



Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

Devotional

We have seen and rejoiced in the great truth that **GOD IS SOVEREIGN** and in complete control of everything, every person and every circumstance, and we know that believing this truth about God **LEADS US TO WORSHIP HIM**, brings us personal **SECURITY**, and gives us **CONFIDENCE** in the results of our ministry. The second truth we need to understand about God is closely linked and intertwined with this first one. The two most frequent questions in a Christian's life are: "Why has God not answered my prayer?" and "Why should this happen to me?" Have you ever asked yourself these questions? The simple answer to these questions comes when we understand and believe the second key truth about God. **GOD IS WISE**. (Romans 11:33-36)

TRUST HIM— HE KNOWS WHAT IS BEST

What does that mean? It is true that God knows everything, but wisdom is more than knowledge. Wisdom is the application of that knowledge to a particular situation. God is wise and knows what is best for you and that which will bring most glory to His Name, and He also knows the steps whereby He can achieve this goal in your life and ministry. Therefore, God, in His wisdom, has a plan for your life and

ministry. **He knows what He is doing**. You don't. "His ways are higher than your ways and His thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9) God in His sovereignty controls every circumstance in your life. God in His wisdom uses, and has a purpose for, all of those circumstances in your life. He uses them to help you to be the person and servant He wants you to be. How wonderful it is to be able to say in the midst of darkness and doubt: **"God knows what He is doing; I can trust Him completely."** God has a reason why that prayer has not been answered; God has a purpose (a good purpose) in whatever happened to you. **TRUST HIM**. Are you in a difficult situation just now and you don't understand why it has happened? Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus in John 13:7 "What I am doing you do not understand NOW, but you will know AFTER this"

How do you react to problems when they come? The person who knows and believes these two doctrines says "God is in complete control; He knows what He is doing" and the result is PEACE. The more you focus on Him and the less you focus on yourself and your problems, the greater will be your PEACE.

A HAPPY CHRISTMAS

TO ALL WHO DOWNLOAD THIS DECEMBER ISSUE OF MINI MAG. WE PRAY THAT GOD WILL HELP ALL OF US TO LEAD OUR CHILDREN INTO THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS, AND THE VITAL PART IT PLAYED IN OUR SALVATION

Welcome

We welcome and invite **EVERYONE** to download, read and study Mini Mag and its contents.

- We welcome beginners. Are you just starting your ministry to children, and are eager to learn? Welcome!
- We welcome experienced children's workers. Are there ways to strengthen your ministry? Welcome!
- We welcome parents and pastors who are looking for help in their ministry to children. Welcome!
- We welcome **EVERYONE** who is seeking God's will for their lives and service. Welcome!

We trust and pray that this issue of Mini Mag, and all the other issues which precede it and follow it, will give you the help you are looking for.

**"Oh, the depth of the
riches both of the wisdom
and knowledge of God!"**

Romans 11:33

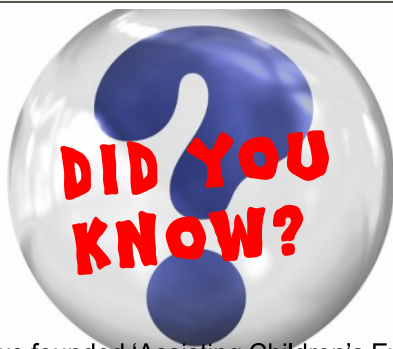
Children in the Bible

Matthew 18: 1-14, the passage we have been studying, is the main passage in the Bible which teaches us about children. The Lord Jesus concludes this passage with a short story in verses 11-14. (Please read it.) This story teaches us **THREE TRUTHS** about children. Last month we studied **THE FIRST TRUTH** which the Lord Jesus used this story to teach. These four verses teach us that children, even little children, are “lost” (verse 11), that they have “gone astray” (verses 12 and 13), and that they could “perish.” (verse 14) **CHILDREN ARE LOST AND NEED A SAVIOUR**. All children are lost in the sense that, because of their sinful nature, they are **OUTSIDE** God’s kingdom. However, those children who have reached the age of accountability and have rejected Christ are under God’s judgment and are lost eternally. **THE SECOND TRUTH** the Lord Jesus teaches us in this short story is that **GOD THE FATHER LOVES CHILDREN** and that **“IT IS NOT HIS WILL THAT EVEN ONE OF THEM SHOULD PERISH.”** (Verse 14) What does that mean? It does not mean that none of them will perish. The word “will” used in verse 14 means “wish” or “desire”. We find it used again in 1 Timothy 2:4 with the words “God our Saviour who **DESIRES** ALL men to be saved” and in 2 Peter 3:9 where we read that God is “not **WILLING** that any should perish but that **ALL** should come to repentance.” Obviously neither of these two verses can teach that **EVERYONE** will be saved, but they teach that it is God’s **DESIRE** or **WISH** that everyone be saved. Similarly Matthew 18:14 teaches us that **GOD LOVES CHILDREN** and that it is **HIS DESIRE, HIS WISH** that children, little children, should not perish or be lost eternally.



However the use of this word “desire” or “wish” also teaches us that there is the possibility of them doing so. The fact that God does not want it, or desire it, to happen means that it might or could happen. It is this possibility which motivates us to evangelise the children of all ages. It is a tragedy that, even in some of our evangelical churches, children are not seen as lost or perishing until they are in their teens, when the age of accountability can be much earlier. As a result, they are taught the Word of God but they are not evangelised. May God burden our hearts for our **LOST CHILDREN**, and may He help us to present and teach the Gospel to them no matter what age they are.

God, in Matthew 18:14, has revealed His love for children and His will concerning them. He does not want even one of them to perish or be lost. Therefore if you are bringing the good news of the Gospel to them and showing them how they can be saved, you have the ASSURANCE that you are doing God’s will.



that when we founded ‘Assisting Children’s Evangelists Worldwide’ we had two main goals in mind:

- Firstly we wanted to help and encourage younger and less experienced children’s workers, especially those who were rather isolated and did not have much opportunity for training and help. So we have tried to concentrate on basic truths and principles. I would have been very happy to receive help like this in the early days of my ministry to children
- Secondly we wanted to challenge and encourage more experienced children’s workers to examine their ministry to ensure that it is as good and as biblical as it should be. We should always be learning and seeking ways to improve and strengthen our ministry, and to be open to change if change is necessary. Many of the books I have written reflect and record the lessons I learned in over 70 years of our ministry to children, the mistakes I made, and, as a result, the changes I needed to make to strengthen that ministry. We should always be ready to make changes if the Holy Spirit is leading us to do so.



YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED

Q. Could you explain what is meant by the age of accountability?

A. What is it? The age of accountability is the age when a child becomes old enough to know what sin is before God, old enough to be convicted of sin, and to have desire to turn from it, old enough to know that, in some way, Jesus Christ died for him, and old enough to trust Jesus Christ as his Saviour or to reject Him. If a child dies before he reaches that age, God will, I believe, graciously take him home to Heaven. But if he dies in unbelief and rejection, after he reaches that age, he will be lost forever.

What does the Bible say?

- The Bible makes it clear in many verses like John 3:18 and John 3:36 that God condemns those who deliberately reject and disobey Him. Condemnation is the result of rejection; therefore those who cannot reject cannot be condemned. God would never condemn a little one with no understanding or rejection.
- The Bible also gives a number of verses which refer to the concept of an age of accountability. (Deuteronomy 1:39; Isaiah 7:16; Jonah 4:11)
- When David’s new born baby died he plainly stated that he would, one day, go to him (2 Sam. 12:23)

At what age does it occur? We don’t know. The Bible does not give us any such age. We need to understand, also, that one child differs from another, and that some come to the age of understanding earlier than others. Therefore we should not set ages; but I feel we can say clearly that this age is a long time before the age of 13 or 14, which many believe. Actually it not our responsibility to know if children are accountable or not. Our God given responsibility according to Mark 16:15 is to evangelise **EVERYONE** and leave the results in His Hands. He knows whether they are accountable or not. We don’t need to.

Teaching Children



Teaching requires, and is based upon, communication. Communication is the act of passing truth from ourselves to the children. The main instrument or “agent” of communication is the voice. We use our voice to communicate the truths of God’s Word to the children so they can understand them. Therefore every teacher needs to examine how he/she uses their **VOICE** when teaching, and also examine the **WORDS** which they use in doing so. Your voice and your words are the two “agents” which will, if they are properly used, ensure that you are really communicating.

EXAMINE YOUR VOICE. You need to be sure that you are using your voice effectively.

- It should be a pleasant voice, and easy to listen to.
- It should be a natural voice and not a preaching voice or a childish voice. Talk to them, but not “down to them”.
- It should be a relaxed voice and not a high-pitched shrill nervous voice.
- It should be easy to hear your voice but without shouting. Speak so the children in the back row can hear you, but not the children in the next street. Enunciate your words clearly.
- It should be varied according to what is happening in the story. Vary its speed –faster for excitement, slower for sadness. Vary its volume –louder for action, softer for suspense.

EXAMINE YOUR WORDS. You need to be sure that the children understand your words in the same way as you do.

You must learn to speak simply and to look for words which say the same as more complicated words, but are more simple. You can learn to do this by listening to children’s conversations, by reading children’s books and by watching children’s television.

- Don’t use theological words and evangelistic cliches unless you explain them.
- Don’t assume that the children understand words like “saved”, “eternal life”, “sin”, or “faith”. Many of them won’t.
- Don’t use long rambling sentences. Keep your sentences short with a simple construction.
- Don’t keep repeating words like “You know...” or “Well now, boys and girls”

• Remember that the children will often take you literally. What do they understand by “a caravan of camels” or by “Gideon’s pitchers” or by the words “God drove them out of the garden?”

• Above all, use words and concepts which children can understand. Remember you are feeding lambs (John 21:15) and not giraffes!! Good communication and good understanding depend upon the use of words and concepts which are familiar to your listeners. It is not so much what you say that counts. It is what they hear and understand.

As you teach, aim at making your lesson so clear that it cannot be misunderstood, and so interesting that it cannot be forgotten.

The use of your voice and the message of your words will be greatly enhanced and made more attractive when they are backed up by a warm and pleasant personality and a really interesting presentation.



Comments from those who have used our publications

“We have used all of the books you have sent us. Could you send us 100 more copies of books one and two for our Institute training and for our Levels programme? I praise God for all of you who make these resources available to us. Your books have been taken into many homes in South Africa and have already impacted the lives of many children’s workers” (From the national director of CEF in South Africa)

“I received the books that I ordered last week. I am so grateful to receive them. I’m going through them at the moment and teaching myself to teach. God bless you all for this ministry.” (Australia)



ACEW CAN HELP YOU

There will be times when you have an opportunity to speak to children for about ten minutes, and you have neither the time or the space to use elaborate visual aids. We in ACEW have published two books entitled “Bible Talks for Children 1 and 2.” Each book contains almost 200 simple but effective ten-minute talks. Pastors find them helpful for giving short talks to children in a morning service. Parents find them helpful for inclusion in daily devotionals with their children. Children’s workers find them invaluable when invited to give a short address in a church or a school assembly. You can download them at www.cefbookministry.com.



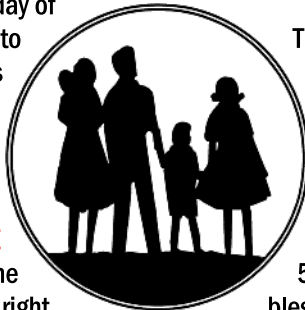
History of Children's Evangelism

So far in our history of children's evangelism we have looked at, and appreciated, a number of men and women who have played key and strategic roles in an evangelistic ministry to children down through the years. We called them heroes and heroines and listed them in our Mini Mag Hall of Fame. We will now change our focus from the **PEOPLE** engaged in that history, to the **PLACES** where children have been taught and evangelised in the past and present.

God created the first man and woman on the sixth day of creation (Genesis 1:27), and His very first command to them was to "be fruitful and multiply" (Genesis 1:28). It is obvious that God's plan was to inhabit the earth with the children who would be born, and that Adam and Eve were to give birth to the first of them. It was equally obvious, from the beginning, that the basic unit of mankind was to be **THE FAMILY**—a man and a woman and their children. The children were a very valuable part of each family and right through the Old Testament the parents were expected to give them the physical and mental help they needed to enable them to grow and develop. God also required them to give their children spiritual help and to instruct them in the knowledge of His Word and work.

Therefore these parents were exhorted, over and over again, in God's Word, "to teach these things to your children" (Deut. 4:9), "to teach these words diligently to your children" (Deut 6:7) "to teach these words of Mine to your children" (Deut 11:19). As a result, **THE FIRST PLACE** in our history of children's evangelism, where the Word of God was to be taught and applied to the children, was **THE HOME**; and the first, (and in many ways the best) evangelists were to be **THE PARENTS**. God's plan for this

situation could well be summarised by Solomon's words in Proverbs 1: 8. ("My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother.") The father was to direct the children and the mother to teach them. Perhaps the best example or illustration of this plan in practice can be seen in God's commendation of Abraham in Genesis 18:19 when He said "I have known him ...that he may command his children... after him, that they keep the way of the Lord to do righteousness and justice"



This principle of **PARENTS** teaching and applying God's Word to **CHILDREN** in their **HOMES** seems also to be the normal way to minister to children in the New Testament. "Fathers ...bring them (your children) up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). A practical example of this can be found in the life of Timothy by comparing 2 Timothy 1: 5 and 2 Timothy 3:14 and 15. Timothy was greatly blessed by the teaching of his mother and grandmother in his home. Should we not conclude that the most effective evangelists of children to-day could well be **CHRISTIAN PARENTS** in their **HOMES**. Should we not be encouraging and training Christian parents how to evangelise their children and have the privilege of leading them to Christ. What greater privilege could they enjoy?

**WE WELCOME ALL
PARENTS WHO TEACH
AND EVANGELISE THEIR
CHILDREN INTO OUR
HALL OF FAME**

The Mini Mag HALL of FAME

Personal advice from the Author

GOOD DOCTRINE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

"How we live, how we pray and how we deal with problems is determined primarily by what we believe about God". An understanding of, and belief in, the two great doctrines of God's sovereignty and His wisdom, will give us peace, confidence and freedom from worry in any situation. They can also give us **COMFORT** at critical times in our lives. For example: An unsaved person whom we know and love, for whom we have often prayed, and to whom we have consistently witnessed, dies. It is possible for a sovereign God to use our past witness to him, and our past prayers for him, to speak to that person, in his dying moments, and enable him to trust Jesus Christ. I use the word "possible" and not the word "certain" or "definite." We cannot be sure or dogmatic

concerning what God will do, but the possibility is there, and that can give us **COMFORT**. The judgements and ways of our wise God are unsearchable and past finding out. (Romans 11:33) This would be a miracle of course, but no more a miracle than what happened to you and me, when God used the prayers and witness of others to speak to us when we were spiritually dead and gave us new life. Therefore we should not despair in a situation like this. If we have been faithful in our witness to this person and in our prayers for him, we can leave the results in the hands of a God Who is sovereign and wise. One day when we get to heaven we may get a wonderful surprise to see that person there.

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.

Copyright © 2021 - All rights reserved Permission is given to CEF workers to copy and distribute free of charge.