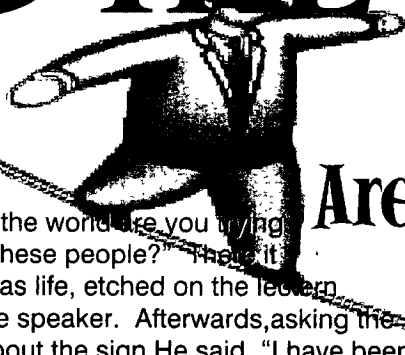


# DIRECTIONS

NEWSLETTER FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATORS



"What in the world are you trying to do to these people?" That it was, big as life, etched on the ledger facing the speaker. Afterwards, asking the pastor about the sign He said, "I have been preaching twelve years without an objective, and it finally dawned on me one day that if I didn't know what I was doing there was a good possibility they didn't know what they were supposed to do."

The sign is clear! We have to know what we are doing. As our time of history now hinges on change we must KNOW both theology and practice in Christian Education. Good theology is to LOVE GOD, LOVE TRUTH, and LOVE PEOPLE. Good practice is to bring people to a CHANGED LIFE. When Paul strongly admonished Timothy (I Timothy 6:15) he prescribed three objectives of education.

**objective #1 TEACH PEOPLE TO THINK**  
Growing up in the early 50's there was a time in our home when we had no television. As my dad brought one home and placed it into the living room my dear mother said, "That thing is an 'idiot box'. If you watch it you will become one." I thought she made up the term. Recently I looked up "idiot box" in the American Heritage Dictionary and found only one word - television. *WebTrack* calls children between the ages of 8 and 14 the *SCREENAGERS*, because so much of their life is spent in front of the TV, computer, movie or game screen.

We do not have to settle! Our God-given task is to stretch the human mind. We want to change a person permanently. We need to make sure a person's thinking changes and not just the person's behavior. The best teachers in your life were probably those who planted seed (made you think). You are still reaping the harvest!

**objective #2 TEACH PEOPLE HOW TO LEARN**  
Most often those who need to learn the most are those who seldom try to learn. A

## What In The World Are You Trying To Do To These People?

vital part of our Christian education ministry is to show people that learning is exciting, logical and full of discovery.

Howard Hendricks writes in *Teaching to Change Lives*, "The average listener in the church is not excited by truth - he's embalmed by it. The educational program in the churches is often an insult to people's intelligence. We're giving them wilted cut flowers, instead of teaching them how to grow by the means of loving God's work, which is alive!"

**objective #3 TEACH PEOPLE HOW TO WORK**  
A few years ago I had occasion to interview a young man for a job. Matt was a graduate of a respected high school, an award winning athlete, and ready to begin his work career. After nearly 90 minutes, the young man confessed he had no idea how to fill out an employment application. As we worked through the process together, I learned something else about Matt. He had never been taught to work. Matt had never worked at any job, big or small.

Matt received input from others in his life who were able to show him how to work. Through encouragement and proper application during teaching moments, today Matt has an excellent position with a bright future.

Churches are full of people like Matt. They have no idea how to begin or how to serve once they start. A significant portion of our Christian education ministry is to show people how to work, how to serve, how to start!

We are committed to the idea that a TEACHING church is a growing church!

Working with you,  
*Rick Wulfestieg*



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HERE'S HOPE FOR THEIR FUTURE

# How Children Perceive Prayer

2 - 3  
year olds

Children this age understand that God loves and takes care of them by how others show love. They understand that Jesus is their friend. Children want to know how God helps with their anger and fears. They lack language skills to communicate effectively, and they like repetition. They don't fully comprehend prayer but like to participate in it.

4 - 5  
year olds

Children want to know that God loves them and others. They want to know how God works and that He is active in their lives. Preschool-age children wonder about who God is and all He has created. They expect God to listen to and answer their prayers.

7 - 9  
year olds

Children this age want Jesus as a friend. They have a need for God's help in different situations such as friendships and good decision-making. Children understand the concept of God's forgiveness. They can express thoughts in their own words. Children this age are concerned about others' needs.

10 - 12  
year olds

Older kids want more information about who God is and what he can do for them. They understand that God can be more personal and can help them and their friends in their everyday lives. Sometimes kids may doubt God's love and care. They think globally and know more about the world's problems.

## Ways to Help Children Pray

Remember the National Day of Prayer. May 1, 1998

Let children feel God's love and care through your unconditional love. Hold children by the hand, gently touch them on the shoulder, and use a gentle voice as you pray. Say simple, conversational prayers that relate to children's lives. For example, "Thank you God for rain" or "God, please help me be kind." Have them repeat prayers. Show pictures of Jesus praying.

Use nature to prompt prayer. For example, show children a flower and have them say a prayer such as "Thank you, God for pretty flowers." Sing songs as prayers. Give examples of how God can answer prayer, such as good health after sickness. Help children think of others to pray for such as parents and friends. Have them complete sentence prayers: "God, thank you for..."

Help children pray about their problems. Tell children how God might answer - that He may take longer than a quick "yes" or "no." Use spontaneous prayer. For example, if a child gets angry with a friend, have the child pray for God's help to forgive. Help children pray for others such as sick classmates or family members. Keep a class prayer list and note answers to prayer.

Use daily experiences and global events to lead kids in prayer. Use newspaper articles to jumpstart prayer. Help kids express their joys, fears, and anxieties. Teach them to pray using the prayer pattern ACTS-"A" for adoration, "C" for confession, "T" for thanksgiving, and "S" for supplication. Use the Bible to support kids' prayer lives. Philippians 4:6 and I Thessalonians 5:17-18 provide guidelines for praying with a thankful heart and praying continually.

# Single adult MINISTRY

## Three trends that will affect your single adult ministry.

### 1 **Single Fathers With Custody Grows By 325%.**

The number of single fathers with children under 18 grew from 400,000 in 1970 to 1.7 million in 1995. Compared to all family groups with children, they increased fivefold: from one percent to five percent.

From 1976 to 1996, there was also great growth--225%--in the number of children living with only their fathers, from 863,000 to 2.8 million. Among these children's fathers, 48 percent were divorced, 28 percent had never been married, 18 percent were married but not living with their wife and five percent were widowed.

### 2 **The Exploding Growth of Middle-aged Single Adults.**

During the next 13 years, those aged 45 to 64 are expected to increase. Women aged 65 and older who live alone will likely decrease five percent while the number of women aged 45 to 64 who live alone is projected to increase 65 percent. Single men in the same age group will increase 83 percent.

### 3 **Cohabitation: 50% Of All Married Couples Live Together Before Marriage.**

The biggest increase in couples choosing to live together is not among twentysomethings, but among people over 35. Almost half of adults under 40 have lived with an unmarried partner--and in ten years that will be true for the total population under age 50.

Forty-nine percent of those between 35 and 39 are currently living with someone. Forty percent of college graduates have done so at one time.

#### **Religion and Cohabitation**

Persons living together who report no religious affiliation are much less likely to marry. Those who attend church weekly, fundamentalists, and those with the most traditional values are less like to cohabit.

Only a small segment of people disapprove of cohabitation and sex outside marriage. While 70-80 percent of those over age 70 disapprove, the proportion declines consistently with age to about 25 percent of persons 25-29.

Original article appeared in SAM Journal Issue #124, Sept/Oct 1997 ©Singles Ministry Resources Cook Communications Ministries, Colorado Springs, CO. Used with permission.

## Superficial inconsistent

### Delusional Christianity

- Three fourths of all Americans believe that angels exist and have an effect on people's lives. However, according to a new nationwide survey of adults, a large majority of adults do not believe that either the Devil or the Holy Spirit exists.
- Nearly 62 percent of all adults agree that Satan "is not a living being but is a symbol of evil." 52% of born again Christians deny Satan's existence. Women are more likely than men to reject Satan's existence (64% vs. 59%).
- Six out of ten Americans agreed that "the Holy Spirit is a symbol of God's presence or power, but is not a living entity." Among the segments of the population most likely to deny the existence of the Holy Spirit were Baby Busters (18 to 31 years old, of whom 66% rejected the Spirit) and non-whites (66%). Amazingly, a majority of all born again Christians also reject the existence of the Holy Spirit (55%).

Other significant findings related to spirituality included:

- 87% claim their religious faith is important in their life.
- 58% agree that the Bible is totally accurate in all it teaches.
- 34% of born again Christians believe that if a person is good enough, or does enough good things for people they will earn their way to Heaven.
- 28% of born again Christians believe that when Jesus was on earth He committed sins. 40% of all Americans believe this.
- 39% of Americans say that Jesus Christ was crucified, but He never had a physical resurrection. Nearly the same proportion of born again Christians (35%) embrace that thinking.

"America appears to be drowning in a sea of relativistic, non-biblical theology. We are living amidst the dilution of traditional, Bible-based Christian faith. Millions of Americans are comfortable calling themselves "Christian" even though their beliefs suggest otherwise. For a majority of Americans--especially born again Christians--to reject the existence of the Holy Spirit, reflects either incredible ignorance of the basic teaching of Christianity, or a pick-and-choose mentality in which people only believe those teachings from the Bible which they like or understand.

Statistics excerpted from Angels Are In--Devil & Holy Spirit Are Out, Barna Research Group, Ltd., Oxnard, CA.

# Renewal Principles for Your Ministry

By Michael Slaughter

Michael Slaughter directs us to foundational truth about our core biblical values. The six principles outlined in this article apply to church renewal and can easily be applied to the Christian education ministry within our churches. As you read these thoughts, pray for God's direction to show you strengths and weaknesses of your own ministry. Then, take steps to renew your leadership in His truth.

Christ Principle: People are transformed solely as a result of a confrontation with Jesus Christ.

In time of renewal, the church returns to a clear focus on Jesus Christ as the object of faith. Most reformers were almost considered to be cultic because of their emphasis on Jesus. There is much confusion in our culture today about who Jesus is. We are ministering to a post-Christian generation who have virtually no knowledge of Christ or scriptural truth. Renewal happens when a church rediscovers how to effectively communicate Jesus as God's hope, solution, presence, and power in the world.

Scripture Principle: The Bible was given that we might hear God's voice and act accordingly.

Every renewal is accompanied by a return to Scripture as the primary source for what the church believes and does. We must rediscover God's Word. Yet, too often, liberals and conservatives alike wrongly turn to Scripture more for information than for how to know and obey God. Scripture was not given to be primarily informational, but relational.

Worship Principle: Renewal never happens unless new wineskins of worship speak the language of the culture.

In renewal, the church develops new worship forms ("new wineskins") that relate more to the needs of the unchurched culture than to the preferences of the church. Renewals have shown that the new worship forms are usually so effective at reaching the unchurched that the newcomers soon outnumber their predecessors and the informal soon becomes the new worship form. In fact, most churches adopt the worship forms of the last renewal. Currently, the majority of churches are worshiping with forms that are 125 to 250 years old.

Covenant Principle: Jesus calls us to build disciples, not club members.

In every renewal the church rediscovers that it costs something to be a follower of Jesus Christ and a member of His body. Like marriage, membership in Christ's Body is a covenant commitment. When a church gets serious about renewal, it begins to ask new questions about the responsibilities of membership. As a result, a movement in renewal always has a smaller membership than the total attendance. An attendance that is smaller than membership is a sign of institutional decline. Surely those who choose to walk on the narrow way should be less in number than those who attend.

Priesthood Principle: The "priesthood of all believers" excludes an elitism where professionals do ministry for observers.

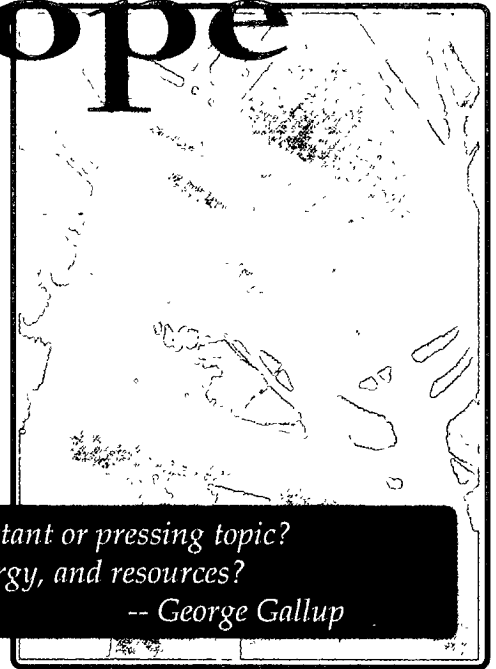
The New Testament model is not a caste system. The New Testament church functioned as a seminary. It raised up the laity from the inside and then turned them loose on the outside. Churches in renewal become seminaries that equip the saints for works of ministry and service.

Leadership Principle: The leader communicates three things: the mission statement, clear goals, and strategies.

When renewal occurs, leaders function as the catalysts. There has never been a renewal in church history apart from a leader. The church today has many managers and group facilitators, but few real leaders. The manager is big on committees and votes. The leader has a God-given vision and always communicates the mission statement, clear goals, and strategies.

Every renewal movement in church history has had all six of these principles operating. They are part of the theological environment in which renewal is birthed. In which of these principles are you and in which of these principles do you need to grow? Don't confuse renewal principles with techniques. Only God can truly bring renewal. There is no shortcut for wrestling with God to find His direction and blessing.

# Here's Hope For Their Future



*"How do we redeem the promise of our children? Is there a more important or pressing topic? Can anyone deny that our children need a greater share of our time, energy, and resources? We're not doing enough, or enough that works."*

*-- George Gallup*

For the first time, Americans feel that life for children in the future will be worse-not better. A number of factors contribute to this. Young people will inherit astronomical national debt. Career prospects are darkened. Family structures and other social institutions have been weakened. Faith has become watered down. Sadly, youth themselves share the bleak outlook of adults.

One in five children live in poverty; 10 million do not have health coverage. Homicide and suicide kill almost 7000 children every year. One in four children is born to unmarried mothers, many of whom are children themselves. And 135 children bring guns to school each day. Children from every social strata suffer from abuse, neglect, and preventable emotional problems.

Despite their sometimes bleak, short-term outlook, a majority of American youth report that they are happy and excited about the future, feel very close to their families, are likely to marry, want to have children, are satisfied with their personal lives, and desire to reach the top of their chosen careers.

Leaders of UNICEF, based on the dramatic improvement in the health and quality of life of children over the last 50 years, say that the 21st century will be the century of the child. Tomorrow's world will be greatly affected by how we deal with (children and) youth today.

Here are ten observations gleaned from studies conducted by the Gallup organization during recent years which give specific direction to our educational ministry, parenting and family ministry.

1. Teens want clear rules to live by; they want clarity.
2. They favor teaching values in schools, which half of the schools do now.
3. In the area of sex education, teens overwhelmingly would like to have abstinence taught.
4. Young women would like more help in knowing how to say "no."
5. Young people overwhelmingly want to reduce the level of violence on television.
6. Young people would like to see divorce harder to get.
7. They would like to see more pre-marriage counseling.
8. Nearly half of all young people today volunteer.
9. If a child is involved in volunteerism before age 11, it becomes a lifetime habit.
10. Youth actually want more homework.

*"In a sense, youth know what is best for them and for the nation. Maybe it is time we listened to them!"*

# Idea Bank

## Missions Education

### Adopt a Missionary Kid

**Purpose:** To make the children aware of missionary children, their problems, their blessings and their needs.

**Preparation:** Select several missionary families the church helps support. (Every Foursquare Church is assigned missionary families to support each year. Contact your district office for this information.) Find out the addresses, the birthdays, and procure pictures.

**Supplies needed:** Picture and information about "missionary kids," felt-tip pens, calligraphy pens, regular pens, large heavy duty paper with "Certificate of Adoption" at the top, ruler, glue, tape.

**Time Needed:** 20 minutes plus continuing follow-up.

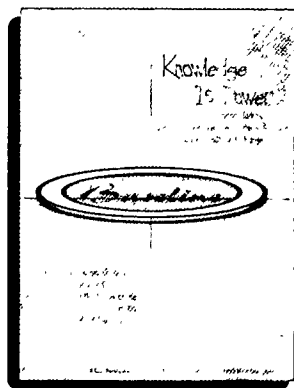
**What to Do:** Explain to the students that you would like them to "adopt" a missionary kid to be a special friend of the class. Show family pictures, explain the situation, show a map of the country, provide family information. Share the dangers of living in that country, the schooling, the customs of that country, etc. List where the MKs were born, their hobbies, etc.

Allow the students to create a "Certificate of Adoption" with the supplies provided. Hang up on the bulletin board. Another possibility would be to use the family photo and scan or photocopy onto 8<sup>1/2</sup>" x 11" paper and have the kids list specific information on the paper. This page can be taken home and used to remind the students to pray for their adopted friend and long-distance class member.

**Projected Result:** This project should generate a prayer interest among the children, perhaps even a desire to go to the field where this child lives. There will be a genuine interest in missionary works.

**One missionary's experience:** One Christmas holiday when Gary and Johnell Loop were serving in the Philippines, things were especially hard. There was a lot of fighting going on with local rebels. Sub-machine guns were being fired. Their missionary friends from another denomination were taken hostage. Fortunately, their friends were later released, but it was a sad time for the Loops. One church had sent the Loops a Christmas box. Inside were many small packages. Steve, their oldest son, opened one of his packages. He looked up at his folks and said, "How did they know this was my favorite candy!" A little box of Nerds made his day.

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