

GOD'S REVIVALIST

January / February 2016

and Bible Advocate



Children's
Ministry
Today



about this issue

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

My mother always had a way with children—yes, even starting with her own. It was evident in how she communicated with us and how she could get us to do almost anything. Let me give you two examples.

Often she would adopt the role of Dale Evans and we would eagerly become Roy Rogers. Of course, Roy would do whatever Dale asked, whether it was to put toys away, throw something in the trash, or help with the dishes. I remember getting little trash trucks for Christmas one year. She would refer to us as her “trashmen.” It is amazing what she was able to get her trashmen to do! Most of the tasks had nothing to do with trash. But, again, we were happy and compliant. She did have a way.... Still does.

For as long as I can remember, Mother had vibrant ministries to children in each of my father's pastoral stops. Even during their time as GBS students, she became involved in children's ministry and was asked to teach some classes. I actually have memories of being in those services and giving my mother assistance. I know you are curious about how I could have been of help! Let me tell you.

I may have been around four years old when the thought came to me that I could tell stories just like Mother. I remember taking one or more of my coloring books, cutting out some of the finished pictures, and gluing them onto variously colored poster boards cut roughly in the same shape. I made up a story that I managed to associate with the various pages and the pictures. Neither one of us remembers the story line, but we both recall what happened next. My mother took me to her classes and other campus venues and stood me up front to tell my story. (Yes, even in the early 1950s, I was a lot like my mother.... Still am!) I have faint memories of one of my performances to a gathering in Room 103 of the Music Hall. The windows were open and, as I recall, kids were sitting on the ledges. I can only imagine how this must have delighted Betty Wallace Farmer as she saw little Kenny imitating his mother!

Enjoy this special issue dedicated to children's ministry! —Ken Farmer ■

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the president's page



Being serious about good parenting means that with God's help you can build in your children a foundation for character formation that will set the stage for them to become great saints and responsible citizens.

SAVING OUR KIDS

by Michael R. Avery, President

Too many parents think in terms of “getting their kids saved” rather than “saving their kids.” One carries the idea of evangelism and happens in the miracle of a moment, while the other involves an extended period of character formation (instruction, discipline, etc.) and lays the foundation for the kind of person and Christian it is possible for them to become. The former is obviously crucial to the well-being of their eternal soul, but so is the latter!

As Wesleyans, we believe that prevenient grace covers the hearts of our children until they reach an age of accountability. Additionally, John Wesley was a strong advocate of emphasizing Christian instruction, discipline, and training rather than childhood conversions. In doing so, he was not implying that children should not be given the opportunity to experience the love of God for themselves, but he was stressing the importance of the kind of childhood character formation that makes for great saints and responsible citizens.

I have watched this play out in real life. Parents, who by willful negligence or by ignorance, fail in their role of parenting and then pray desperately for a miraculous conversion. Even if “bad boy Brad” does finally get converted, it is a bittersweet moment because he will lack the necessary character needed to be a real man of God and a productive citizen and will likely face life with a certain level of dysfunction.

In the last 30 years I have preached to and counseled thousands of teens and young adults in camps, conferences, and schools. While I have yet to meet any that had Solomonian wisdom or angelic perfection, I have been privileged to meet many wonderful kids—the kind of young people who made me say, “Your parents did something right!” I have also met some kids that lacked the basic character training necessary to be responsible, respectful, truthful, and productive. In comparing the two groups, I have searched for the single most significant reason that has made the difference. I am convinced that a large part of the answer is parenting.

It is not my intention to put parents on a guilt trip, nor to blame them for behavior that is clearly the result of the exercise of free will. But I do want to remind parents of the responsibility that belongs solely to them in the child-rearing process. There is a critical period of time in the growing-up process during which parents can shape the character, attitude, and behavior of their children. If that formative work is missed, it is nearly impossible to “insert” it later on! I am keenly aware that not all children are endowed equally with the same temperament, learning ability, and giftedness. But the ground is level when it comes to building character. That process is a personal responsibility that begins with Mom and Dad in the very early years of a child’s life. Character is molded and developed in the home and cemented by the choices one makes every day. One’s peers do not mold one’s character. They may well influence one’s decisions, but they do not form one’s character; they can only test and reveal what is there. Character is also not determined by the environment. I have watched as quality parenting has raised quality kids in situations that were far from ideal. I have also watched as poor parenting has produced problem kids in environments that offered every advantage.

If, in fact, this period of character formation is so important, shouldn’t there be certain well-defined traits on which a parent should focus? I think so! The list will no doubt vary from person to person, but I believe that list must have the following “Big Four.”

OBEDIENCE

In a recent search for biblical passages on parenting, I discovered that those passages were divided equally between the subjects of *discipline* and *instruction*. I also noticed that all of these passages pointed to *one* thing: obedience! The formation of character through discipline and instruction is for the purpose of obedience. Once children understand that they must obey and that they must do so with a willing attitude, then you scarcely have to teach them anything else! Once children know they must obey, you can simply “ask” them to do something, and they will do it. After children learn to obey willingly, then parental discipline will be cut to a minimum and the vast majority of time can be spent on teaching, nurturing, and forming them into the kinds of men or women they should be!

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

The idea that one is responsible for things is not native to children. It comes only with much training as children develop. Furthermore, children like to engage in fun things. Responsibility can be rather tedious and boring to a child. The parental commands to, “clean your room, make your bed, put your things

away, and do your homework” are certainly not exciting or fun. It takes discipline and maturity to learn how to manage doing what is not fun and staying on task until the job has been completed. Good parenting is critical to this development.

Most parents can easily tell their children the things they ought to be doing. However, more important than just giving commands is how the parent *responds* when the child doesn’t comply with the command. In other words, the parents have to make sure their children *do* what they are told. This promotes accountability. You have to hold your children accountable for not meeting their responsibilities. Being held accountable requires that parents make the consequence for not meeting the responsibility less pleasant than the consequence for completing the task. And that act of being held accountable promotes a willingness to meet the responsibilities next time. Failure to hold children accountable teaches them that complaining, whining, blaming others, excuse making, and even lying “works” if the goal is not to take personal responsibility.

WORK ETHIC

Dr. Ruth Peters, psychologist and author of *Overcoming Underachieving* says: “Daily in my practice I see parents who have made the mistake of not taking the time and attention to teach their children to be workers and achievers. These kids have learned to settle for less rather than to face and challenge adversity, to become whiners rather than creative problem solvers, and to blame others for perceived slights and lack of success.”

One of the greatest gifts we can give our children is the intentional investment of our time in teaching them to have a healthy work ethic. There is no “job fairy” that will come in the middle of the night and sprinkle work ethic dust on your child. A love for work must be taught as well as caught! This means we must model a good work ethic while also allowing them freedom to learn by trial and error. First, the old adage, “If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself” must be permanently banned from your thinking. Every mother knows that it takes less time to clean the bathroom herself than it does with her “helpers” working alongside. But little helpers can only learn by watching *and* doing!

If we are serious about developing a healthy work ethic in our children, we must start when they are young. For example, assign children age-appropriate, regular chores. Young children can put away laundry, make a bed, and pick up toys. Older children can vacuum, rake leaves, take out the trash, wash the car, cut the grass, etc. When they see work as a normal part of life, they spend less time grumbling and more time

learning to enjoy the satisfaction of a job well done. Holding children accountable to complete their assigned tasks and to complete them well is extremely important. It lays the groundwork for the kind of person that not only does good work but also exceeds the expectations of a teacher or an employer.

Parents should be generous with praise for a job well done, but should never give false praise for a job poorly done. If the job is done well, praise them for the job done. If it is done poorly, but with great effort, praise them for the effort. If it is done poorly and little effort was made to do it right, no praise should be forthcoming. Furthermore, parents should never say to their kids, "Johnny, you can do anything." Why? For the simple reason—they can't. It takes time and experience to accomplish some things well.

Thomas Edison said, "Opportunity is missed by most because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." By offering our kids a healthy perspective on work, and teaching them to embrace rather than fear it, we free them to succeed in almost anything they do.

RESPECT

Respect is an attitude of admiration or esteem towards others, oneself, and one's possessions. In today's world, where disrespect is so pervasive, we cannot expect our children to learn respect simply through normal social interaction at school and play. Good parenting is necessary here! We must model respect and intentionally utilize strategies to instill in our children crucial lessons in kindness, consideration, honesty, open-mindedness, and gratitude—all of which grow out of respect!

Fundamental to showing respect for others is to give them your time and full attention. This is easy to model and to teach. Setting boundaries is another way to teach our children to respect authority and to help them understand that the world doesn't revolve around them. Making sure their actions have consequences is a way to teach our children to consider how their words and deeds impact others. Teach your child basic social interaction skills. It may sound old fashioned, but it's very important to teach basic manners, like the importance of saying "please" and "thank you."

Parenting is not for the faint of heart, but it can be one of life's greatest joys. Willfully not doing one's best at it is to commit a terrible wrong that can cripple a child. Being serious about being good parents doesn't ensure that you will be perfect parents. It does mean, however, that with God's help you can build in your children a foundation for character formation that will set the stage for them to become great saints and responsible citizens. The payoff for good parenting lasts for generations! ■

Letters

TO THE EDITOR

Letters should be addressed to the Editorial Office, 1810 Young Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202, or emailed to revivalist@gbs.edu. Letters reprinted here do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editor of God's Revivalist nor those of the administration of God's Bible School. Names and locations of writers will be withheld at their specific request or at the discretion of the editor. We reserve the right to edit and condense.

Clarence Hamm ["Alumni News," December 2015] was such a blessing to all he met. He had a warm smile for all. We loved to hear him sing; it was so uplifting. He received so much from his training at GBS and took what he learned and shared it in many ways all of his life.

DOYLE & PHYLLIS FANNING
Yukon, OK

I love *God's Revivalist*. It always has good, solid, thought-provoking articles. There are two articles that I really like in the December 2015 issue. The first one is President Avery's article "God's Wonderful Gift of Life." While we are living in a world today that takes life for granted by killing unwanted babies and seniors, we truly need to stop and take a look at life and the Giver of life. The second is Mrs. Jani Ortlund's article "Three Words Better Than Merry Christmas." Christmas as a whole has been so warped by commercialism that the "Merry" in "Merry Christmas" is not so merry any more. Christians should not forget why we celebrate Christmas. Thank you for *God's Revivalist*. Keep it God-centered, and keep printing!

P. FREDERICK BAKER II
Pearisburg, VA

Great job with the *Revivalist*. It is always a joy to get it in the mail, although, I must say, I generally read an electronic version first [accessible at www.godsrevivalist.com].

RODNEY LOPER
Hobe Sound, FL

I love the issues with articles dealing with current life challenges. Thank you!

TAMMIE MIHALY
Columbus, OH

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2016

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Then & Now: Children's Ministry at God's Bible School

by Charlotte Frederick

As I prepared to write this article, I decided to browse the pages of the GBS centenary pictorial history book, *God's Clock Keeps Perfect Time*, published by Revivalist Press in 2000. I was pleased to see the many photographs that included pictures of staff and faculty with their children. Some pictures of early graduation classes even included the children of faculty members!

However, what I was really searching for was a hint of the earliest beginnings of intentional children's ministry at God's Bible School. While there is the history of Hope Cottage for "wayward girls and their infants," founded in the earliest days of the school, this was not quite what I was looking for. My investigation continued.

It was then that I found, and read with tears in my eyes, the account of Uncle Bud Robinson ministering to the hungry children who had come to GBS from the squalid inner-city ghettos for the school's annual Thanksgiving Day dinner. In Uncle Bud's own words:

This is the most remarkable history I have ever known. It seems there is no way to make it more beautiful and glorious than it is. To watch Brother Standley, the other trustees, the workers, and the bands of students—especially to see the students start at an early hour to gather these little ones together, and put them in big auto trucks and bring them to the Mount of Blessings—is a sight on earth to see. They hop and skip, and whoop and yell, and jump and stand on their hands.¹

I was absolutely delighted with my discovery! GBS has been ministering to children since its earliest days (and, may I note, children still act the way Uncle Bud described!). In 1900, our founder, Martin Wells Knapp, only weeks after the school's opening, began these free dinners as a way to spread the gospel to thousands upon thousands of hungry children. But there was more to this ministry than just a good meal. The music seemed to captivate the attention of the ragtag youngsters and prepared them for the preaching, as on November 30, 1922, when Uncle Bud Robinson, Charles Slater, and John Franklin Knapp took turns

speaking to the different waves of wiggling youngsters. This proved more effective than Uncle Bud anticipated. At the conclusion of the service, when he invited them to Christ, hundreds knelt at their seats as there was no room for them at the altar. "How beautiful was the scene of little ones bowing before Christ who loved them, claiming Him as their Savior, and finding sweet rest in their little hearts."²

Another story caught my attention, this time from 1930. It concerned the beautiful stained glass windows which adorn the rear wall of the chapel platform. I was reminded of President Standley's rationale for including them in the plans. He said: "For days there had been on my heart a longing to have before the audience—and I thought especially of the Thanksgiving children—three beautiful windows.... I was thinking only of the inspiration, not only to the adults, but to the thousands of children." He mentioned this in a message and the president of the Art Stained Glass Company happened to be present. He stood to his feet and said, "Brother Standley, I will give you the three windows at a very special price, not much more than for the other plain glass windows!"³

Yes, GBS has ALWAYS had a concern for children. During more than 100 years of GBS camp meetings, there were lively children's services. GBS occasionally



offered child evangelism classes—and at no charge. A class or two was periodically offered in what was known as the “10 Weeks Course.” (These classes only resulted in a certificate of completion—no listing on a transcript.) Although perhaps not formally structured, students and staff also held services for children on campus and in various surrounding neighborhoods throughout the years.

Then a robust children’s ministry effort began at GBS with the arrival of Wilma and Paul Reynolds in 1970. Paul was assigned the duty of supervising the eleven inner-city missions that were run by GBS students. Wilma worked in the cashier’s office. They visited a different city mission each Sunday for services. Most of these missions had very active children’s ministries. However, Wilma began to sense a need for visual aids and training for the Good News Clubs that were held in each mission on Sunday evenings and midweek. She was given a room on the fourth floor of the girls’ dorm to begin a weekly workshop. Soon a class was started teaching the basics of constructing visual aids and how to evangelize children. A visual aid lending library was set up with items that could be checked out for use in the Good News Clubs. This was the beginning of the Child Evangelism Department.⁴

In 2016, God’s Bible School continues to invest in children and in children’s ministry. Twelve hours of children’s ministry classes are available within the BA in Church and Family Ministry degree program. One can also take individual classes of interest on the collegiate level through the online Aldersgate Distance Education Program (ADEP). There are two children’s ministry clubs within the inner city led by our students and many more students, staff, and faculty are involved in ministries to children in their home churches.

I am excited to think of what the future holds. Even as I write, the faces of recent graduates come to mind. All across this nation and world there are GBS students, every Sunday and throughout the week, investing in the lives of children through Sunday school, junior church, camps, clubs, and special events. Only eternity will reveal the impact.

Let the words of Jesus in Mark 10:14 inspire you in your children’s ministry endeavors: “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.” ■

Charlotte (Potteiger) Frederick (BA ’86) has been active in children’s ministry since 1984, conducting vacation Bible schools and working in various children’s camps. She is an assistant professor at GBS where she has been teaching since 2006.

PHOTOS PAGE 6: (Top) Children sing “Brighten the Corner Where You Are” at the 1943 GBS Thanksgiving Day dinner. (Bottom) Child Evangelism Team (mid 1980s), (L-R) Butch Bates, David Crane, Esther Reynolds, Charlotte Potteiger, Helen Leigh.

1. Moser, Kevin and Larry Smith. *God’s Clock Keeps Perfect Time*. Revivalist Press, 2000, p.126-137.
 2. Ibid.
 3. Ibid., pp.191-192.
 4. Ibid., pp.364-365



CHILDREN’S MINISTRY RESOURCE BOOKS

Barna, George. *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions: Why Children Should Be Your #1 Priority*. Baker Books, 2016.

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Elmore, Tim. *Generation iY: Our Last Chance to Save Their Future*. Poet Gardner Publishing, 2010.

Haynes, Brian. *Shift: What it Takes to Finally Reach Families Today*. Group Publishing, 2009.

Holmen, Mark A. *Church+Home: The Proven Formula for Building Lifelong Faith*, revised edition. Regal, 2010.

Joiner, Reggie. *Think Orange: Imagine the Impact When Church and Family Collude*. David C. Cook, 2009.

Joiner, Reggie & Kristen Ivy. *It’s Just a Phase—So Don’t Miss It: Why Every Life Stage of a Kid Matters and at Least 13 Things Your Church Should Do About It*. Orange, 2015.

Maxwell, John. *Winning with People: Discover the People Principles that Work for You Every Time*. Thomas Nelson, 2007.

Miller, Sue & David Staal. *Making Your Children’s Ministry the Best Hour of Every Kid’s Week*. Zondervan, 2004.

Sanders, J. Oswald. *The Divine Art of Soul Winning*. Moody Press, 1980.

Shallenberger, Larry. *Lead the Way God Made You: Discovering Your Leadership Style in Children’s Ministry*. Group Publishing, 2005.

Wideman, Jim. *Children’s Ministry Volunteers That Stick*. Group Publishing, 2004.

Young, Ray. *The Miracle of the Bus Ministry*. Self-printed, 1996.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Answers Bible Curriculum for Kids (AIG)

<https://answersingenesis.org/store/product/answers-kids-bible-curriculum>

Creative Ministry Solutions

<http://www.creativemin.com>

Group Publishing

www.group.com

High Voltage Kids Curriculum

<http://highvoltage-kids.com>

Worship House Kids

www.worshiphousekids.com

MAGAZINES

Children’s Ministry Magazine
KidzMatter Magazine



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SURVIVAL SKILLS

Countless people are serving in children's ministry today. For some, it is a very specific calling; for others, simply an obedient response to a door of opportunity opened by God. However you arrived here, you are now in the midst of the beautiful chaos of teaching children about Jesus. Your ministry may never resemble anyone else's, but you have the chance to be used uniquely by God to transform young lives.

You may already possess most or all of the skills that can help make children's ministry successful. Then again, maybe you are like us, and there is always room to learn and grow. If that is the case, then we hope that some of the truths we are learning and the strengths we are endeavoring to cultivate in our family's ministry can be a help to you along the way.

Before you can lead little people to Jesus, you need a genuine personal relationship with Him.

He's the message of hope you bring to a hurting world; He's the reason you teach. He has to be REAL to you; it's not possible to teach what you do not know. Truly knowing Jesus will sustain you in ministry and direct your steps; it will keep you from throwing yourself in front of the church bus on those days when someone threw up on the back row, staff are in conflict, a lice epidemic has broken out, and a cherubic preschooler is loudly displaying his knowledge of four-letter words.

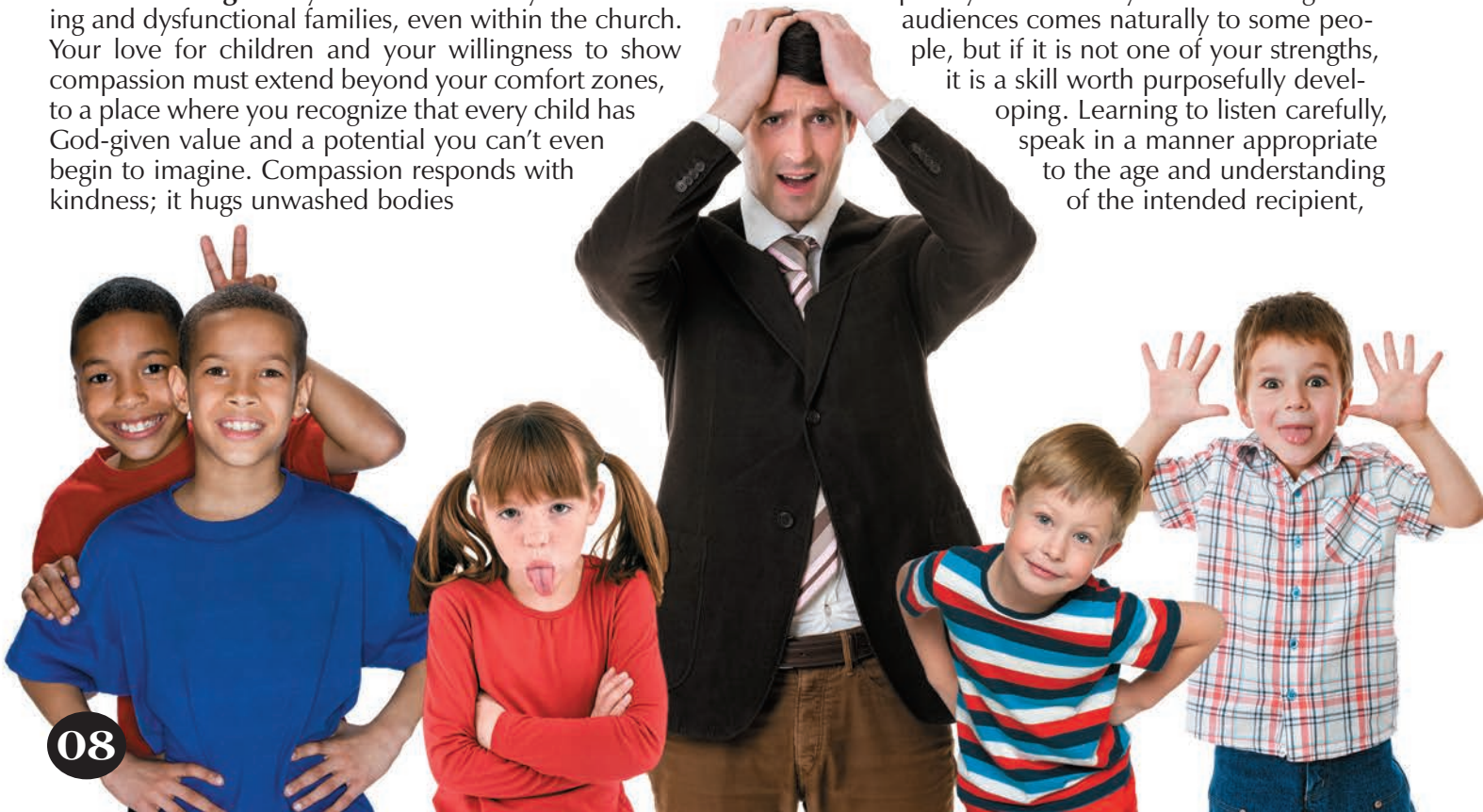
Children's ministry should be firmly grounded in compassion for ALL children and their families, without regard for race, ethnicity, lifestyle, or socio-economic standing. Many of them come to you from hurting and dysfunctional families, even within the church. Your love for children and your willingness to show compassion must extend beyond your comfort zones, to a place where you recognize that every child has God-given value and a potential you can't even begin to imagine. Compassion responds with kindness; it hugs unwashed bodies

and listens patiently to long stories. Compassion leaves no room for prejudice.

There is no substitute for consistent faithfulness to the work. Anyone can show up for a day or two here or there or even a whole week working with children, and that is all good and much appreciated. However, the mark of a true children's worker is a visible commitment to the weekly duties of the ministry. Yes, it's hard to be faithful on dark, rainy nights, during busy seasons, or when you find yourself bored with the routine. In those hard times, please remember that your dedication is a beautiful act of service in a world of shrinking attention spans and neglected obligations; it is an incredible opportunity to establish yourself as a familiar and trusted presence in the life of a child, and create a bond that draws them to Jesus.

Plan on completely surrendering your desire for affirmation to God, because children's ministry is neither high-profile nor glamorous. While you're shaping a future generation in the church basement, people may forget about you, or dismiss you as a lunatic because you organized a game of Mosquito Tag while wearing a pirate costume. You won't get the fanciest room in the church, the best piano, or top priority status in the church budget...and you will survive. The only applause you really need comes from nail-scarred hands. God sees what you are doing!

Effective communication skills are critical to the success of your children's ministry. The ability to express yourself clearly to a wide range of audiences comes naturally to some people, but if it is not one of your strengths, it is a skill worth purposefully developing. Learning to listen carefully, speak in a manner appropriate to the age and understanding of the intended recipient,



for Children's Workers

by Gene and Angie Davis

and navigate language barriers will be an asset to your ministry and your life.

Healthy ministry leadership allows multiple people to get involved, learn new skills, and use their gifts for Jesus. Unless your church is small enough that it's necessary for your ministry to be dependent entirely on one person or one couple, it's important to learn to delegate responsibilities and allow others to make meaningful contributions to the ministry. Schedule times for qualified people to take charge; train young people; give others the chance to minister alongside you. You don't have to micromanage every aspect of the ministry, and you don't have to feel guilty for asking someone to help. If you struggle with this (and we certainly have), it's not too late to learn. You might be surprised what can be accomplished with teamwork!

It is easier to function if you are organized. Make a schedule for workers, store your resources efficiently, and put things away when you are finished with them; you can avoid a frantic rush to find staff or materials when you're pressed for time, and you'll never be forced to chew open a bag of balloons because you lost the scissors.

Flexibility is key to your survival. If you work with children, be prepared for surprises. Plans often go awry, but the ability to adapt and improvise with a good attitude will serve you well. Also, as group dynamics and technology change, you have a responsibility to adjust accordingly. Healthy evolution of your methods will not kill you.

Laughter is a good thing! Laugh at yourself; laugh with others; laugh when the unexpected happens. There is enough sadness in the world. Children need more healthy laughter in their lives, and you probably do, too. Our kids need to see that there is joy in serving Jesus, and many of us adults could take ourselves a little less seriously.

Don't be afraid to be creative. Wonderful things can be accomplished when you're not afraid to think outside the box. When you stop worrying about what

others will think and try something different, unorthodox methods can produce extraordinary results. You are competing with an incredible amount of technology for their attention, and a unique approach may help you connect with children's hearts and reach them for Jesus. Forget the critics. Write your own story or song, wear a ridiculous hat; bring new life to your ministry!

You're human, and burnout is a real danger to be avoided. Take regular vacations to refresh yourself, and renew your vision for children's ministry. Arrange for others to have a break, too. Plan that weekend away BEFORE the kids all start to annoy you and you're tempted to bite your coworkers. You owe it to yourself, your family, and the children with whom you work. Please be the healthiest person you can be.

A mark of spiritual maturity is your desire to see other people succeed in children's ministry. As Christians, we have a beautiful opportunity—and a responsibility—to encourage others in this journey; to applaud their victories, lend a helping hand, share a resource or pray for them. It doesn't matter if they do things differently than you; they are doing it for Jesus, and some of them are dangerously discouraged. You can get excited about the advancement of God's work; even the parts that weren't your idea.

If you are one of the precious people serving in children's ministry, our family is cheering for you! You're impacting our world for Jesus. We hope you are blessed with the privilege of watching a child you taught grow up to do great things for God someday. ■

Gene and Angie Davis have served together in children's ministry for nearly 20 years. Gene is also the associate pastor at the Frankfort Bible Holiness Church and serves in nursing leadership at a local hospital. They are both graduates of Union Bible College and they live in Frankfort, IN, with their sons, Connor (15), and Kent (10), and an ornery lizard named Sheen.





EMPLOYEE CHRISTMAS DINNER

The annual Christmas Dinner for GBS faculty and staff was held at



Staff Children Sing at the Christmas Dinner

the festively decorated Higher Ground Conference and Retreat Center, West Harrison, IN, on the evening of December 3. President Avery gave greetings, prayer was offered, and buffet lines were opened—a scrumptious feast featuring the choice of prime rib or pecan chicken. Fun activities and singing followed the meal and led up to the most endearing feature of the night—the distribution of gifts by President Avery on behalf of the school to each darling campus child.

DORM RESIDENTS RECEIVE GIFTS

The Greensboro, AL, Bible Methodist Church gave Christmas gifts to every student in the women’s residence hall! Delivered by Pastor Steve (BRE ’78) and Kay (Kennedy) (1982-83) Vernon, these gifts brightened the day of each student who received one. We appreciate



these alumni who give of their time and resources to make a difference in the lives of our students.

CHRISTMAS SERVICE FOR LARRY

After Larry Smith retired from editing *God’s Revivalist* in June 2015, he turned his attention to finishing his upcoming book on the history of GBS. However, he experienced severe setbacks. First there were extended treatments throughout the summer followed by surgery for colon cancer in October. Two days after he was

REVIVALIST FAMILY

On these pages, we feature items about GBS alumni, significant events scheduled throughout the “Revivalist Family,” and brief news notes from across the Holiness Movement.

BIRTHS



To **Jana (Burroughs) (BA ’03) and Nicolae Pop (BA ’00)**, a daughter, **Abigail Nicole**, born December 27 at The Christ Hospital, Cincinnati. Dr. Jana chairs the GBS Music Division and Dr. Nicolae teaches voice. Abigail was welcomed by brother Samuel (6).



To **Renee (Langworthy) (BA ’14) and Shane Muir (BA ’09)**, a son, **Peter Brennan**, born January 1 at Good Samaritan Hospital, Cincinnati. Shane is a digital media specialist at GBS and Renee is finishing a graduate degree in music at Miami University.

DEATHS

Ocena (Meadows) Allen, 94, of Kansas City, MO, passed away August 12, 2015. She was born 1921 to Floyd and Carrie Meadows in Chicago, IL. Her father was a printer/pressman for the Revivalist Press. The family lived in what now serves as the home for the president of GBS. Ocena attended Taft Elementary School and, for one year, Woodward High School before the family moved away from the area. She had many fond memories of GBS, including the Thanksgiving Day dinners. She married Howard Allen and together they had four children. Ocena is survived by her children, Lawrence, Roger, Gail, and Douglas; four grandchildren; and a great-grandson. Funeral services were held at First Church of the Nazarene in Kansas City, where Ocena was a member. Interment following at Green Lawn Cemetery.

released from rehabilitation, he fell down the stairs at his house, breaking his neck and requiring more surgery and rehabilitation.

On December 22, about 25 faculty, staff, and students travelled to the Marjorie P. Lee Center, where Larry has been recuperating, and held a special service for him in the chapel. After congregational singing, special song, a violin duet, and various Scripture readings, President Avery gave remarks and recounted Larry's favorite Christmas story.

Keep both Larry and his wife Carol in your prayers.



Christmas Service For Larry and Carol Smith

STAFF CHANGES / ADDITIONS



Maria Stetler (BA, AA'12) has been named Director of Human Resources. She recently completed her MA in Human Resources from U.C. She will remain the Title IX Director and retain some Alumni Relations duties. Her previous position, Administrative Assistant to the Director



of Institutional Advancement, will be filled by **Rachel Pohl**, who has been a student worker for two years in that department.



Tonya (Hoschar) Lambeth (BA '01), who taught in the academy from 2006 to 2009, returns to teach grades three and four. She replaces Carol Gardner who resigned at the end of 2015 due to issues related to her health.



Heidi (Rebman) Nelson (BA '15), who had been working in the cafeteria on a limited basis, has now been hired full-time to be the assistant to the head cook, Debby Byer. Heidi's husband, **Stephen Nelson (BA '13)** was hired to work in the GBS Security Department.



Marilyn Muir will no longer be working in the Music Office as she will be staying home to help care for her new grandson Peter (see birth announcement, p.10). Marilyn's previous duties will be divided between two people: **Crystal (Kessen) Powers (BA, AA '15)** in the morning and **Shelley Carey (BA '14)** in the afternoon. ■



Lauren Davin Derscheid, 36, passed away November 30. He traded in his cancer-laden body for a new and perfect version. Lauren was born December 4, 1978, in Grand Rapids, MI, to Larry and Betty Derscheid. While growing up, he lived one year abroad in Denmark with his family—an experience that he reflected on with delight even in his last days. Following graduation from the Wesleyan Holiness Academy in 1997, Lauren attended Mid-Michigan Community College and God's Bible School (1998-2000, 2002) for college studies. He was a charter member of GBS-sponsored Aldersgate Ski Club. He was also a member of the Wesleyan Holiness Chapel of Mt. Pleasant, MI. Lauren was a fun-loving guy. He enjoyed playing pranks and watching Christian comedians; he always had an arsenal of jokes up his sleeve. Before his illness, he was a childcare worker at Pineview Boys Home

in Ewart, MI, and was very creative in finding activities for the boys. He knew something about everything and threw his heart and soul into all that he did—whether it was skiing, fishing, setting up and maintaining aquariums, raising exotic animals, politics, his job, or his most recent prayer ministry. He is survived by his parents; brother, Tony (Sarah); sister, Elizabeth; paternal grandmother; four nieces; and numerous aunts, uncles, and cousins. Funeral services were held at the Free Methodist Church, Ewart, MI, with Revs. Donald Newport and Scott Thrasher officiating.

NOTICES

Ralph I. Tilley (HS '61, ThB '65) recently authored *Renewed by the Spirit: 365 Daily Meditations*. This latest book touches on a wide variety of Christian doctrine and practice. ■



What Makes A Bus Ministry Effective?

by Jack Hooker

*Bring them in, bring them in,
Bring them in from the fields of sin.
Bring them in, bring them in,
Bring the wandering ones to Jesus.*

As a child, I remember singing those words. Their message is the underlying principle of a bus ministry. In many communities, there are children and youth whose parents are not motivated to bring their families to church. In other cases they have no transportation available in order to attend services. The church reaches out to these people by providing the means by which they can come to church.

My experiences with this ministry really started in my childhood. My mother loved to seek out unchurched families. Often she would squeeze children into our station wagon on the way to church. Although I didn't always appreciate the crowded conditions, I did admire her passion for souls. Later, when I came to GBS as a student, I began to use my car to pick up inner-city

children and bring them to a GBS mission at the corner of Liberty and Elm Streets—right in the heart of the depressed area of downtown Cincinnati. I never got over the joy of bringing kids into that storefront so they could hear about Jesus.

In my first pastorate, we began picking up kids in cars. We graduated to a twelve-passenger van, and then added the second route—my wife driving our Chevrolet nine-passenger station wagon. For eleven years I was privileged to pastor in Gratz, PA, where my predecessor, Rev. M.R. McCrary, had built a large and effective bus ministry. What a thrill Sunday after Sunday to greet those yellow school buses filled with children, young people, and adults—people who would never have been in church had someone not brought them.

What makes an effective bus ministry? Obviously, it is not necessarily the vehicle. It is not always the community—effective bus ministries exist in both urban and rural settings. But there are three qualities that are essential to the success of this kind of ministry.

1 Consistency

In a bus ministry, hit or miss will not work. You are dealing with children and young people who have little or no encouragement at home to attend church. Worse than that, much of the influence over their lives is ungodly. They will need constant reinforcement and invitations. You cannot give up easily. They will need incentives to motivate them to come to church. It could be a piece of candy, a contest, or an award—something, anything, to produce a positive result when attending church. They will require weekly contact to remind them you are stopping by their house on Sunday morning. And when you are not there, make sure somebody is taking your place.

2 Commitment

This is not a ministry for the half-hearted or the faint-hearted. You are building a relationship of trust with the children and with their parents. Your commitment will involve sacrifices. When others are enjoying a full day off, you may be spending part of that day calling on your bus route. You will be waking up early to pick up children before service. You may be cleaning off a snowy vehicle on a cold winter Sunday. While others are involved in corporate worship, you may be telling a story, teaching a memory verse, or sitting next to an unruly child. You may eat Sunday dinner a little later than most. But you are committed and maybe even called to bring the gospel to those who need to hear it. You understand that real worship is not just getting but also giving. This commitment must be shared by the church as a whole. It costs to buy and maintain vans and buses. The church must be prepared to receive the children once they arrive. That usually means worship services on their level. It means investment in facilities, material, and manpower—a “total church buy-in.” Though

everyone may not participate in the actual ministry, everyone should pray and support this ministry of bringing people to Jesus.

3 Compassion

This may be the most important part of a successful bus ministry. You’ve got to love kids! Not everyone is cut out for this kind of ministry. It takes a large dose of patience, a good deal of understanding, and, above all, real love—the love of Christ for children. Jesus himself said, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” Children deserve to see Jesus in you. They will understand that Jesus loves them by first knowing that you care.

Over the years I have pastored some very special people who valued little lives as much as big lives—poor as much as rich. I am convinced God can impart in us a genuine love for children and a genuine burden to bring them to church. One child riding on a bus will open a door of ministry to an entire family or an entire neighborhood. When we finally reach heaven, we will enjoy the musical strains of “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” and “Amazing Grace.” But we will also join the heavenly chorus as we sing “Jesus Loves Me,” “Stop and Let Me Tell You,” and “Happiness Is the Lord.” Children really matter!

One Final Thought

A bus ministry must be adaptable to the church and community from which it originates. What will work for one may not work for others. But what does work is the age-old principle, “bring the wandering ones to Jesus.” This is a ministry we all can support. ■

Jack Hooker (BRE '74) pastors the Bible Methodist Church in Franklin, OH, and has been involved in bus ministry for many years. He is a GBS trustee.

I Was A Bus Kid!

by Dan Durkee

My unwed mother was 15 when I was conceived. But in the midst of a pregnancy, indulging in drugs and alcohol, she prayed a prayer that forever shaped my life. She asked God to forgive her for what she was doing that was harming her baby and to give her a dark-eyed, dark-haired, healthy baby boy. In return, she would give this baby back to God all the days of his life.

On Halloween night in 1970, at the age of 16, my mother gave birth to a healthy, dark-eyed, dark-haired baby boy and named me Daniel Paul after two Bible names she knew.

My mother never forgot God’s answer to her prayer and she never forgot what she had promised God. Because of that prayer I became a bus kid. Even though I didn’t grow up in a Christian home, I can’t recall a time when I didn’t go to Sunday school or church. My mother put me on someone’s church bus or van and sent me off to church. It



might have been a babysitter for her, but it was a lifesaver for me.

When I was 11 years old, a neighborhood boy invited me to his church picnic and kid’s club. He was so excited about what was

happening that he told all his friends. I decided to go. That Wednesday night a church van pulled into the trailer park where I lived. Pastor Jack Hooker picked me up and took me to church. The kid's club, Saturday church picnic, and Sunday school forever changed my life.

As I attended the Bible Methodist Church in Pinellas Park, FL, I began to experience the love of God through the lives of some wonderful and godly people. Even though I was often an unruly boy, I knew the teachers, pastors, and general laypeople loved me unconditionally. There were times when their love was tough and unaccepting of my behavior, but I knew deep down that their love was real. Because of that genuine affection, I could accept their correction! I'm convinced that the only way correction works is if it is preceded by affection. People must know you love them, and, frankly, they WILL know, especially kids. One writer said, "You can con a con; you can fool a fool; but you can't kid a kid!" I knew that I was loved at church.

One day it dawned on me that Jesus Christ gave His all for me. I began to realize that the least that I could do for Him was to give Him my all. On Easter Sunday, April 7, 1985, I truly confessed my sins and told Jesus I was sorry. I asked Him to come into my life and told Him I would serve Him the rest of my life. Jesus kept His promise and came into my heart and I've done my best to keep my promise. It's been 30 years since the day a



Florida bus kid began a journey with Jesus. It has not always been easy, but He has never failed me.

Today I'm blessed to pastor the Emmanuel Wesleyan Church in Gratz, PA, where the bus ministry is a part of our DNA. Watching bus kids get off our buses each and every Sunday thrills my heart. It reminds me that God can take a broken and battered bus kid, and, through prayer and love, change his life forever. I thank God I was a bus kid! ■

Intergenerational

by Blake Jones

I had come to celebrate a wedding, but a laminated card in the hymnal rack caught my eye. It was a note to the church's parents welcoming them to interact with their children to make the worship experience meaningful to them. The note then gave a list of things the parent could do, such as help a child find the song in the hymn book, hold the book together, whisper explanations of what was being done, and, in general, engage the child in what was taking place. Frankly, I wanted to return on a Sunday to experience intergenerational worship in that setting. And I think the note made the heart of the One who held and blessed children smile.

None can truly deny that a child can be saved. And since Jesus pointedly stated that childlikeness is a must in His kingdom, why should heaven's favored ones be ignored or banished from the worship setting? A little girl whose daddy was taking her to an age-appropriate session asked, "Why can't I stay with you and God?"

One of the ladies in our church put together a large basket of colorful, cloth "Kids' Bags." Each has small, quiet items to help entertain a preschooler; a book, a quiet toy, perhaps a tiny snack. The greeters or ushers are welcome to make them available to families who might be interested. The bags make a statement right in the vestibule that children are welcome in our worship setting.

I suppose that sitting on the platform allows me a special vantage point for watching tiny worshippers. Oh how I love to see innocent, little participants imitating daddy or mommy with their chubby little hand raised as we sing. Those are moments I cherish! And when a toddler "sings" along with the congregation with hearty voice, I hope the parents will not try to silence the song. I just wish the adults would put in half as much soul and volume! I love to see the approving nods and smiles of the congregation. May God have mercy on any who frown on such simple and innocent worship!

From the front I watch an usher carrying a child or leading one by the hand as he steps forward to gather the tithes and offerings. He is tall and manly, but well aware that he has brought his children to church! I watch as grandparents give their envelope to a child to place in the offering. Once a month we call for the children to go through the congregation

Worship


with containers for a special offering. The enthusiasm of those energetic little ushers is contagious. And, anyway, who can resist a child who stands expectantly waiting for something in his or her pail? They are great fund raisers! These are occasions to affirm the children verbally and coach a church family to treasure wiggly worshippers.

This Sunday we will open our service with a children's presentation of hand bells. They have only to ring their bell when its color matches the color on the leader's card. We are not big into clapping, but we will clap for the children! We want them to know we are delighted with them.

Sometimes children sing the special song. I know that can produce some embarrassing moments, and not everything may come off production perfect. But this is not about a production, it is about glorifying God at their level of capability! If we wait for perfection, we will wait right past the window of God's intended connection and development. If children have been sidelined during their formative years and by some miracle stay with the church into adulthood, they will likely struggle to participate in church ministries.

Periodically we call the children to the front just before the morning message to connect with them on their level. The brief movement, a tiny story, a few questions, a small object lesson—these help to break the long hour of sitting and re-engage their minds while impacting their hearts. Some of them will crave an opportunity to answer your questions while speaking into your microphone. As children get a little older, allowing them to read the Scripture lesson will be a blessing to them and to some proud relatives! And be sure to give them opportunity to quote Scripture verses they are learning!

Let me assure you that as a pastor there are some things that frustrate me to no end. I cringe at ill-prepared and botched worship settings. I believe worship should be orderly and honoring to God. Shoddy, casual, slap-happy Sunday mornings do not foster worship. I nearly fidget to death on the inside when there are long, dead spaces as singers get in place, discuss their parts, find their key, etc. But let me tell you that if we are to incorporate children into worship (whether children in age or children in spiritual status), our desire for excellence must embrace patience. Intergenerational worship will not always get it right or get it smooth. It will not always sound good or look good live streamed. But it just may be that our children's worship is more real than some practice-perfect



If children have been sidelined during their formative years and by some miracle stay with the church into adulthood, they will likely struggle to participate in church ministries.

performances where the Spirit's anointing has been ignored. If we are not careful, it will not be their lack of accomplishment that hinders true spiritual worship, but our cringing, critical perfectionism that kills worship.

I am well aware that every church is unique and there is no "one-size-fits-all" for intergenerational worship patterns. We must keep keenly aware of the needs of a changing, growing church family and what works in our setting. Presently, we are offering children's church in the evening to facilitate our young families' request to worship together on Sunday mornings. However, we will endeavor to assess this periodically to know that we are staying in touch and in tune with families.

I have been sharing with you about including children in our worship services, but remember that every age group, the young to the old and the newly churched to the seasoned saint, needs to participate. Don't focus on the children and forget the teens or struggling seniors. Intergenerational worship is to incorporate the whole church family in glorifying God. And God is glorified when we worship Him in spirit and in truth—however many birthdays we may have had. ■

Rev. Blake Jones is president of the Great Lakes Conference of the Bible Methodist Connection of Churches. He and his wife, Saundy, live in Vestaburg, MI, where he pastors the Rock Lake Bible Methodist Church.

Today's



© Herring Photography

by Tara J. McCasland

What do 10 boxes of goldfish crackers, 500 ping-pong balls, and disappearing ink have in common? Why, vacation Bible school (VBS), of course!

Many people wonder: Is VBS really worth the time, energy and money? What does VBS look like today? Does it really matter?

A Brief history of VBS

Children's summer Bible programs have been around since the early 1870s with the goal of spiritual development in children, and they continue to be a driving force in children's ministry. A Barna study in 2012¹ showed that 68% of churches in America offered a VBS for children. VBS continues to be a consistent summer activity in many American churches.

Twenty years ago, children at VBS would be sitting quietly and listening with a snack break in the middle of the session. Today VBS looks much different because kids are growing up in a world that is drastically different from that of any other generation. Today's children are growing up in the "digital age."

Technology has been a major factor in changing the way today's child learns and inter-

acts with the world. In his book *Generation i*,² Tim Elmore discusses this, stating that children born after 1990 have had their world shaped by technology—iPod, iBook, iPhone, iChat, iMovie, iPad, and iTunes. As a result, children's attention spans are becoming shorter as they opt for screen-based activities over conventional reading. The digital age and shorter attention spans have forced a change to take place in the vacation Bible school strategy.

What should VBS look like today?

In order to meet the wide needs of children more effectively, VBS needs to be fresh and creative. VBS needs to have both high spiritual impact and high energy. Today's child is not wired to sit still and listen for 45 minutes straight. I believe the best model for VBS involves small groups that rotate through various stations. These stations provide settings where the children can experience a Bible story through drama, and then participate in the story themselves. For ex-



ample, kids remember more about the lesson by seeing a scripted drama of King Josiah tearing down idols in Judah and participating in the story by stomping on cups to represent destroying idols. Coloring a picture or making a glitter craft cannot compare to the personal experience of smashing their own symbolic idols.

Also, VBS needs to tap into the visual stimuli that motivate this generation. This can be through PowerPoint song lyrics, Bible memory characters, Bible story video clips, or real life video stories that can spark conversation. Create activities to ensure that this happens. For example, provide children opportunities to connect with each other and with mentors. This could mean sitting in a circle and discussing, "What are idols in your life that keep you from putting Jesus first?" An effective VBS will combine personal experiences, visual stimuli, connection, and participation to reach today's child with the message of Jesus.

The Message has not changed

Yes, VBS looks different today than it did 20 years ago, but our message has not changed. We offer the same hope as we did yesterday. We offer hope that children and parents in our communities desperately need to hear: "God made me. God loves me. Jesus wants to be my forever friend. I can trust God no matter what." So, while the way we deliver our message may have changed, God's truth has not and will not change.

Many will argue that vacation Bible school is outdated. I would say that VBS still matters today. George Barna indicates that 43% of all Americans who accept Jesus as their Savior do so before the age of 13.¹ So, we need to use every tool available to reach them at this critical time. VBS can make a real difference.

Children make serious commitments to Christ during VBS. Recently, one young girl came to VBS, attended our kids program, moved on to participate in the youth group, and committed her life to Christ. That's the power of VBS!

Yes, tired and weary children's ministry leader, children's pastor, and volunteer, what you do matters. What you do has a significant impact on the spiritual health of our children, families, and churches. So, break out the goldfish, ping-pong balls, and disappearing ink, because I hope VBS is coming to your church this summer! ■

Tara (Powell) McCasland (AA '00, BA '02) is the children's pastor at the Bible Methodist Church, Kenwood, OH. Tara lives in Newtown, OH, with her husband Matt and their three children.

1. "The State of Vacation Bible School." The Barna Research Group, July 9, 2013. Accessed online at www.barna.org.
2. Elmore, Tim. *Generation Y: Our Last Chance to Save Their Future*. Poet Gardener, 2010.

God's Bible School and College streams Wednesday chapel messages, as well as other special services and events during the school year. Livestreamed events can be accessed at www.gbs.edu/news-events.

Additionally, new videos are posted to YouTube each Tuesday. Below are three such sermons which have been uploaded for your edification and enjoyment.



Michael Avery: "Knowing God"
9/8/15 (43 min) www.gbs.edu/Avery16-1
Jeremiah 9:23-24. The critical necessity of really knowing God. Three ways our understanding of God is developed: instructionally, experientially, relationally.



Marc Sankey: "Mission Field Attack"
11/17/15 (54 min) www.gbs.edu/Sankey16-1
The horrific attack Sankey experienced as a missionary in Mexico. Encouragement for people to believe God for miracles and to live lives completely "sold out" to Him.



James Keaton: "Why I Must Pray"
10/20/15 (38 min) www.gbs.edu/Keaton16-1
Several reasons why he is compelled to pray, e.g. "I owe it to my family" and "I owe it to my church." Insight and personal application on prayer.

YouTube.com/GBSC1900 is your online source for chapel sermons, GBS history, college information, and even comical or candid glimpses of campus life that may include your son, daughter, sibling, cousin, or friend!

Be sure to click on the "subscribe" button at the top right of the screen.

Other points of interest may be accessed from the bottom of our home page (www.gbs.edu). Various icons direct you to other aspects of our social media: Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

Motivated For Children's Ministry

by Barbara Baker

It was late Saturday night in 1969 when the telephone rang. The caller identified herself as a pastor's wife who was in need of help. Their church needed someone "to tell a story in their vacation Bible school" which was about to take place. They had a cancellation and someone had recommended me. They must have been desperate!

Why me? I had very little experience telling stories. Plus, I was starting a class for my master's degree around that same time. I wanted to focus on my studies and make good grades. However, I agreed to consider the opportunity saying I would give my answer the next afternoon. Although I can't remember all the details, I know I decided to do it.

My aunt, Mrs. J.D. Stafford, had traveled many years conducting vacation Bible schools. When she heard that I was going to be involved in one, she came alive! She had many questions about how it would be run. She even accompanied me to meet with the pastor's wife, Mrs. Marshall Smart. It turned out that my involvement was going to be more substantial than what I had understood from the initial request.

The first night I felt I did a terrible job, but the Smarts complimented me profusely. That motivated me to do a better job the next night. That vacation Bible school was the beginning of many years of children's ministry—45 to be exact. It took the Baker Family from coast to coast and even to several foreign countries.

Perseverance Required

Looking back over all those years, I wondered what kept us

motivated. What kept us going to the churches (as many as 20 times to one church)? We kept going back because we were asked. In other words, we walked through open doors. That didn't necessarily mean we were that good with this work, but the door was open and we went through it. Certainly it was all part of God's plan, and we give Him all the glory.

At first, we only conducted one or two vacation Bible schools per summer, but then worked our way up to five. I thought that was all we could do—that we needed a week between vacation Bible schools for rest. But as we got more invitations, we continued to walk through those open doors. God gave the strength and stamina. Many times we would go straight to the next place the day after we finished the previous meeting. One year we helped conduct 14 vacation Bible schools, which included some weekend services after school had started (in addition to the normal summer services).

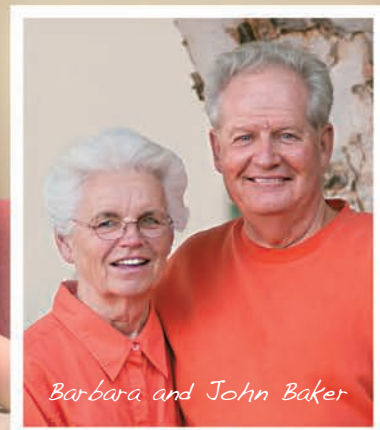
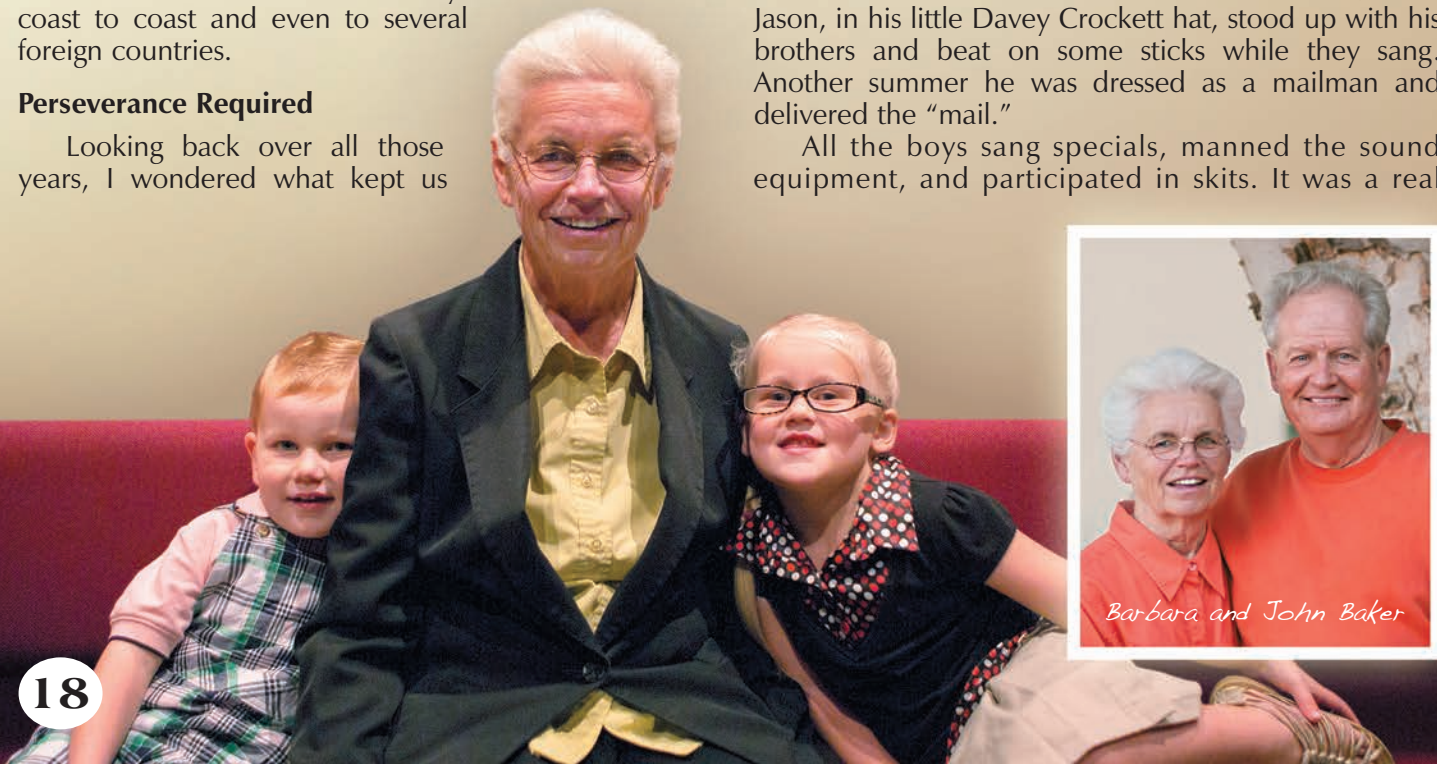
Ministry Was a "Family Thing"

As our family grew, so did our ministry. We found vacation Bible school a good way to involve the whole family. God blessed our home with three boys, and we felt they added a spark to what we were doing. There's just something about children attracting children.

We began to dress in outfits to complement our vacation Bible school theme. The summer when our third son was 6-8 months old, we dressed him in striped overalls and hat as a train engineer for our theme "Life's Railroad to Heaven." His older brothers would sing, "Welcome all you children; we're so glad that you've come. We're the Baker Railroad Company and three sons. My name is Aaron, and I am John Mark, and our little brother Jason also has his part." At that time my husband would put little Jason up to the window of our large cardboard train. Sometimes he would smile right at that moment.

The next summer we were "Pioneers for Jesus." Jason, in his little Davey Crockett hat, stood up with his brothers and beat on some sticks while they sang. Another summer he was dressed as a mailman and delivered the "mail."

All the boys sang specials, manned the sound equipment, and participated in skits. It was a real



Barbara and John Baker

blessing to have them traveling with us until they were 20 years of age.

What Kept Us Motivated

There were many things that kept us motivated which might be classified as “perks” that God allowed us to enjoy—the excitement of the children, watching the growth of children from year to year, meeting new people, traveling to many places. We especially enjoyed the Chapel of the Children at the Interchurch Holiness Convention. We were aware that vacation Bible school had the potential of drawing more outsiders into the local church than any other church activity. The appreciation expressed by pastors and congregations was rewarding.

So everything was rosy and upbeat? No! Monday nights, with all the excitement of the first night and the new theme, were usually pretty good. But Tuesday night was another story. The kids had seen our big props and sometimes were a bit noisier. It could be rather discouraging! I sometimes wanted to pack up and leave. It was helpful when we had our own travel trailer—it gave me a place to go and “hide.” Of course we didn’t leave, and things usually got better by the end of the vacation Bible school...and we continued to the next church.

During the non-summer months, our jobs in education kept us busy, but that was a good time to gather new ideas. We were always looking for conferences or workshops on child evangelism. When I attended, I received inspiration, instruction, and ideas to keep our services interesting, exciting, and fresh.

The most helpful conference I was privileged to attend was the Children’s Pastors’ Conference (www.childrenspastorsconference.com). There were many breakout sessions from which to choose plus general sessions taught by renowned speakers. I always came home equipped with new ideas and ready to hit the vacation Bible school trail again! And, of course, weekends and breaks during the regular school year opened other ministry possibilities.

But the most serious, most important motivation was the children. Yes, even children can be saved. For years I gave an invitation for children to pray for salvation practically every night of vacation Bible school. I have no regrets concerning the many miles we traveled, or the countless hours we spent preparing, or the times we prayed for the children at the altar night after night. To see little children give their hearts to God was the greatest reward. That is what kept us going all those years.

Available to God No Matter What

But now a progressive, disabling disease known as Parkinson’s has given me unsteady feet, quivering jaw, forgetful brain, and trembling and clumsy hands. I don’t know what the future holds, but there is something I do know—I want to tell the boys and girls Jesus can save them from their sins!

The good news is that God has allowed us to continue our ministry with children—on the church bus! I’m a little slow, but I can still climb out of the van at houses on Saturday to see who’s coming the next day, and to invite new ones to come. And on Sunday, I can climb the steps of the church bus and stand up and teach and sing and talk till the last child is delivered.

It’s the perfect ministry for me—the bus shakes a bit and I do, too! ■

Barbara and John Baker were involved in children’s ministry for 45 years, traveling extensively during the summer and on weekends as the Baker Family with their three sons. They are now retired from their work in public education and live in Anderson, IN.



TOUR ISRAEL

this summer with GBS students
and **Dr. Dan Glick**

This is an amazing opportunity for young and old alike to experience the Holy Land for 19 days in June.

Cost is \$3,500 from New York City. Comparable trips are \$5,000+.

For more info, contact Dan Glick:
Email: dglick@gbs.edu
Call/Text: (513) 328-8852

Commissioning Weekend 2016


God’s Bible School & College, Cincinnati, OH
Nathan Purdy, guest speaker

The public is invited to join with us for our
“end-of-the-year, spiritual renewal.”
Help us celebrate commitment and commencement.

Friday, May 20
7:00 PM The Challenge

Saturday, May 21
10:00 AM Commencement (College)
7:00 PM Consecration

Sunday, May 22
10:30 AM Communion
2:30 PM Commitment to Ministering Now
6:00 PM Commission



Services will be livestreamed beginning Friday, 7:00 PM at www.gbs.edu/news-events

Leading a Child to Christ

by Helen Leigh Reiff

“It is not the will of your Father which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish” (Matt. 18:14).

Leading a child to know Jesus and receive the transforming work of salvation is one of the most rewarding and fulfilling things I have ever experienced. I had some very good examples to follow. They were not educated in child evangelism, nor did they follow any predetermined steps; they simply loved Jesus and believed that I needed a Savior and began to influence me through their lives and through their love. Through their living examples, I learned so much. I learned that there are at least six steps in leading a child to Christ.

STEP 1: Believe

My neighbor, who was a devout Christian, truly believed that I was a sinner and needed to be saved. Any parent, Sunday school teacher, day school teacher, pastor, or neighbor who wants to lead a child to Christ must believe that a child is lost (Psa. 51:5), and that the child can be saved, transformed, and made a new creation in Christ. It is God’s will for children to come to Him (Mark 10:14).

STEP 2: Pray

It was very evident that my neighbor prayed for guidance in dealing with me and my family. To be ready to bring a child to salvation, we must bathe our efforts in prayer. Pray that the Spirit will illuminate our minds and awaken in us an urgency to see our children saved. Pray that the Lord will open their understanding and show them their need of a Savior. Pray that we will sense the direction of the Spirit in our teaching so we will know how to deal with the disturbances

the enemy causes. He does not want the children to understand nor feel conviction. His aim is to blind them to their need to be saved.

STEP 3: Prepare with a purpose

When I was a child, there were so many things to distract me from listening to my neighbor and my Sunday school teacher’s teaching. I grew up in a non-Christian home. So much was going on that made it almost impossible for me to concentrate. My neighbor would invite me over to her house to play with her babies... I loved kids; and while I was there, she would have me read Bible stories to them. She prepared with purpose. She chose stories that would teach me while I thought I was teaching her children.

Whether we are teaching in a formal or informal situation, **we must prepare to...**

Teach the foundational truths.

The enemy will do all in his power to distract the children from listening. Preparation is so vitally important. We fight against principalities and powers that are prepared to destroy.

Teach truth about the Bible. It is inspired by God and is our guidebook for living. We must teach about God, the Creator of all things. And we must make it personal. “God created YOU in His image. He is holy, without sin, and He loves YOU.” We must use the Bible and point out Scriptures such as John 3:16, Jeremiah 31:3, and I John 4:19b to show that what we are telling them is found in God’s Word.

Teach about God’s love. I very easily could believe that God loved me just as I was because

my neighbor showed me that she loved me just as I was. Even when I reeked of cigarette smoke, she would hug me. She took me to church in her car, visited in my home, and allowed me to talk to her about anything. She was leading me to Christ.

Teach about sin. That is something that people do not want to mention today. But since sin is the only thing that will keep us out of heaven, we must teach about it. Sin separates us from God; and our only way back to God is through Jesus, who died on the cross, was buried, and rose again. He did all of that to make forgiveness possible and bring us salvation.

Teach the gospel simply and clearly.

We must never take it for granted that children know and understand all of this. Our focus should be on clearly explaining things for the unsaved child, presenting growing truth for the saved child, and making appropriate application to their lives.

STEP 4: Teach with anointing

Preparing is very important, but during the teaching time we need the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is His presence, not our talents, that brings awareness, understanding, and conviction.

It is essential to make eye contact with each child so that each one will know the lesson is for him or her. The eyes of the children will also tell us if they are “getting it” or if they are troubled or confused.

We should make it a point to use personal pronouns like “you” and “your” so that the children will personalize the lesson. “Jesus loves YOU

and died to save *YOU* from *YOUR* sins." We must also be sure to give a clear explanation of what sin is (anything that is displeasing to God).

STEP 5: Give an invitation

This is the ultimate goal. We want to bring each child to the point of making a decision to give his or her heart to Jesus and experience the transformation that only He can give. We must use the Word of God to show what God requires of the child. 1 John 1:9 tells us that confession brings forgiveness. John 1:12 reminds us of God's promise of salvation, that if we receive and believe, we will become the children of God. The following list gives a step-by-step explanation of how to give an invitation:

- Make the invitation clear. Be sure the child knows what you are inviting him or her to do.
- Briefly review the need of salvation ("You are a sinner").
- Briefly review that Jesus is our only way to salvation ("He paid for your sins").
- Make the invitation personal. Use the pronoun "you" instead of "anyone" or "whoever."
- Ask questions such as, "Do YOU want to ask Jesus to forgive YOU and make YOU His child?"

- Explain that "God is offering you forgiveness of your sins and inviting you to be His child."
- Keep the invitation brief. The child's attention span is short. If God is speaking to the child, he or she will respond.

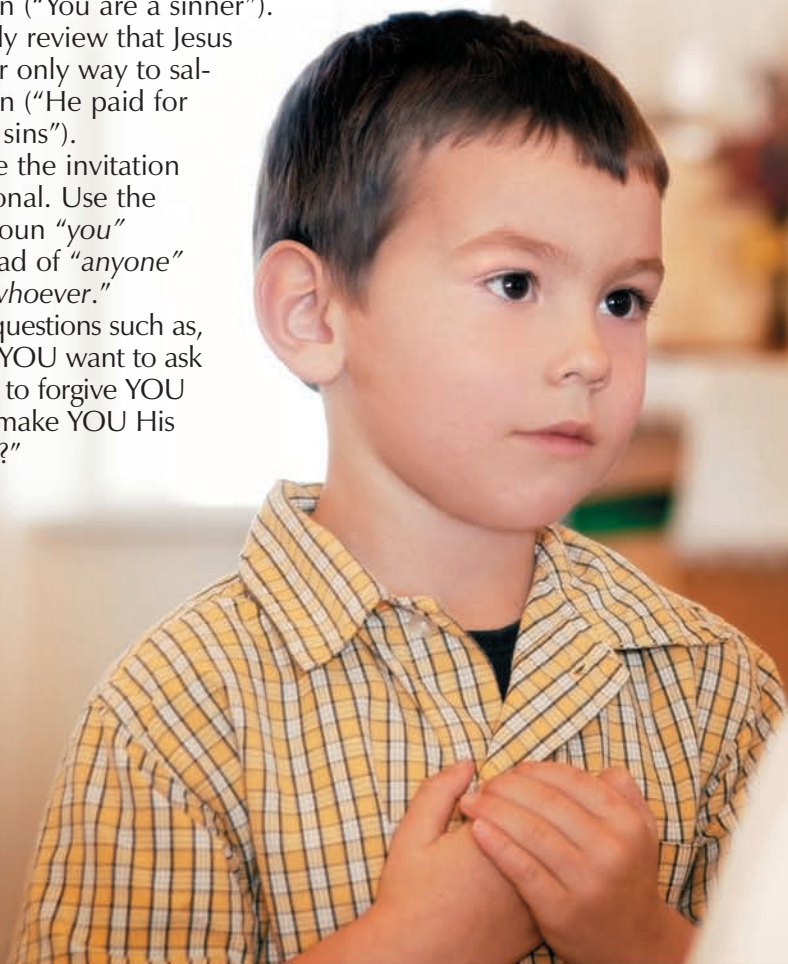
STEP 6: Follow up with each child who responds

When children respond to the invitation, we must carefully counsel them. We should ask them what Jesus did for them and assure them that we will be praying for them. We should also instruct them to read a portion of God's Word each day and pray for God to help them live for Him.

Follow-up beyond the conversion is also very important. We can call, visit, or write a note. We must become part of their great cloud of witnesses to encourage them to be faithful.

It has been my privilege for the last 50 years to minister to children in churches, schools, and camp meetings. It is always a thrill to share the gospel and see the children's eyes light up with a longing to know Jesus personally. I am so thankful for those who led me to the Lord, and my desire is to be faithful to lead others to Jesus. ■

Helen Leigh Reiff (BA '70) is a semi-retired teacher and missionary. She was on the GBS faculty 1968-71 and 1983-89. Her major focus was child evangelism. She resides with her husband Glen (ThB '57) in Hobe Sound, FL.



"At every step in leading a child to Christ, pray for, look for, and expect the Holy Spirit to convict of sin, to reveal the truth of the gospel, and to illumine the child's mind so he can grasp the saving truth."

—J. Irvin Overholtzer,
founder of Child Evangelism Fellowship

Children's Camp

by Maurice McCrary



If you were not privileged to be a camper at a youth or children's camp when you were young, you likely don't realize the euphoria of that experience. Maybe you wonder why parents would want to send their children and teens to such a camp when it might put a strain on the budget. Let me see if I can help you see the value of getting your children involved.

First, understand that these camps are run by personnel who are sincerely interested in making the camp enjoyable and creating lifelong memories for the campers. The programs are well planned and designed to give happiness, adventure, structured activities, and discipleship. Every detail of the camp is as perfect as the staff can possibly make it.

These camps are created for the purpose of developing social interaction. They teach the campers how to communicate with other campers and enjoy working together as a team. Living together in the dorm rooms, taking on chores, helping to settle disputes, and bringing peace among themselves offers them leadership training. They sense their role and understand how it contributes to making the camp a real success. In the process, campers make new friends. Some actually establish lifelong friendships. Singing together, laughing with each other, playing games, building crafts, romping in the afterglows, and worshipping together enables the kids to build such friendships.

The camps assist in conquering the dread and fear of being separated from parents. I have seen the tears and heard the sobs of children and even young teens when mom and dad drove away from the camp. But consoling those frightened is a job any good staff member takes to heart. What a joy to see how quickly those who were overcome by the fear of being without their parents get involved in camp activities. It's awesome to watch campers blossom, learning to make decisions and learning new aspects of who they really are. When the camp is over they can't wait until next year.

At a well-planned youth or children's camp there is no "downtime" or idle moments for mischief. The intent is to keep campers too busy to experience boredom and homesickness. At the end of the day, they should be too tired to do anything but sleep.

I want to say this carefully, but fun and the Holy Spirit are not some water-and-oil dynamic which can't be blended. Camp is a place where the youth can laugh, play their games, joke around, and then come into the worship center to celebrate Christ with an evangelistic service, seek Him as their personal Savior, and return to an arena of fun. As a result, it has been my wonderful pleasure as the founder of Appalachian Youth Camp and Kidz Adventure Children's Camp to have seen literally thousands of our youth come to know Christ, and today they are serving Him with fervor.

The Gospel according to Luke gives a brief glimpse of Jesus as a child, saying that "He grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man." Our youth and children's camps endeavor to follow these developmental areas by giving insights to enhance their wisdom, sharing physical activities to develop their stature, evangelizing and discipling them to enrich their favor with God, and creating friendships to promote positive relationships with both peers and staff.

What better way could we do this than to provide them a camp where they can learn about Jesus and interact with kids of their own age? If your church has one of these camps, please plan to send your children there. If your church doesn't have a camp, make a strong appeal for them to establish one or support an existing one. ■

Rev. Maurice (Mac) McCrary founded Appalachian Youth Camp in 1982 and Kidz Adventure Children's Camp in 2007, both of which are still in operation today. The McCrarys live in Indianapolis, IN.



A Few Thoughts On Children's Ministry

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

1. The Great Commission includes children.
2. Reaching out to the neighborhoods and busing children to our churches is one method of reaching them.
3. A busing program can encourage people as they see larger numbers on the attendance board.
4. Having children receive Jesus as their Savior is extremely important.
5. Teaching children the Bible is extremely important.
6. Involving children in the worship experience is extremely important.

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Many churches have started a separate Sunday morning service for children that occurs simultaneous with the adult morning worship service.

Reasons for having a separate children's service for bus children.

1. A primary reason relates to the problems of integrating these children into the morning service. Most bus children do not know the "rules" for proper behavior during a morning worship service, and can therefore become disruptive and distracting.
2. It gives opportunity for people in the church who love children and wish to participate in the children's service an opportunity for involvement—a meaningful ministry opportunity.

Reasons for not having a separate children's service for bus children.

1. If it is simultaneous with the adult morning worship service, it causes key leaders and helpers in the children's ministry to be absent from the morning ministry of the pastor. They regularly miss the Sunday morning sermon. This is bad from a pastoral perspective.
2. Some churches bus in neighborhood children on a day of the week other than Sunday. This permits the families of the church to be pastored and nurtured together as a family unit on Sunday mornings. This is much better from a pastoral perspective.
3. The biblical pattern of worship in the OT and NT is family oriented. Families worshipped together. Children sat with their parents and grandparents and were taught to listen and participate. The idea that children need to be taught how to "worship" on their level is not found in Scripture. ■



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THOUGHTS

for the quiet hour

by Sonja Vernon

WHAT MATTERS MOST

"Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me." —Mark 9:36-37 NASB

I love Mark's version of this story. In order to appreciate what's really going on in these verses, we need to back up a bit and look at the context. Jesus and His disciples had journeyed to Capernaum, and when they reached the place where they were to stay, Jesus asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" And things got quiet...very quiet, because their conversation had centered around which one of them was the greatest...again. Ouch! Jesus didn't berate them or embarrass them further. He didn't even make them answer. He simply sat down, told them to huddle up, and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all" (v.35). And then the Son of God enfolded a child in His arms and reminded His disciples again that the Kingdom is not about power and position but "the least of these." Even children are image bearers, and in receiving them, Jesus said, we receive God Himself. No effort we put into touching the life of a child is ever wasted, and those who spend their lives pouring them into little ones are bringing glory to the God who made them. So do not lose heart, weary parent, discouraged children's minister, harried teacher. Your service is eternal—all of it; and it touches the heart of God! ■

Sonja Vernon is Dean of Women at God's Bible School and College.

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2016

COLLEGE CHOIR LATE-WINTER TOUR

February 25, Thursday, 7:30 PM
Pell City Area GBS Choir Rally
Bible Methodist Church
618 Martin St. N., Pell City, AL
Mr. Wayne Fleming (205) 956-2857

February 26, Friday, 7:00 PM
South/Central AL GBS Choir Rally
Bibb County Board of Education Auditorium
721 Walnut Street, Centreville, AL
Rally Coordinator: Rev. Steve Vernon
(334) 624-4298

February 27, Saturday, 7:00 PM
Oak Ridge Wesleyan Church
11000 110th Ave. North, Largo, FL
Dr. Phillip Gray, Pastor (727) 393-9182

February 28, Sunday, 10:00 AM
Light and Life
5730 Deeson Rd., Lakeland, FL
Dr. Eldred Kelley, pastor (863) 858-6361

February 28, Sunday, 2:30 PM
Lakeland Holiness Camp
Florida Holiness Campground
3335 South Florida Ave., Lakeland, FL
Rev. Glen Allison, president
(863) 646-5152 (office)

February 28, Sunday, 6:00 PM
First Church of the Nazarene
1875 Nursery Road, Clearwater, FL
Rev. Ernie Lewis (Sr. Adult Ministry Dir.)
(727) 536-1498

February 29, Monday, 7:00 PM
Avon Park Camp Association

1001 W. Lake Isis Ave., Avon Park, FL
(Interdenominational Conference Grounds
1200 block of US Hwy 27 North)
(863) 453-6831 (office)

March 1, Tuesday, 7:30 PM
Bible Methodist Church
855 Gentry Memorial Hwy., Easley, SC
Rev. Jonathan Slagenweit, pastor
(864) 395-7247

March 2, Wednesday, 7:00 PM
Parkway House of Prayer
3230 King Street, Roanoke, VA
Rev. Ray Campbell, pastor (540) 982-0115

March 3, Thursday, 7:00 PM
NC GBS Choir Rally
Holly Hills Wesleyan Church
202 W. Holly Hill Road, Thomasville, NC
Rev. Mark A. Mullins (336) 472-7973

March 4, Friday, 7:00 PM
South-Central Ohio GBS Choir Rally
Locust Grove Wesleyan Tabernacle
State Route 41, Locust Grove, OH
Rev. Richard Williams (937) 587-6275

March 5, Saturday, 6:00 PM
South-Central IN GBS Choir Rally
Faith Mission Church
1813 26th St., Bedford, IN
Rev. Mark Stetler (812) 583-5712

March 6, Sunday, 10:45 AM
Independent Nazarene Church
5152 Hornet Ave., Beech Grove, IN
Rev. Richard Gremillion (317) 884-9891

March 6, Sunday, 6:00 PM
Bible Methodist Church
6000 S. Dixie Hwy., Franklin, OH
Rev. Jack Hooker (937) 746-8281

COLLEGE CHOIR

2016 TOUR

