



Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

Devotional

Last month we started to study the doctrines of God. We found that the main truth about God in the Bible is that He is sovereign. He is in absolute control of every person, everything and every circumstance. The sovereign God Who created the world at a fixed time and in six days also created you in your mother's womb as David explains in Psalm 139:13-16. He chose your parents, your personality, the colour of your skin and your size. All the circumstances, all "the things which happen in 'the circle' of your life", from the moment of your birth are under His sovereign control. **Everything which happens in your life is either sent by God or allowed by Him.** Both the pleasant circumstances and the difficult ones are ALL under His control. If you believe that, it will

GOD CONTROLS EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE IN YOUR LIFE

make a big difference in your life and ministry. Joseph, you might remember, was one of the finest and most godly people in the Old Testament. Yet he encountered problem

after problem. Many of the things which happened to him were really unpleasant. He was despised and criticised by his brothers. He was thrown into a pit and sold into slavery in a foreign land. He was tempted by his master's wife. He was thrown into prison on a false charge. He was forgotten by the one who had promised to arrange his release. He had every reason to become bitter, disillusioned and miserable. Yet we find that he remained calm, unruffled, sweet and at peace. When the opportunity for revenge presented itself, he did not take it. What is the explanation? Joseph gives the answer himself:

Genesis 45:5 "God sent me"

Genesis 45:7 "God sent me before you"

Genesis 45:8 "It was not you who sent me here but God"

Genesis 50:20 "You meant evil against me; but God meant it for good tosave many people alive."

Joseph had come to a clear understanding that **GOD IS SOVEREIGN** and in control of every circumstance in his life. He saw that God had used all these circumstances **FOR HIS GOOD**

Welcome

HELP is a short word with only four letters, but it is one of the most important and most used words in the English language. The word **HELP** can mean a **REQUEST** when we are looking for an answer, a **CRY** when we are in a very difficult situation, or a **PLEA** when we have a special need. But this word **HELP** also describes a **MINISTRY** which **HELPS** to answer questions, to give guidance and to meet needs. The reason we produce Mini Mag each month is to provide **HELP** for you in your life and in your ministry to children.

Do you find Mini Mag to be a **HELP**? Do you have a question, a difficulty or a need in your ministry? We in Mini Mag would like to **HELP** you. Contact us at TFACEW@aol.com and we will try to give you that **HELP** in future issues of Mini Mag.

(Romans 8:28). They had brought him to a place of blessing. They had made him a blessing to many people in Egypt, and to all his family (including the brothers who had wronged him). **May God help us to understand that ALL circumstances in our lives are in the hands of God. As a result, we will become better and not bitter, and we will make it our goal and practice not to complain, worry, or be confused.**

Children in the Bible

So far in our study of Matthew 18 verses 1-14, the main passage about children in the Bible, we have found three commands (two of them positive and one negative) to obey in our ministry to children:

- **IMITATE THEM** (verses 3 and 4) to be converted and to be the greatest in the kingdom,
- **RECEIVE THEM** (verse 5) to help them spiritually and to be blessed by the presence of the Lord Jesus.
- **DO NOT CAUSE THEM TO STUMBLE** (verse 6). Believing children need encouragement not discouragement.

This month we add a fourth command contained in these fourteen verses— another negative command:

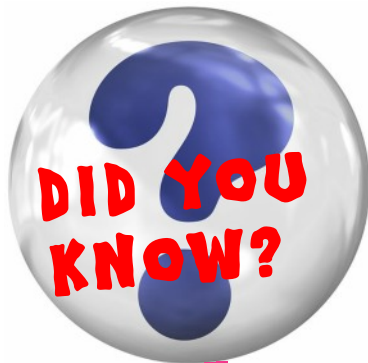
- **DO NOT DESPISE THEM** (verse 10). The word “despise” means “look down upon with an attitude of superiority.” It means to regard someone as inferior or even worthless. We realise that in many ways children are “inferior” to adults—in height, strength, experience and learning. But they are certainly not inferior in believing (the subject the Lord Jesus is speaking about). They are, indeed, often superior to adults in the ability to believe and trust. That is why the Lord Jesus teaches us in Matthew 18:3 that instead of children needing to become like adults to be saved, adults need to become like children. It is unfortunate that many Christians believe that children, and especially little children, are too young to trust Jesus Christ. They see them as inferior in this way and, as a result, they despise, or look down upon, them. Were the disciples themselves not guilty of this in Matthew 19:13, when they rebuked those who were bringing little children to



the Lord Jesus for His blessing and wanted to turn them away?

In the second part of verse 10 the Lord Jesus gives us a special reason why we should not despise even “one of these little ones”. This phrase was used in verse 6 with regard to little children who believe. So we can conclude that the Lord Jesus is still referring to believing children when He states that “their angels always see the face of My Father in Heaven.” What does this mean? The Bible teaches us that believers have angels who are sent to minister to them (Hebrews 1:14) and to guard and protect them. (Psalm 34:7; 91:11)

God thinks so much of these little believing children that He gives them angels to guard them. The Lord Jesus also tells us that these angels have uninterrupted access to the throne of God. If God gives them such special dignity and honour we should never despise them



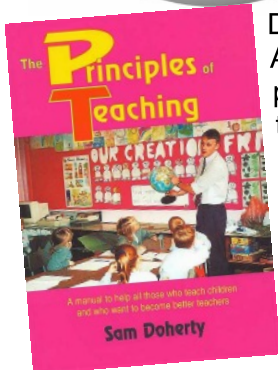
YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Question: What do you see as the necessary qualifications for someone who wants to work with, and evangelise, children

Answer: I can see four qualifications for this vital ministry, but we need to remember that no-one is perfect and that some of the qualifications are qualities which will develop and mature with prayer, obedience and experience.

- 1) The teacher must be **CONVERTED**.
You cannot teach children about the Lord Jesus unless you, yourself, have trusted Him as your Saviour
- 2) The teacher must be **CONSECRATED**.
You should be seeking to give the Lord Jesus first place in your life, and aiming to live a life which is pleasing to Him
- 3) The teacher must be **CONVICTED**:
 - a) that the Bible is truly the Word of God, inspired and without mistake.
 - b) that salvation is the Work of God in the children's hearts in response to His Word.
 - c) that it is the Will of God that children can be saved and that they should not perish. (Matthew 18:14)
- 4) The teacher must be **CALLED**.
The reason you want to teach children should be because God has laid this upon your heart and called you to do so.

Ability and experience are not necessary qualifications. These will develop as you pray, as you attend training classes, as you read and use good teaching materials, and as you watch and learn from other people. However you should see your need to learn, and be willing to develop, your skills as a teacher.



Did you know that ACEW has published a training manual entitled “The Principles of Teaching”? You can download this book at

www.cefbookministry.com

Dr Warren Wiersbe, the renowned Bible teacher and conference speaker, wrote in the book's foreword: “This book is important: it tells you what teaching is and how you can teach effectively in the service of the Lord.”



Teaching Children

As a teacher of God's Word, you should always want the children to know that you are teaching them from the very Word of God. From time to time, as you teach, you should hold the Bible in your hand. When you quote a Bible verse you should read it from the Bible in your hand (just the verse – no more). This is an important “object lesson” for the children, and shows that it is not only you who are teaching, but that God is speaking to them. **That will help “attract or pull “them to your message, and encourage them to listen to what you are saying.**

The Bible is a book full of many wonderful stories—spy stories, love stories, war stories, adventure stories, and many others. If properly prepared, and enthusiastically presented, the children will be attracted to the Word of God and blessed by it. **Secondly** you need to recognise that you cannot speak to children in the same way as you speak to adults. Your presentation of this message needs to be given in a language the children understand and directed towards THEIR lives and problems.

If that message helps to meet their needs, to answer their questions and to solve their problems, they will be attracted by it, listen to it, and return to hear more.

Next month we will consider the importance of putting life into your presentation, making it come alive and using your creativity to make it attractive to them.

Last month we saw that effective teaching is the result of “**an attractive person presenting an attractive message in an attractive way**”. An attractive person “pulls children” towards him (or her). But that attractive person also needs to have a message which will “pull children” towards IT. Teaching will be less effective if the children are not attracted to what is being taught. Two key factors are involved in the teaching of an attractive message.

Firstly that message must be completely based on the Word of God. God has promised to bless His Word (Isaiah 55:11) and use His Word to meet the needs of those who listen to it. “Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.” (Romans 10:17) There is POWER –power that draws or attracts-- in the Word of God. (Romans 1:16).

We must never substitute other things for His Word and His message. Do not aim at anything less than the presentation and the exposition of the Word of God.



Comments from those who have used our publications

- “Your books have been of great value to my ministry. I used the contents of the first one in several seminars for Sunday School teachers and when teaching pastors in the Bible School here. I have taught the second book to my African co-workers during a children’s evangelisation in an Islamic unreached area. Thirteen children trusted the Lord and a children’s class was started. I also introduced this book to the representatives of all the churches and missions of Mali at a conference” (From Mali)
- Thank you so very much, I pray that the materials will be strongly used by me for God's glory in teaching the children, there is such a great need for teaching children the pure Word of God! It all starts with Salvation, so many churches in our area are teaching children "moral lessons" and "character lessons," completely missing the point that without being saved there will be no true life. (From USA)



ACEW CAN HELP YOU

Several years ago we, at ACEW, saw the need for a book which could be given to someone who wants to teach the Bible to children but has no experience and no training. As a result, we wrote and published a 250 page book entitled “First Steps”. It endeavours to cover, as simply and as practically as possible, just about everything which is involved in a ministry to children. If you are starting your ministry to children, you will find this book very helpful. You can download it at www.cefbookministry.com. Experienced children’s workers will also find it helpful.

History of Children's Evangelism

This month we visit South America to identify a hero and heroine who have **devoted their lives to the evangelism of children**. They are an example of how God can use a dedicated couple from simple and humble backgrounds to develop a ministry to children and teachers in many countries.

VASSILIOS CONSTANTINIDIS was born in Egypt. His parents were Greeks who had emigrated from Turkey. Their son, **VASSILIOS**, then emigrated from Egypt to Brazil



when he was 17 years old, and several months later he was deeply convicted of sin and trusted Jesus Christ as his Saviour. Soon

after his conversion, he started to work with children.

In 1963 he was invited to work in the office of Child Evangelism Fellowship of Brazil. He worked there for two years. Laughingly, he describes himself as an "office boy" during those two years. But that "boy" believed that God was calling him to lead children to Christ. So he

decided to go to Bible College for two years and it was there he met and married **ILONA**. In 1965 they became full-time evangelists with Brazilian CEF. That was the beginning of a long and remarkable ministry which God was going to bless all over South and Central America and also in the Middle East.

In 1965 they started their ministry in the great city of Sao Paulo. In the following two years, they, and an "army" of co-workers, developed, with the permission of the authorities, a remarkable evangelistic outreach to children in hundreds of public schools.

In 1967 they moved to Rio de Janeiro and started and developed a similar work there.

In 1971 they were invited to lead the work of CEF for the whole of Brazil and, in the 28 years which followed, they developed an extensive ministry to train teachers and reach children all over the country.

VASSILIOS was also given the responsibility, for 12 years, to lead and organise CEF's outreach to children all over South America. The work really grew. Many children were reached with the gospel and many were saved.

When he "retired" in 2007 he took on the responsibility of leading and organising an extensive and very effective CEF programme to reach children all over the Middle East. When he eventually "retired" AGAIN, he continues to do deputation work in South America to help the ministry to children in the Middle East.

Have you got your breath back? What a wonderful example of a couple who were, and are, completely devoted to God and the children. They demonstrate what God can do in the life of an "office boy" who had emigrated from Egypt in his teens. He and his wife have truly become a hero and a heroine in the history of children's evangelism.

VASSILIOS AND ILONA WE WELCOME YOU INTO OUR MINI MAG HALL OF FAME.

The Mini Mag HALL of FAME

Personal advice from the Author

When I was a young children's evangelist, I often used visualised stories with a gospel application as a BASIS of my evangelistic ministry to children. They were good stories such as "Barney's Barrel," "Little Red Hen" and "The Foolish Frog", which the children loved. These stories were certainly related to Bible teaching and contained a clear Gospel presentation. But, as I came to understand more fully that God has promised to bless His Word (Isaiah 55:10, 11), and that "faith comes by hearing and hearing by THE WORD OF GOD" (Romans 10:17), I became more and more concerned and convicted about this matter. These stories were good and very interesting, but they were not really a presentation and

PREACH THE WORD (2 Timothy 4:2)

exposition of God's Word. I was convicted about this. I realised I was not actually teaching the Word of God. So I decided no longer to use such stories as the BASIS of my Gospel presentations. Instead I started to BASE my presentations on the Bible stories themselves and the truths which THEY presented. I found that the children listened equally well to these stories and their truths, and I knew that I could now rely upon God's promise TO BLESS HIS WORD. Of course, I still used stories such as those mentioned above, but now I only used them as illustrations of Bible truths, and not as the heart and BASIS of my lesson presentation.

The Mini-Mag is published by Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide and written by Sam Doherty with the assistance and advice of Terry Flannigan, Director of the ACEW Trust, and Kenneth Martin, Chairman of the ACEW Trust.

All of them have occupied leadership positions for many years in the worldwide ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship®. The contents of each Mini-Mag are based upon the author's 70 years of experience working with Child Evangelism Fellowship, successively as national director of Irish CEF, as European CEF regional director and as founder of the CEF Specialised Book Ministry. Contact can be made at www.CEFBookMinistry.com.

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