction of the Home Missions MAPS Department, assist Assemblies of God churches and projects by providing over \$13 million worth of labor and construction costs," says MAPS Department Director Patrick Donadio.

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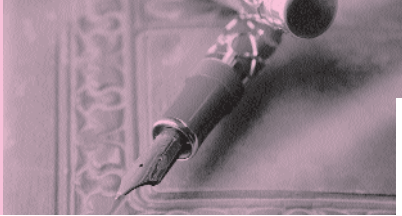
"Actually, I've agreed with every single point you made tonight. I've been arguing because I just love a good old debate!"

"MAPS workers save home missions ministries and smaller churches, colleges, missionaries, and Teen Challenge centers from 30 to 50 percent and more on estimated costs."

The Home Missions MAPS Department is known across the United States for not only the many services it provides, but also the quality of people providing them. "You won't find more willing, God-loving workers anywhere," Donadio says.

Made up of four areas—RV Volunteers- Construction and Evangelism, Church Teams, Missionary Associates, and Summer Associates—Home Missions MAPS concentrates its efforts in the United States and its territories. "When you see new construction or major remodeling occurring in district churches or some other Assemblies of God facility, there's a good chance MAPS workers are involved," says Donadio. "And when disaster strikes a church, you can count on MAPS workers to lend a hand."

Although the MAPS Department does much for the Fellowship, financial support is vital for keeping the ministry effectively organized and growing. On June 24, remember the MAPS Department in prayer and with an offering. The next church MAPS volunteers come to may be yours.



news & resources

INTERCULTURAL MINISTRIES DAY IS AUG. 26

"Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world; red and yellow, black and white...." Who hasn't heard that favorite children's Sunday school song.

More than ever, this song needs to be sung in the adult service. Why? Because America is the most ethnically diverse nation in the world, and it's time the church takes advantage of this opportunity.

In years past, missionaries traveled thousands of miles overseas to reach the lost. Now the peoples of the world are flooding to our doorstep from Asia, Africa, Hispanic nations, and more. Assemblies of God intercultural missionaries are responding to this overwhelming need, but they need your help.

On Sunday, Aug. 26, we ask that you receive an offering and pray for the needs of Intercultural Ministries and missionaries. Working with Native Americans, Asians, people with disabilities, and many other groups, the Intercultural Ministries Department is dedicated to taking Christ to the many cultures that are a part of America today—and influencing the America of tomorrow.

MILITARY PERSONNEL DAY IS JULY 1

You see military men and women on posters and on TV advertisements. They appear efficient, strong, proud, and in control. And they often are. However, military men and women are like everyone else. They suffer the death of loved ones, experience divorce, and face inner turmoil and frustrations. These inner struggles are often buried behind the years of training.

The church needs to prayerfully support our military. These men and women who place their lives on the line to ensure the security of the United States need to know God. For only through God will they ever know true peace.

Your church can become a hands-on supporter to our Assemblies of God military ministries by honoring our military men and women on Sunday, July 1. Your financial gifts help send Bibles, tracts, and other materials to chaplains stationed around the world.

The Chaplaincy Department encourages you and your church to be a vital part of changing military men's and women's lives to become efficient, strong, proud—and in God's control.

DISABILITY AWARENESS SUNDAY IS AUG. 19

According to the Census Bureau, 1 out of every 5 Americans lives with some form of disability, and 1 out of every 10 struggles with a severe disability. That means approximately 58 million people are disabled and another 8.5 million are visually impaired. The Assemblies of God has developed two ministries to reach these forgotten and often overlooked people.

Special Touch Ministry, Inc., is the recognized ministry of the Assemblies of God to people with disabilities. It helps churches to include people with disabilities through various methods like Christian retreats, vacations, and camps for people with disabilities. Special Touch Ministry, Inc., also provides residential services, advocacy, church awareness seminars, and development of evangelism and discipleship material.

The Center for the Blind reaches them with the gospel through secular conventions for the blind and by equipping others with blind-accessible material. It also offers resources and referrals for reaching and ministering to the blind. The Whitney Library for the Blind provides Sunday school materials and periodicals on cassette and in Braille. There is also a Braille and cassette lending library. The recently created Adriene Resource Center for Blind Children is committed to providing Christian literature for blind children and the children of blind parents.

Assemblies of God Home Missions asks you to remember Special Touch Ministry, Inc. and the Center for the Blind with an offering on Sunday, Aug. 19. Send support to Special Touch Ministry, Inc., account number 4425930. Send support to the Center for the Blind, account number 3097656. Send your offering to:

Assemblies of God Home Missions



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1445 Boonville Avenue
Springfield, MO 65802-1894

Your generous gift will enable both ministries to continue to reach this vast, unreached group of people.

CHURCH PLANTING DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES FALL BOOTCAMPS

Church Planting Director Paul Drost has announced that two Church Planting BootCamps will be held this Sept.—one in the Rocky Mountain District and the other in the Wisconsin/Northern Michigan District.

“This will be our second BootCamp in the Rocky Mountain District,” Drost says, “Last year’s camp was an incredible success.” This year the BootCamp will be held Sept. 10–13, at Hermit Basin Conference Center in Westcliffe, Colo.

The Wisconsin/Northern Michigan District BootCamp will be held Sept. 24–27 at the Spencer Lake Christian Center in Waupaca, Wis.

“BootCamps are designed to develop leaders who will be able to raise up healthy, disciple-making churches,” Drost says. “We will have training on coaching the church planter, assessing potential planters to help them clarify their call and abilities, reboot/revitalization training for the plateaued or declining church, parenting churches for the church that would like to help start a new work, and training for the new church planter.”

Those interested in learning more about Church Planting BootCamps, additional camps, or church planting can call 417-862-2781, E-mail churchplanting@ag.org, or visit the Web site: www.ChurchPlanting.ag.org.

YOUTH CONGRESS, AUG 7-10

Youth Congress will convene Tuesday through Friday, Aug. 7–10, 2001 in

Kansas City, Mo. The theme for the congress is No Regrets. The congress will mobilize and empower students through the ministry of the Holy Spirit to reach those around them with the gospel. Students will have a fun, exciting, and powerful time and will leave determined to live their lives with reckless abandon...to live with no regrets.

Registration for Youth Congress is \$50. If students are registering for either the Fine Arts Festival or AIM Outreach Kansas City, the fees for those events also cover the Youth Congress registration.

Youth Congress will convene in the Municipal Auditorium Tuesday–Thursday and in the main arena on Friday. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday through Thursday to allow students time to visit the Youth Congress exhibitors.

For more information, E-mail: youth@ag.org, or call national Youth Ministries at 417-862-2781, ext. 4034.

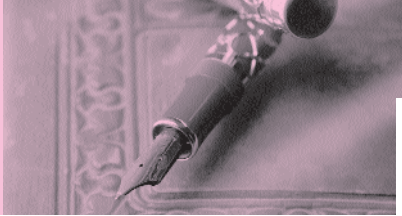
AIM OUTREACH KANSAS CITY

AUG. 6–10

An Ambassadors in Mission outreach in Kansas City, Mo., will offer an experience in missions that is guaranteed to change the lives of Assemblies of God teens. The outreach will join together youths from across the nation in an effort to show Kansas City the love of Jesus Christ during General Council. Partnering with the Northern Missouri, Southern Missouri, and Kansas districts, the national AIM office invites students to join in this powerful outreach ministry.

This event is for teams only. The \$70 registration includes Youth Congress, outreach materials and equipment, two team T-shirts, and accident insurance. The recommended room/board/transportation budget is \$35 per person per day. (Affordable housing will be available.) A bus or van for your team is required.

For registration and further information, contact the national AIM office at 417-862-2781, ext. 4039, or E-mail: aim@ag.org.



news & resources

FINE ARTS FESTIVAL, AUG. 6-10

Fine Arts Festival presentations and workshops will be in the Kansas City Convention Center, Aug. 6-10, 2001. Registration and a mandatory orientation will be on Aug. 6. Participants will give their presentations Tuesday through Friday.

The National FAF Celebration Service, where FAF Award of Merit winners are honored, will be on Friday, Aug. 10. The national FAF choir and orchestra will minister at this service and in another service during the week.

Students receiving a Superior with Invitation rating at the district FAF must send in a separate set of registration forms provided by their district youth director or national Youth Ministries. The FAF registration fee of \$70 includes an evaluation of the FAF presentation,

certificates and/or awards, a national FAF schedule book and T-shirt, workshops, participation in the FAF choir and orchestra, and admission to Youth Congress. For more information, E-mail: faf@ag.org, or call 417-862-2781, ext. 2820.

NATIONAL BIBLE QUIZ BIBLE

CHALLENGE TOURNAMENT, AUG. 6-9

Be a part of the second annual National Bible Quiz Bible Challenge Tournament. This competition is open to students who have completed grades 6 through 12 in the 2000-01 academic year. Join us on Aug. 8,9, for an exciting 2 days of quizzing. A \$1,000 scholarship for post-high school education/training will be awarded to the winner.

The tournament is a one-on-one round robin competition. Questions

range from Genesis to Revelation, and vary in degree of difficulty. Registration for the tournament is on Monday and Tuesday (Aug. 6,7, 2001) at the Kansas City Convention Center. The cost is \$10 per person. For more information, contact the national Bible Quiz office at 417-862-2781, or by E-mail at: bq@ag.org.

NATIONAL PK PARTY, AUG. 7

National Youth Ministries and the Executive Presbytery invite all junior and senior high school students whose parent(s) is an Assemblies of God credential holder(s) to this year's PK Party.

The party will follow the General Council evening service on Tuesday, Aug. 7, 2001. The \$10 charge includes pizza, pop, and prizes. For more information, E-mail National Youth Ministries at youth@ag.org, or call 417-862-2781, ext. 4034.

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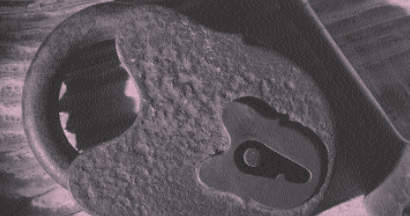
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in closing

BY DAVID BOYD

Children's Ministry

The results of children's ministry may take a while to be seen. There are some immediate signs: new families drawn to your church, a growing children's ministry. But many results take longer: a thriving youth ministry (as biblically core kids become core teenagers), and increased young adults ministering in your church (new young families means future key leaders in ministry). In some churches, children's ministry is not important because the long-term results are not stressed.

Eighteen years ago I was children's pastor in Bismarck, North Dakota. As children's pastor, I conducted a children's crusade each year. Like many churches, I remember the struggle for finances. Members asked: Is a children's crusade worth the investment? Should we have a children's crusade? I remember struggling to raise enough money in the offering contest to pay for the crusade.

Recently I reviewed a list of visitors who had attended one of our crusades. It read like a who's-who list of key families in the Bismarck church today. Among the list were the Bitzes, Hornbachers, Siefert, Morkens, Savageaus, Davenport, Benekes, Schmidts, and the Steiningers. Eighteen years later, these children and their parents represent families who have been board members, Sunday school superintendents, teachers, janitors, women's speakers,

and leaders. How many families were touched by the effort of the children's workers ministering during that one crusade? How many children's leaders continued to minister to these children in the weeks, months, and years ahead, helping them win their entire families to Jesus? That's what children's ministry does. It grows your church; it reaches families; it changes lives.

How much tithes did these nine families give to God's storehouse during the past 18 years? Was the crusade financially worth it? Is it worthwhile to invest in children's ministries? What about the many people these nine families have drawn into the church by their ministries? What multiplication effect has this ministry to children done for this church?

As I studied this list further, I compared it to the list of those who were still attending the Bismarck church a year later. Fifty-seven of the children were still attending regularly a full year later. As their parents were saved and joined the church, these 57 children and their parents represented a growth of over 100 people for the church. Today, some of the children on this list are Assemblies of God pastors or pastors' wives. Others are in Bible colleges preparing to take their place in God's world and in the local church. They are the long-term dividends for a church that felt children's ministries was a

worthwhile investment.

Children are in every nook and cranny of your community. They are worth the investment. They are easy to reach. They will say yes to the presentation of the gospel. Many of their parents will say yes if you find a way to bring them to your church.

We might consider children as representative of those whom the Lord sent out His servants to find in the story of the wedding feast in Matthew 22:1-14. When everyone else was too busy to come to the feast, the Master commanded His servants, "Go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find" (verse 9, NIV). Do as the Master says. Go after those who are willing to be reached. Go after the children.

In another church, in another state, one single mom and her three girls rode our bus to church. Today, 15 years later, this mom has been a key part of the Missionettes program and single ministries of the church. Two of the three girls have attended Assemblies of God colleges. The third girl will graduate from high school soon and is seeking God's will for her life.

Reaching children is worth it. It changes lives, changes churches, and changes the future. **E**

David Boyd is Children's Ministries Agency/BGMC coordinator, Springfield, Missouri.



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