



Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

Devotional

You will find that some of God's attributes are referred to more often in the Bible than others. The two we have been studying (GOD IS SOVEREIGN and GOD IS WISE) are among that number and could be justly seen as key attributes. They are joined to-day by a third of God's key attributes - **GOD IS LOVE**. (1 John 4:8,16) Not only does God love us with a great love (Eph 2:4) but **HE IS LOVE** itself. This is a vitally important attribute because it also links in with, and helps us to understand, other attributes. God's sovereignty is a **loving** sovereignty. God's wisdom is a **loving** wisdom. These two great attributes, like all of God's attributes, are always governed by, and exercised in, love.

GOD IS LOVE and He is the **LOVING** Heavenly Father of all believers. (Galatians 3:26, Matthew 7:11). He wants the best for us, His children, and will only allow things to happen to us which are for our good. He loves us much more than any earthly father. We, as His children, can come to Him, talk with Him and listen to Him. He, as our Father, will listen to us, care for us, supply all our needs, and, if necessary, chasten us.

An understanding of this great truth that God is love can be of great help and blessing to us. For example, this truth, and its importance, was illustrated visually, and practically, by the Lord Jesus to His disciples in Matthew 6:25-34 as He prepared them for the great task which lay ahead of them. He knew they would face many problems, and He wanted them to react to those problems in the right way. He did not want them **TO WORRY** about anything. Firstly, in verse 25, He commanded them not to worry. He then gave them two reasons why they should not worry.

In verses 26, 27 He tells them they should not worry because God, their Heavenly Father, **CARES** for them more than the birds. Then in verses 28-30 He tells them they should not worry because their sovereign God **CAN** dress them more splendidly than the lilies. **GOD CARES and GOD CAN. God is love and God is sovereign. If they (and you) fully understand and really believe these two great divine attributes THEY (AND YOU) WILL NEVER WORRY.**

Do you see in this simple biblical event the practical value of knowing and understanding the attributes of our great God? **The more we know and understand Him, and attributes like His love and His sovereignty, and the more we keep our eyes on Him, the better we can handle and overcome problems like WORRY.**

Welcome

**A WARM WELCOME AND A
HAPPY NEW YEAR
TO ALL OUR READERS**

We are glad that you are one of the many children's workers who have downloaded this issue of Mini Mag. We have produced it, and the 16 issues which preceded it, to **help and encourage** you in your ministry to children. You can, of course, download all the previous issues to give you a vast resource of helpful material. We would appreciate it if you would forward this issue to those who could benefit from it—children's workers, parents, pastors and missionaries—so they could also be **helped and encouraged** in their ministry.



Matthew 18:1-14 is the section of the Bible which gives us most help in our study and understanding of children. In the last four verses of this section we find a little story or parable told by the Lord Jesus. (Please read them.) This parable (“an earthly story with a heavenly meaning”) teaches us three truths about children, two of which we have outlined and studied in our last two issues

- CHILDREN NEED A SAVIOUR. They are lost, (v.11), they have gone astray (v. 12) and they could perish (v. 14)
- CHILDREN ARE PRECIOUS TO GOD. (v.14), He loves them and does not want any of them to perish (v. 14)
- The third truth tells us WHAT THE LORD JESUS DID to save them from perishing. (v. 11-14)

JESUS CHRIST CAME “The Son of Man has come.” (v.11). This is a picture of the Lord Jesus leaving Heaven’s glory to come, as Saviour and Shepherd, to where the lost sheep were. His specific purpose in coming was to SAVE the little (and big) sheep who were LOST (v. 11), who had gone astray (v.12) and who were “outside the fold”.

JESUS CHRIST SOUGHT (looked diligently for) one sheep which had wandered far away. (v.12). This sheep, in the context of these four verses, was a child—a little sheep. It was helpless and not able to find its way home on its own.

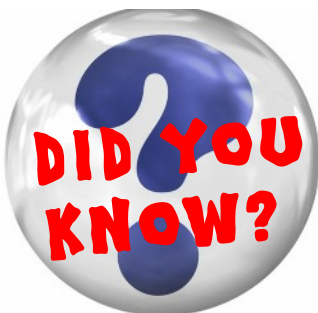
JESUS CHRIST FOUND that little sheep away up there in the mountains (v. 12). The initiative and the first step in its salvation is taken by the Saviour, the Good Shepherd, and not by the sheep.



JESUS CHRIST SAVED that little sheep and brought it from the mountains into a place of security. (v.13) Salvation is the work of the Saviour. His ministry and His work is to save both “little and big sheep” and He does so ONE BY ONE.

JESUS CHRIST REJOICED and was so happy that He had saved that ONE little sheep (v.13). His diligence in seeking the little sheep results in His delight in saving it. What a wonderful picture this story or parable provides of the saving work of the Lord Jesus, and His desire and ability to save children. It is especially interesting to see the emphasis in His story on the word ONE. He looked for ONE little sheep (v.12). He found ONE little sheep (v.13). He rejoiced over the salvation of ONE little sheep (v. 13).

Can we also see in this story an example for us, who are His under-shepherds (1 Peter 5:2,3, John 21:15-17) to follow Him, and to go to the mountains, look for little lost sheep and bring them the message of salvation and security



that our basic reason for starting the ministry of ACEW 25 years ago was that we saw “a gap” which, we felt, needed to be filled. We discovered that there was a shortage, or even a lack, of simple but thorough BOOKS on a number of key areas of the life and ministry of children’s workers, especially those who were young and inexperienced in the ministry. Complete books on a number of subjects, which could be given to a children’s worker to help him/her with that subject, were rare. It was difficult to find, for example, books, which showed clearly and simply how to counsel a child and lead him to Christ, or books which taught how to teach doctrines to children in an attractive way, or books which specifically addressed the needs and problems of children’s workers and how to overcome them. Therefore we felt that the main purpose and top priority for ACEW was to produce such books (and many others) and make them available to children’s workers worldwide FREE OF CHARGE.



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Question: I find that the children listen well to my story; but when I come to the end of it, and then try to teach them the central truth of the story and its application, they get very restless. What should I do?

Answer: Your problem is a very common one and we have all experienced it. Children will always listen to an interesting narrative, but they do not listen so well to “what it means.” Imagine a mother who wants her little boy to take a pill. She asks him to open his mouth and she puts the pill in; but he does not like it and immediately spits it out again. So she hides the pill in the middle of a spoonful of raspberry jam and gives it to him. He enjoys the jam but when he comes to the pill, he spits it out. But his mother is very clever. She grinds the pill into a powder and mixes it with a spoonful of raspberry jam. The boy takes it and enjoys it, not knowing that he has also swallowed the pill.

The Gospel and the truths of God’s Word are, of course, not pills, but the illustration makes the point. The children might see the story you tell as the “jam” and they might think of the truth and its application as the “pill”. Therefore, instead of telling a story and adding on the truth, and its application, at the end you should “break up” the truth and its application and weave them through your story as someone might weave thread through a tapestry. You have told your story and you have taught your truth. Then you only need to conclude your lesson with a very short application and challenge.



Teaching Children

Last month we studied how to use our voices and words to teach truth to the children. Faith comes, we are told in Romans 10:17,18 by HEARING and by hearing THE WORD OF GOD. Therefore we want the children to LISTEN to, and UNDERSTAND, what we are saying, but we can help them to do so by using their eyes as well as their ears. Don't rely on spoken words alone. A child learns more from what he HEARS and SEES than from that which he just hears. The experts tell us we remember 10% of what we hear, but up to 50% of what we hear and see. The Lord Jesus gives us many examples of His use of visuals when teaching. He uses things which can be SEEN to help His listeners understand what they are HEARING –things like sheep, sowers, lilies, birds, vines, coins, fish, flowers and even a child. We should, therefore, explore how we can use visuals to assist us in our ministry to the children.

What visuals can you use? There is a great variety of visuals available. These include flannelgraph, flashcards, object lessons, a blackboard or a whiteboard, pictures, maps, word strips, power point presentations, and video recordings.

How and where can you get these visuals?

▶ You can buy some of them from organisations like Child Evangelism Fellowship, which produce them.

- ▶ You can download some of them free of charge from websites like ACEW at www.cefbookministry.com.
- ▶ You can make some of them yourself.
- ▶ You can use objects or things which are at hand to illustrate what you are teaching---as the Lord Jesus often did.

What can you use visuals for? They can be used to help the children memorise Bible verses, to teach them choruses, to present Bible quizzes, to teach missions, to teach doctrine, and, especially, to teach Bible lessons.

Could you give me some help in my choice and use of visuals?

- ▶ Be sure that your visuals suit the age group you are teaching. For example pictures of some kind are ideal for younger children and word strips are more suitable for teen-agers.
- ▶ Be sure that they do illustrate what you are teaching and that they do so accurately.
- ▶ Be sure that they are big enough for everyone to see.
- ▶ Be sure to remember that they are visual AIDS. They are to help you in your teaching and make it more understandable. They should not become a substitute for your teaching.

ALWAYS REMEMBER THAT YOU YOURSELF ARE THE BEST VISUAL AID OF ALL. WHAT THE CHILDREN SEE IN YOUR LIFE AND IN YOUR ATTITUDES WILL HELP THEM TO BELIEVE WHAT YOU ARE TEACHING



Comments from those who have used our publications

"I'm using your books to teach my assistants who help me to train children in my church and other churches. Many churches come and borrow your books and return them in two weeks. Your books have also trained me a lot in my own spiritual life" (From a pastor in Tanzania)

"I'm from Vietnam, and I want to find a program to teach children at my church about Doctrine in the Bible. After learning about CEF I found it very suitable for our needs in terms of teaching children so I want to study more about your resources. I built a program to teach the Word of God to children for my church, and for my children."



ACEW CAN HELP YOU

We strongly advise you to buy, or make, a Wordless Book and use it often as a visual to explain the gospel message simply to groups of children or to individual children. This is a little book with five coloured pages –gold, black, red, white and green. You can get full information about how to do this by downloading issue 8 of Mini Mag, or by downloading the booklet "God's Dynamite" from our website at www.cefbookministry.com.

History of Children's Evangelism

Last month we started to discover and study the PLACES where children have been taught and evangelised in the past and in the present. We found that the FIRST PLACE, the BIBLICAL PLACE, and the BEST PLACE was the HOME, and that the biblical and best teachers and evangelists were to be THE PARENTS. This was emphasised many times by clear commands in both the Old and the New Testaments, and by the examples set by the parents of men like Isaac, Joseph, Moses, David and Timothy, parents who were diligent in bringing their children into the knowledge of God and His Word. And we can never over estimate the key roles played by parents like Noah and Abraham in God's plan to produce a people who would honour Him. As a result we concluded that the most effective evangelists of children are, or should be, CHRISTIAN PARENTS in their HOMES. This raises a very practical question for those of us who are, or will be, parents, and for those of us who minister to parents.



HOW CAN PARENTS EVANGELIZE THEIR CHILDREN IN THEIR OWN HOMES? HERE ARE EIGHT STEPS TO FOLLOW:

- **BE AWARE** that your children need to be saved, and need therefore to be evangelized. They have the privilege of having Christian parents, but, if unsaved, they are spiritually dead and need to be born again. (John 3:3)
- **BELIEVE** that they can be saved when still young. God the Holy Spirit can work in their hearts and bring them NOW to Christ. They don't need to wait until they are teenagers or adults before they can be saved. (Matthew 18:6)
- **BE PRAYERFUL** and ask God to work in their hearts. The Holy Spirit gives them conviction and understanding and it is He Who regenerates them. So spend much time

to pray specifically and regularly for the salvation of your children.

- **BE AN EXAMPLE** to your children at all times. It is most important that your deeds speak as loudly as your words do. It is through your life and witness that they will be influenced and drawn to the Saviour. (Matthew 5:16)
- **BE DILIGENT** in explaining the gospel to them. You could do this as part of a short daily family time, when you read the Bible and pray. Or you could introduce it briefly during conversations together. But don't overdo it. Be natural.
- **BE AVAILABLE** to your children if they want to receive help in how to trust Christ. Let them know that you are ready to show them more clearly how to trust Christ. But they should come to you and ask you to do so..
- **BE CAREFUL** never to put pressure upon your children to trust Christ or to come and speak to you about it. You don't want them to "make a decision" just to please you. You want this to be the result of the work of the Holy Spirit.

● **BE SYMPATHETIC** towards your children if and when they trust Christ. Don't expect too much from them. Christian growth is a long and slow process and they will need help, love and sympathy rather than criticism. (2 Peter 3:18).

ONCE AGAIN WE WELCOME ALL CHRISTIAN PARENTS WHO TEACH AND EVANGELIZE THEIR CHILDREN INTO OUR MINI MAG HALL OF FAME. MAY YOU HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF SEEING THEM TRUST CHRIST AS THEIR SAVIOUR.

The Mini Mag HALL of FAME

Personal advice from the Author

It was a special day, and one I had looked forward to with much expectancy. A new Good News Club was to start that day. I had obtained a fairly large building, had set out at least 60 chairs in neat rows, and had visited every home in the neighbourhood personally. I was the teacher (in addition to being the organiser and visitor) and I expected many children to come. However, when the time came to start the meeting, only two children had arrived – a girl of ten, and a girl of six. I was bitterly disappointed and was tempted to cancel the meeting for that week (and use the lesson, songs and verses which I had prepared next week when, I hoped more children would be there). However, I resisted the temptation and I went ahead with the meeting as if all 60 seats were filled instead of only two. We sang together, learned a memory verse, had a Bible quiz (one half against the

other) and I taught our visualised Bible lesson. What a JOY it was when the ten year old girl came to me afterwards and said she would like to trust Jesus Christ as her Saviour. How wonderful it was to lead her to the Lord Jesus and then to watch her grow spiritually in the years which followed. That was the evening when fifty per cent of my "congregation" trusted Christ. The lesson I learned that evening was that the Lord Jesus is interested in the "ones" and the "twos" and so should we be. We want to see good numbers present but, if not, let us always remember that "Whoever receives ONE little child in My name receives ME" (Matthew 18:5), and that the Lord Jesus was willing to leave the ninety nine and go into the mountains to look for, find and save that ONE LITTLE LOST SHEEP.

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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