



# Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide

## **Devotional** A MAJOR PROBLEM FOR A MAJORITY OF WORKERS

*"Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, the help of my countenance and my God." (Psalm 42:11)*

For several months we have been seeking and finding the biblical solution to our problems as children's workers. I think I am correct when I say that perhaps the major problem faced by children's workers is **DISCOURAGEMENT** in life and in ministry. Therefore, this issue of Mini Mag will concentrate on that.

Discouragement is defined in the dictionary as "a loss of courage, confidence, enthusiasm or energy." It means "cast down, demoralised, disheartened, depressed." Are you acquainted with any of these? Even the greatest and most spiritual men have experienced discouragement; men in the Bible like Moses (Exodus 17:1-4), David (Psalm 43:5) and Elijah (1 Kings 19:4); and men in church history like William Carey and Charles Spurgeon. So if you feel, or have felt, discouraged, you are "in good company."

- Our discouragement can result from **our own mistakes** like overwork, over sensitivity or personal failures.
- It can be caused by other people by their **criticism**, opposition, misunderstanding and letting us down.
- It can be the result of **circumstances** like health problems, unanswered prayer, a co-worker's resignation.
- It can result from financial and **personal problems**, or if our work is not going well, and lacks results.

**What are we to do?** Some of these problems can be solved by common sense, by cultivating a good attitude to others, by not overworking or by not trying to do something we know we cannot do. But there remain many areas of discouragement in our lives and ministries, which we find we cannot deal with, and we need to know what we should do when we are faced with them.

David expresses his discouragement three times in Psalms 42 and 43. He speaks to himself and asks himself a question "Why are you cast down? Why are you disquieted and discouraged?" and immediately in both Psalms he tells himself the answer to his problems. **"HOPE IN GOD."** The answer to his problems does not exist in himself; it is found solely and completely in God; and we need to see, like David, that He alone can take away our discouragement, and help us "yet to praise Him". We need to follow three steps.

▶ **THINK ABOUT GOD.** Focus your thoughts immediately on Him and not on your failures, the criticism of others, your circumstances or your work. See Him as **SOVEREIGN**, and in complete control. See Him as **WISE** and realise that He knows what He is doing. See Him as your **HEAVENLY FATHER**, Who cares for you and plans to use all these problems for your good. (Romans 8:28) Why should we worry or be discouraged?



We trust that you will find this 45th issue of Mini Mag helpful for your life and ministry. It contains a selection of themes--how to defeat discouragement, a treasure hunt in the Old Testament, how to teach saved children the reality of sin in their lives, an example of five 10 minute gospel messages a pastor could give to the children in his morning service, illustrations to help you in your Bible lessons for saved children, and a personal story which illustrates the importance of not quitting when the ministry is difficult.

Please let us know if this issue has been a help for you and your ministry. We would appreciate hearing from you. Your comments would be very WELCOME.

▶ **TALK TO GOD** Be anxious for nothing, but thank Him for everything (Philippians 4:6,7) Tell Him you trust Him and that you are leaving your problems in His hands. He may not remove the source of your discouragement, but He will give you strength to handle it, and a real experience of peace.

▶ **THROW ONTO GOD**, as a conscious and continuous act, whatever is causing your discouragement, "Cast all your care upon Him for He cares for you" we read in 1 Peter 5:7. And be sure not to take it back again.

**HOPE IN GOD is David's solution to his problem, and he demonstrates it in 1 Samuel 30:6 when he is faced with great distress and discouragement. He "strengthens (encourages) himself in the Lord his God."**

# TEACH TRUTH TO THE CHILDREN

Do join us in our treasure hunt. We are searching for verses in the Old Testament which teach us about children and our ministry to them, and which complement the teaching in the major passages about children in Deuteronomy and the Psalms. We are amazed there are so many such verses and even passages and appreciate what we can learn from them. Two months ago, we located 5 verses or short passages encouraging us to use visual aids when we teach children, and to be ready to answer their questions. And then, last month, we found 4 verses or passages which emphasise that we should teach children about sin, repentance and judgment. This month we continue our search. I will give you the references of more such verses and give my thoughts on what they tell us about children. It would be helpful if you yourself would find and read these references in your Bible. I don't have enough space to quote them here.

**Psalm 71:5,17.** David tells us in this psalm that God started to TEACH him when he was still young (verse 17) and that he also trusted God when he was still young. (verse 5) The Hebrew word used here for "youth" is NEURIM and could apply to teenage years. God must have used someone to be the human teacher, and if they were parents, they could have started to teach much earlier. But what an investment it was for them!

**Psalm 34:11-14.** David now wanted to share with children (BEN) all he had learned, especially the three secrets of a

happy life—see what is good, say what is good, and do what is good. (verses 11-14) But he also wanted to TEACH them that these can only come by experiencing the fear of the Lord, (verse 11) and having a personal relationship with Him.

**Isaiah 54:13.** "All your children (BEN) shall be TAUGHT by the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children"(BEN)

What a wonderful promise for every parent, Sunday school teacher and Good News Club teacher to claim. The Psalmist records the Lord's desire for children to be taught "He commanded our fathers "that they should make them (God's laws) known to their children." (Psalm 78:5b). We have the privilege to teach our children, and God promises to bless our teaching, give them understanding, and bring them to salvation and peace through what they learn.

**Joel 1:1-3.** God's plan for His people is that each generation should reach and TEACH the next generation. (the children).

This underlines the responsibility of parents and adults towards the children, and stresses how much the future of any nation depends on the children of to-day and how we minister to them.

**Genesis 18:19.** In this verse God praises and blesses a man who directed and taught his children and his household, and they followed in his ways.

All these isolated verses and passages emphasise the importance of teaching truth to the children when they are young. They are in our hands and our future is in their hands.



## KEY QUESTIONS ASKED

### BY CHILDREN'S WORKERS

**Question:** I am a pastor. Could you give me help for my 10 minute children's talk in my morning service.

**Answer:** I would suggest, for a start, that you give five talks displaying and using the wordless book. The wordless book is a little (or large) book with four double pages of different colours inside a green cover. You could make one or buy one from CEF. The four colours are black (or dark) red, white and gold; and the cover is green. Each page can be shown, one page each week, plus the revision of previous pages, and used to teach biblical truths and the gospel message to the children.

**FIRST TALK:** The gold page speaks about GOD, and His holiness (Isaiah 6:3).

▶ He created and owns the world. (Gold speaks about wealth.)

▶ He is the King of Kings. (Gold speaks about power and majesty.)

▶ He is pure and holy. (Gold is a metal with all impurities removed.)

▶ He lives in Heaven. (Where the street is paved with gold, and He wants you to go there when you die.)

**SECOND TALK:** The dark (black) page speaks about SIN, and its consequences. (Romans 3:23)

▶ Sin is disobeying God and His commands, and we have all done that.

▶ God is just and He must punish our sin. If you are not a Christian, your sin will keep you out of Heaven.

**THIRD TALK:** The red page speaks about the PRECIOUS BLOOD of the Lord Jesus and salvation. (Romans 5:8,9)

▶ The Lord Jesus left Heaven and came to our world to save us from the punishment of our sin.

▶ He took God's punishment for all the wrong things we have done. Have you asked Him to save you?

**FOURTH TALK:** The white page speaks of JUSTIFICATION and the forgiveness of all sin. (Romans 3:28)

▶ When we trust the Lord Jesus, God forgives all our sins and Heaven will be our home, one day.

▶ God sees us, now and forever, as pure and as clean as the Lord Jesus. Be sure to trust the Lord Jesus.

**FIFTH TALK:** The green cover speaks about GROWTH after salvation. (2 Peter 3:18)

▶ The green grass and trees all grow. If you have trusted the Lord Jesus, God wants you to grow spiritually.

▶ You will grow as you read and obey the Word of God, as you attend church, and as you pray to Him.

## Your Ministry to Children:

The two main problems faced by a Christian child, and the questions he asks most frequently, are: "How can I be sure I am saved?" and "What can I do with sin in my life?" We dealt with the problem of assurance in the last two issues of Mini Mag. We will deal with the problem of victory over sin this month and next month.

### WHAT SHOULD WE TEACH THEM ABOUT SIN IN THEIR LIVES?

First of all, we need to teach our saved children THE REALITY OF SIN IN THEIR LIVES. Some Christian children believe that when they trust the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, they are saved from sinning, and that they will never sin again. Therefore, we need to teach them three truths:

- **Explain** clearly that they do not become perfect when they trust the Lord Jesus. It is still possible for them to sin, even though they may not want to. (1 John 1:8,10)
- **Teach** them that, while they now have a new nature, there is still an old nature there, and it continually battles with their new nature. (Ephesians 4:22-24, Galatians 5:16,17)
- **Make it clear** that when they sin, the Lord Jesus will not leave them. He has promised NEVER to leave them. Therefore, they do not ever need to be saved again. (John 10:28)

### HOW SHOULD YOU TEACH THEM THESE TRUTHS?

You can do so in two ways:

- **By teaching Bible lessons** which illustrate these truths in the lives of godly characters in the Bible.
  - The apostle Peter sinned grievously (Mark 14:53-72).

## THE REALITY OF SIN IN THE LIFE OF A CHRISTIAN CHILD



- David, a man after God's own heart fell into sin. (2 Samuel 11)
  - Abraham, the great man of faith, was guilty of deceit (Genesis 12:14-20)
  - The apostle Paul spoke of the struggle he had with sin (Romans 7:14-25)
- They all sinned but none of them lost their salvation. They lost their fellowship with God and the joy and peace it brought; but they did not need to be saved again. God restored them to a place of communion and blessing when they made things right. But they were still prone to sin even after their restoration.
- **By explaining Bible verses** which they are memorising and which state and clarify these truths:
    - 1 John 1:8,10 (It is still possible for Christians to sin.)
    - Hebrews 13:5b (The Lord Jesus does not leave us when we sin.)
    - John 10:28 (Salvation is for ever.)
    - Romans 8:1 (Those who trust the Lord Jesus will NEVER be condemned by God.)
- NEXT MONTH WE WILL SEE THE RESULT OF SIN IN THE CHRISTIAN CHILD'S LIFE, AND WHAT HE SHOULD DO ABOUT IT. BUT WE REMIND HIM THIS MONTH THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL HELP HIM OVERCOME HIS SINS.**

# HELP!



**ACEW CAN HELP YOU  
TEACH ATTRACTIVELY  
AND EFFECTIVELY**

It is difficult to find good illustrations of Biblical truths. We in ACEW tried to help solve the problem by putting together as many good illustrations as we could find, and by publishing them in a 286 page book entitled "Now I See It. The Art of Illustration." It contains six chapters on how to find and how to use illustrations in your ministry to children, and over 550 illustrations which are ready to use. We also identified the biblical truth explained by each illustration. If you are, for example, teaching that God is sovereign, you can locate the subject of His sovereignty in the book, and, with it, find a number of illustrations of that truth. We believe that this book will be of great value to all children's workers, and will help them to "shed the light" on many important biblical truths to their children. It is available for downloading free of charge on our website at [www.cefbookministry.com](http://www.cefbookministry.com).





## THREE ILLUSTRATIONS FOR THE SAVED CHILDREN

**1) Many years ago**, a famous sculptor in Italy, called Michael Angelo, planned to make a statue of the great king in the Bible who was called David. First of all, he drew a picture of the statue which he had in his mind. Then he bought a big block of marble which did not look at all like king David (or anyone else.) Then he started to work on the marble block with his hammer and chisel. He hammered here and chiselled there for many, many hours, many weeks and many months. But his work was always done according to his plan. He knew what he wanted this block of marble to become, and he worked and worked until he had finished his plan and had made a beautiful statue of David out of that large piece of marble. This statue can be seen to-day in the city of

Florence in Italy, and many people come to see it and admire it and praise the work of the sculptor.

And so it is with you and me. We are like blocks of stone. God is the sculptor. He has a plan for every saved boy and girl. He wants to make us like the Lord Jesus. And He will, as it were, hammer and chip and chisel us until He completes and finalizes His plan, and we, one day, become like the Lord Jesus. It is a long work, but it will finish when He takes us home. We need to realise that when He chips and hammers it hurts, but it is for our good and it is part of His plan. We may not understand what He is doing. But He does.

**2) A little Christian girl** was asked what she did when she was tempted to do something wrong. She replied, "When I hear Satan knocking at the door of my heart, I just say to the Lord Jesus, Who lives in my heart, 'Lord Jesus would you please go to the door and answer it.' Then, when the Lord Jesus opens the door, Satan sees Him, steps back and says "Oh, excuse me. I

have made a mistake. I have come to the wrong door." It's a child's story, but it reminds us that the Lord Jesus, Who lives in us, gives us the strength to resist and overcome sinful temptations.

**3) Five boys were playing** in the woods one winter's day, and they decided to see who could make the straightest set of tracks in the snow. Each boy carefully watched their feet and put one foot directly in front of the other as they walked. But when they had crossed the clearing in the forest and looked back, they saw that one of their four tracks was curved, one was crooked, and two were zig-zag. Only one boy had a straight track. When they asked him how he did it, he replied that he had not looked at his feet. He had picked out a tree across the clearing, had kept his eyes on it and had walked straight towards it. We, who are Christians, are to walk straight and live the right way in our daily lives. To do this, we must not focus on ourselves or others. We must focus, and keep our eyes, upon the Lord Jesus and FOLLOW HIM at all times.

## 72 Years and Still Learning:

### *The author's experience and the lesson he learned*

### **DON'T QUIT - NO MATTER WHAT**

Many years ago, when I was leader of CEF in Ireland, God laid a burden on my heart for the children of one of the largest housing estates in the country, with hundreds of homes and thousands of children. It was known as a very rough area with a high degree of unemployment, poverty, crime and violence. As a result of this call from God, a co-worker and I decided to start a series of weekly open air meetings, during the summer months, for children, in the centre of the estate. These meetings continued for a number of summers. What an experience it was for the two of us. We knew no-one in the area. We found a large grassy patch in the centre of the estate and set up our flannel board and started to invite the children to come. AND THEY CAME. We had no problem gathering a group of children in those pre-television days. Over 300 children came to every meeting, children of all ages from eighteen months to mid-teens, and they were WILD! Almost all of them had never been to anything like this before. They did not seem to realise that they were supposed to listen to us and to our Bible lessons. Singing was difficult and learning a Bible verse was impossible.

Some children brought whistles and rattles; one even brought an axe and had to be disarmed. Little ones crawled here and there. What a challenge! When one of us was speaking the other had to circle round, and act as guard and controller. It was chaotic –at least for several weeks -- until the children began to understand a little of what was happening, and that they were supposed to listen. When we left each week we were exhausted and our voices were almost gone. But we kept going week after week and summer after summer, and God worked in a number of those young lives.

Many years later, I was teaching at our Training Institute preparing children's workers for a full-time ministry. I told them this story, and one of the students raised her hand and told me that SHE WAS ONE OF THOSE CHILDREN. Actually, she and her husband became full time CEF workers in that same area.

**The lesson we all can learn from this story is that when God calls us to do something, we must do it and never quit or give up – no matter how difficult the situation.**

The Mini-Mag is published by Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide and written by Sam Doherty with the assistance and advice of Terry Flannigan, Administrator 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](http://www.CEFBookMinistry.com).

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