100 Questions & Answers

concerning a ministry to children



Answers to the questions which are most frequently asked by those who evangelize children and minister to their spiritual needs

Sam Doherty

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Questions and Answers
Concerning
a Ministry to Children



CEF
CHILD EVANGELISM
FELLOWSHIP®

Answers to the questions which are most frequently asked by those who evangelize children and who minister to their spiritual needs

BY

SAM DOHERTY

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FOREWORD

This is one of the most practical, informative and inspiring presentations on the evangelism and nurture of children I have ever read. The questions presented and the answers given are not theoretical. They are the content of personal confrontations with which Sam and Sadie Doherty have lived, worked and ministered as they have developed a biblically honest ministry to children through several decades.

These "Questions" did not grow out of "thoughts for a book." They have grown out of the experiences of years with the children and their teachers.

Likewise the "Answers." They have not come from the world of psychological configurations, pragmatic methodology or juvenile entertainment. They have come from a compassionate and prayerful searching of the Scriptures and they have been affirmed by the presence of fruit in biblical likeness.

With the authority of Scripture and a skill enhanced by years of practical experience, Sam Doherty has shared with us insights and understanding that will enlighten, enhance and encourage our ministry to children and to adults.

This book is thorough in its scope yet focused on its target. The questions presented are significantly relevant. The answers given are convincing and convicting. Within its scope and focus this book makes a significant contribution to a theological understanding of the nature of sin, the lostness of children, the completeness of the Gospel, the necessity of prayer, the distinctiveness of doctrine and the dangers of a methodology which contradicts or confuses the purity and purpose of the biblical lesson.

For those who are not convinced that children should be evangelized, this book will present an enlightening challenge to such unsettled thoughts. For those who oppose the evangelizing of children, this book will present a demanding challenge to such a position. For those who love our Lord and children, this book will be a thrilling experience of significant knowledge, practical instruction and biblical affirmation.

Sam has written as he has lived: with profound simplicity, intense conviction and disciplined accuracy. In the writing of this book he has

made a contribution of inestimable value to children and to all who teach them.

Do not read these "Answers" just once. Keep them as a resource. Utilize the index. Teach the content to other teachers. Then watch your confidence grow, your ministry enhanced and lives changed. You will not only be a blessing, you will be blessed.

Dr. Robert L. Alderman
Pastor
Shenandoah Baptist Church
Roanoke, Virginia, USA

INTRODUCTION

I have been involved in the work of child evangelism and in the ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship for forty-eight years—fourteen years in my native Ireland as National Director of CEF of Ireland, twenty-nine years in Europe as Regional Director of European CEF and then five years back in Ireland again in a full-time writing ministry. During all those years I myself have had many questions about children and about child evangelism which I would have liked someone to answer! I don't know any Christian work which involves more questions than work among children. The questions are almost as numerous as the children!

It has been my goal and my ambition for a long time to write this book, and to try to answer the questions which I have faced personally in my own ministry, and also the questions which many children's workers and students have put to me. I am thankful, at long last, that this ambition and desire have become a reality, and I trust that my answers will be a help to all those who evangelize children.

I do not claim to be an expert, nor do I claim any inspiration for my answers. They are, at best, honest attempts to face up to real problems and to try and give solutions to them.

The sources I have used for my answers are three-fold:

- The Word of God.
  This must always come first in any study of children and a ministry to children. Our first responsibility must always be to find out what the Bible says on any particular subject, and in answer to any particular question. And I have endeavoured, as best I can, to do this.
- My own experience.
  I have worked with children in many countries but especially in my own country of Northern Ireland. I have also had the privilege of being extensively involved in the training of children's workers at local and national levels, and in many Leadership Training Institutes.
- The experience and teaching of others.
  I want to pay tribute to the help which I have personally received from those who work with children, and from those who train others to do so. Many of these are inside the ranks of Child Evangelism

Fellowship. Others have written books which have been a real help to me. The names of those who have helped me are many. Indeed they are too many to be listed. But I acknowledge my debt to all of them.

This book has been published by our ministry (Child Evangelism Fellowship Inc.—Specialized Book Ministry) which has been set up as an integral part of the worldwide ministry and outreach of CEF Inc. But I want to emphasize, very strongly, that the answers I give to each question are my own personal answers. I myself take full responsibility for all that I have written.

I am sure that a number of my readers may disagree with some of the answers I have given. Complete agreement would be an impossibility! But none of us should be upset by this. We can always "agree to disagree!" I would encourage each reader to read my answers carefully, and to consider what I have written in relation to the teaching of the Bible. I would also recommend that you do not isolate any one question and answer but that you should see each one in connection with the others, and in relation to the whole. You can then decide on your own answer; and if it is different from mine, it will certainly not create any problem for me!

It is obviously not possible for me to answer each question in detail. The purpose of this book is to give as many answers as possible and, from a practical viewpoint, this means that answers should be reasonably brief. However, you can receive more detailed answers by reading and studying the other books I have written (and which are outlined at the beginning of this book) and the books I plan to write in the future.

I should point out also that there is a certain amount of repetition in this book. There is some repetition from other books in the series, and also some repetition from one answer to another. However, the nature of the book—as an overall view of a ministry to children—makes this inevitable. It will probably not be read page by page like most books, but it is more likely to be used as a reference book, and as a book to "dip into" to find answers to specific questions. Therefore the repetition should not be so obvious.

I trust that my answers will be a help to you, that they will encourage you in your ministry to today's needy children and that you will be challenged, with God's enabling, to do even greater things for these children. If **this** is the result, then the time invested in this book will have been well spent.

If you yourself have any other questions you would like to ask me, or if you have any questions about the answers I have given in this book, please feel free to write to me at the address given at the beginning of the book.

I want to express my appreciation to Dr. Robert Alderman for writing the foreword to this book. He is the pastor of Shenandoah Baptist Church in Roanoke, Virginia, USA, which is a very special church with a great missionary vision. Dr. Alderman and his church have been a great help to us and to our ministry for many years, and I appreciate very much their interest, their encouragement, and the prayers and financial support which they have invested in us and our ministry.

"*Study to show thyself approved unto God a workman that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the Word of truth*" (2 Timothy 2 v15).

SECTION I:
The Bible And The Child

Question 1

Can a child truly trust Jesus Christ as his/her Saviour?

Answer

Before answering this question we need to be clear as to what it means to trust Jesus Christ as Saviour. What does the Bible require?

Paul gives a very straightforward answer in Acts 16 v31 to the question "*What must I do to be saved*?" in verse 30. He said, "*Believe on* **(trust)** *the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*" That is very clear. A sinner is saved by personal trust in, and commitment to, the Lord Jesus Christ who died for Him.

This same truth is also presented simply and clearly in John 3 v16: "*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in* **(trusts)** *Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*"

A sinner receives everlasting life by trusting Jesus Christ.

The Greek word used in both verses and translated "believe on" or "believe in" is PISTEUO. It does not just mean "credence." It means "placing confidence in," "reliance upon" or "trusting."

In Matthew 18 v2 the Lord Jesus "*called a little child unto Him and set him in the midst of them.*" The Greek word used for "little child" is PAIDION. It is a diminutive of PAIS which usually means a child. So this was a **little** child. He was perhaps somewhere between the age of 4 and 7 or 8. In verse 6 the Lord Jesus goes on to say; "*whoso shall offend* (cause to stumble) *one of these little ones which believe in Me . . .*"

Two facts need to be understood:

- The Lord Jesus is still speaking about little children. He has one in His arms and refers to him with the words "*One of these little ones.*" The word for "little child" or "children" is used in verses 2, 3, 4 and 5. Then in verse 6 the Lord Jesus uses the word MIKROS

(little or small) and He is obviously still speaking about children, and specifically about little children.

- He speaks about "*little ones which believe in Me*." The word He uses is the same word (PISTEUO) as used in Acts 16 v31 and John 3 v16.

Is it not therefore simple, clear, and logical for us to conclude that it is possible for a child—even a little child—to trust Jesus Christ and to be saved? How do we know it is possible? Because the Lord Jesus says so. Personally, that is good enough for me.

This is not the only place in the Bible where it is clearly indicated that a child can have a real, true and valid experience with God.

- A child can fear the Lord (Deuteronomy 31 v12, 13).
- A child can set his hope or trust in God (Psalm 78 v7).
- A child can hear the voice of God and respond to it (1 Samuel 3 v10).
- A child can do that which is right in the sight of God (2 Chronicles 24 v1, 2).
- A child can believe, and trust Christ (John 4 v49, 53).
- A child can be a saint (or born again believer) (Ephesians 1 v1 and 6 v1; Colossians 1 v2 and 3 v20).
- A child can be faithful or believing (Titus 1 v6).

In addition there is a multitude of verses in the Bible which promise salvation to **all** who trust Christ:

- to those who believe on the Son (John 3 v36)
- to whomsoever believeth in Him (John 3 v16; Romans 10 v11)
- to all that believe (Acts 13 v39)
- to as many as received Him (John 1 v12)
- to whomsoever shall call on the Name of the Lord (Romans 10 v13)
- to those who repent (Acts 17 v30)

In none of these verses is there any restriction or limitation concerning age. The only qualification is a faith which includes repentance. To add another qualification, such as reaching a certain age, is unscriptural.

The Bible clearly teaches that a child, even a little child, can trust

Jesus Christ and be saved. Therefore we should pray for, and aim at, the salvation of our children.

In addition, experience shows us that many people have trusted Jesus Christ, and have been saved, early in life:

- Perhaps you yourself were saved as a child
- Perhaps you know others who were saved as children
- Perhaps you have seen a child, or children, saved under your ministry
- Certainly you should know that many well known Christians were saved as children. These include Leighton Ford (the well known American evangelist who was saved at six years of age), Corrie Ten Boom (the internationally known Dutch missionary and speaker who was saved at the age of five), Jonathan Edwards (one of the most outstanding evangelists and theologians in American church history who was saved at the age of seven), Stephen Olford (a well known English pastor, evangelist and conference speaker who was saved when he was seven years old) and many, many more.

Can a child truly trust Jesus Christ as his Saviour? Yes indeed.

Question 2

At what age can a child trust Jesus Christ as his Saviour?

Answer

This is a question to which the Bible does not give a specific answer. We must not read into the Bible that which is not there. It is therefore unscriptural to set any age before which it is unlikely or impossible for a child to be saved. It certainly does much harm to the cause of child evangelism, and to the children themselves, to speak about the ages of 12, 13 or 14 as the ages when a child is ready to trust Christ.

Unfortunately in many of our evangelical churches (especially in Europe) there is a philosophy of children's work which has three main goals:

- **To teach** the Bible and the Gospel to young children and older children. In this way you "sow the seed." But "the harvest" is not expected until at least teenage years.

- **To evangelize** the teenagers. A response should be prayed for and expected from them—perhaps around 15, 16 or 17 years of age. This response will be based upon what they were taught during childhood years.
- **To incorporate** these older saved teenagers into the local church.

The consequence of this philosophy is two-fold:

- ✓ The children, and especially the little children, are not evangelized.
- ✓ The teenagers when they are evangelized are often resistant to the Gospel.

Those who have this philosophy of children's work are absolutely and completely sincere in every way, and they are only doing what they feel is right and best. They do not really believe that it is usual for a child to trust Christ. They feel that it might be possible in a few special cases, but that it is not to be expected. They are unconsciously setting a lower age limit for regeneration around 12, 13 or, more likely, 14 years of age.

I repeat again that the Bible does not set such an age. The **only** reference in the New Testament to the age of children trusting Christ is Matthew 18 v6 where the Lord speaks about "one of these **little ones** which believe in Me." So the emphasis here is upon little children trusting the Lord.

The main reason why the Bible does not give an age, at which a child is ready to trust Christ, is because children are so different one from the other. Some children, and especially those from a Christian home, are more ready to trust Christ at an earlier age than those from a non Christian home. Some children of 5 and 6 years can have a clear understanding of spiritual truths, a real conviction of sin and are able to trust Christ. Yet, at the same time, you may find that some children of 7, 8 or 9 do not have this understanding and conviction and are not able or ready to trust Christ. So we cannot and should not set ages for conversion. Speaking about regeneration and the new birth the Lord Jesus said:

"*The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So is everyone born of the Spirit*" (John 3 v8).

This verse makes it clear that we must not try to set rules or to put limits on the work of the Holy Spirit. Dogmatism can sometimes be

dangerous. The Holy Spirit is sovereign in the work of regeneration even though what He does is often beyond our comprehension and impossible to explain.

As soon as a child is old enough to be conscious of having sinned against God, old enough to be sorry for his sin and to want to be different, and old enough to understand that Jesus Christ died for him, then he is old enough to place his trust and reliance in Jesus Christ and to be saved. What age is that? We don't know. But it is almost certainly a long time before he reaches the age of 12, 13 or 14.

Therefore it is our responsibility to evangelize children of all ages. The Lord Jesus commanded us:

"*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature*" (Mark 16 v15).

That command includes children, and it also includes little children. The consequences of our evangelism will be in the hands of the Holy Spirit; but we will have fulfilled our responsibility to evangelize them.

In the early years of my ministry I had the privilege of conducting evangelistic campaigns for children, and had the joy of leading many children to Jesus Christ. I kept a record of all their names, addresses and ages. Some time ago I studied all my statistics and I discovered that the largest age group which I had seen come to Christ were those between the ages of 8 and 10. There were also younger and older children who had trusted Christ, but the main group was the 8 to 10s. This does not, of course, prove anything; but it is, I believe, interesting. This took place a number of years ago. Children are somewhat different today and "develop" earlier. So those ages if transferred to today's child could probably be estimated as between 7 and 9.

I was interested to read, a number of years ago, in a secular book on child psychology, that the period of a person's whole life in which he is most stable emotionally is between the ages of 8 and 10!

At what age can a child trust Jesus Christ as his Saviour? We don't know—but it is often earlier than most people think.

Question 3

Are little children not too young to be able to understand the Gospel and have a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ?

Answer

In some cases the answer is "yes." They **are** too young. They are sometimes too young to understand what sin is, and to be convicted of it and without that understanding and conviction they are not able or ready to be saved.

I do not believe that **all** little children are able to trust Christ. A number of them are not—especially in the younger age group; and we should never put pressure upon them to do so.

But there are those who **are** ready and who **are** able to understand all that they need to understand to be saved; and we should remember the warning of the Lord Jesus not to despise or look down on the little ones:

"*Take heed that ye* ***despise not*** *one of these* ***little*** *ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven*" (Matthew 18 v10).

There are four factors to keep in mind in answer to this question:

- Salvation is by grace **through faith** (Ephesians 2 v8). Sinners are saved by faith and not by understanding.
- There must be some understanding, of course, before any person can exercise faith. But we must not make that level of understanding too high or too complicated (see my answer to question 2).
- We must never under-estimate the capacity of a little child to see and understand things which sometimes those who are more intellectual find difficult or impossible to see and understand: *"At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes"* (Matthew 11 v25).
- We must certainly not under-estimate the power of the Holy Spirit to illuminate, and to regenerate. That is the main key to answering this question. Those who deny the possibility of a little child being regenerated could be close to denying the power and ability of the Holy Spirit to regenerate that child.

Are little children not too young to understand the Gospel and to be saved? Many are, but others are not.

Question 4

What is the best age for a child to trust Jesus Christ?

Answer

The simplest answer to that question is—"The earlier the better."

We rejoice to see old men and women trust Jesus Christ. Their souls are saved, but most of their lives have been wasted. Their habits and personalities have long been shaped and formed, and these are relatively slow to change.

We are happy to see middle aged men and women come to Christ. But they also have given many years to the world.

It is wonderful to see young people and teenagers come to Christ. The larger part of their lives lies in front of them—years in which they can live for Christ and serve Him.

But it is especially wonderful to see a child of 10, or 9 or 8 or 7, or even younger, come to Christ. Almost all his life is still to be lived. Many of his habits, and some of his personality, still need to be shaped. What a potential! Not only is a soul saved but a life is also saved.

Jeremiah wrote:

"It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lamentations 3 v27).

And so it is. The sooner he starts to bear the yoke (Matthew 11 v29) the better. The younger he is, the more flexible and pliable he is and the less fixed and rigid.

I would rather see someone trust Christ at the age of 10 than at the age of 70; even better at the age of 8 or 6.

There is no **specific** answer to this question. But surely we would all agree that the sooner a person comes to Christ the better.

What is the best age for a child to trust Jesus Christ? The earlier the better.

Question 5

Is it necessary for a Christian child to know exactly when he was saved/born again?

Answer

Of course not. It **is** important for a person, whether he is young or old, to know that he has been born again. But it is not essential to know the exact day and hour when it happened. Unfortunately some Christian young people, who don't know the exact day and hour, are worried and concerned about this, especially when they hear the testimonies of those who do.

I was born physically into this world many years ago. I don't remember it happening; but I know it did. The same reasoning applies to the second birth.

It can be helpful for a child or an older person to know, and to have recorded somewhere, the actual moment when he trusted Christ—and many do. But it is not necessary.

When a child is born into a Christian home it is possible that he will come to Christ so early in life that he does not recollect the moment when it happened. This was the testimony of the well known preacher and writer Dr. Campbell Morgan. It is also possible that in a Christian home the gradual process which leads up to the initial moment of saving faith in Jesus Christ can be almost indistinguishable from that moment when the new birth occurs.

The Holy Spirit has selected and used the word "birth" to describe what happens when a person trusts Jesus Christ (John 1 v13; John 3 v3-8; 1 Peter 1 v23; 1 John 2 v29; 3 v9; 4 v7; 5 v1).

Every physical birth has three constituent parts. There is a process of nine months which precedes physical birth. Then there is the birth itself which happens definitely and at one specific time. And following that there is a process of growth which continues for years to come. These three parts are equally relevant with regard to the new birth. There is a process which precedes the new birth. It may be long or short. It involves exposure to God's Word, and a growing understanding of the Gospel and conviction of sin. Then at one moment in time the child is regenerated by the Holy Spirit and receives new life. At that time of new birth the gradual process of sanctification or growth begins, and continues for many years.

The "problem" for some is that they are not able to put their finger on

the actual moment of birth and regeneration. But it should not be a problem, so long as they know it has happened.

It is also possible that a few people may unknowingly be wrong with regard to the date of their new birth. While in their testimonies they relate that they were born again on a certain day and at a certain time, it is possible that this was not so.

- Perhaps their regeneration took place at an earlier time and the experience which they believe was their regeneration was a coming back to the Lord, or a step forward in their sanctification. This is sometimes true of people who say they were saved, or regenerated, as adults, but they can remember something happening when they were much younger. They can remember an earlier decision that was made, and a prayer that was prayed, and were then later almost forgotten about. Perhaps they will discover, one day, that **that** earlier experience was the time of their regeneration, and not later.
- Then there are others whose regeneration may have taken place at a later time than they have always thought and believed. It could be that what they believed to be their regeneration was, in fact, part of the preliminary process and part of the preparatory work of the Holy Spirit before their "real" regeneration. And it could be that a later experience which they believed to be an experience of special blessing in their lives was in reality their regeneration.

It is important and vital in all these situations to know that we have been born again. It is interesting and helpful to know (or to think we know) when it happened—but it is not at all necessary.

Is it necessary for a Christian child to know exactly when he was saved/born again? No.

Question 6

Are all children in the Kingdom of God?

Answer

William Hendriksen, the well known American theologian and writer, defines the Kingdom of God as "the realm in which His rule is recognized and obeyed and in which His grace prevails." He says also that "it is clear

that this expression is equivalent to having everlasting life or being saved" (John 3 v16, 17).

Are all children in this Kingdom? Certainly not. There is nowhere in Scripture where we are taught that all children are in the Kingdom of God. To the contrary, the Bible teaches clearly that all children are spiritually dead, outside the Kingdom of God, and that they need a Saviour. For example the children who were addressed directly as believers or saints in Ephesians 6 v1, had been spiritually dead before they were saved (Ephesians 2 v1, 5). Children are not born into the Kingdom of God. The Bible makes this clear in John 3 v3:

"Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

That is very clear and very definite. The only way to enter the Kingdom of God is through regeneration (on the side of the Holy Spirit), and through repentance and faith (on the side of the sinner). The new birth is a work of the Holy Spirit (John 3 v5, 6) using the Word of God (James 1 v18) and it is this new birth which gives a person new life, a new nature and an entrance into God's Kingdom.

All children born into this world are spiritually dead right from conception and from birth and will remain so until they trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour (Romans 5 v15; Ephesians 2 v1; Ephesians 2 v5). At that moment of faith in Jesus Christ they are regenerated and receive eternal life (Ephesians 2 v5; 1 Peter 1 v3; Titus 3 v5).

All children born into this world have a sinful, corrupt nature right from their conception, which they have inherited from Adam (Psalm 51 v5; Ephesians 2 v3; Romans 5 v12). This nature will show itself, as the child grows, in sinful acts (Psalm 58 v3; Isaiah 53 v6; Romans 3 v23). But the child has trusted Jesus Christ as his Saviour, has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and has received a new nature (2 Corinthians 5 v17), and a new desire to please God—even though he is certainly not perfect.

This is why children need to be evangelized. The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God and the Gospel message to regenerate boys and girls. So they need to hear the Gospel simply and earnestly taught and preached. If they were already in the Kingdom of God they would not need to be evangelized.

Unfortunately there are those in evangelical circles, and even those who work with children, who believe that all children are in the Kingdom

of God. One leader of an evangelical organisation which works with children writes, "Children already belong to the Kingdom of God" and "All children begin with God." The logical conclusion to such reasoning would be that they do not need to be evangelized until they become older and enter their teens.

These people base their views primarily on the words of the Lord Jesus:

"Suffer the little children to come unto Me and forbid them not for of such is the Kingdom of God" (Mark 10 v14).

But this verse could not teach that all children are in the Kingdom of God. Instead, the verse and its context make it clear that the Lord Jesus is saying that the Kingdom of God is only for those who are willing and ready to become like little children.

- He says in verse 14 "*of such* is the Kingdom of God" or "the Kingdom of God consists of people like this"; and this meaning is brought out clearly in the NIV translation which reads "for the Kingdom of God belongs to such as these."
- The following verse, verse 15, explains clearly what the words in verse 14 mean:
  "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as (or like) a little child, he shall not enter therein."

We need to understand that all children are:

- outside the Kingdom of God
- spiritually dead
- sinners by nature

We need to evangelize them and we need to pray that the Holy Spirit will work in their hearts as they hear the Gospel, that He will regenerate them, and bring them into His Kingdom.

Are all children in the Kingdom of God? Certainly not.

Question 7

Are the children of believers automatically in the Kingdom of God?

Answer

The answer is, once again, certainly not. There is nothing in Scripture to show us that any child is born into the Kingdom of God, and that includes the children of believers as much as it does the children of unbelievers.

Those who believe that the children of believers (or of one believer) are in the Kingdom of God usually base their belief on verses such as Mark 10 v14 (which we have dealt with when answering question 6) and 1 Corinthians 7 v14:

"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy" (1 Corinthians 7 v14).

This verse does not teach that the children of believers are in the Kingdom of God. The word "holy" used with regard to the children of believers is another form of the word "sanctified" which is used twice in this verse. This verse states that the unbelieving spouse is sanctified by the believing spouse. This cannot possibly mean that the unbelieving spouse is saved or in the Kingdom of God because of his/her spouse's faith. The word "holy" used with regard to the children is the third use in this verse of the same word "sanctified" in one of its forms. It similarly cannot mean that the children are saved or in the Kingdom of God on the basis of their parents' faith.

What does the word mean? In all three cases it can only mean that the unbelieving person concerned—whether husband, wife or child—is in a very special state of privilege. The child of believers **is** special. He has parents who pray for him, who witness to him and who live the Christian life before him. He is different from the children of unbelievers. This is not because he is saved, but because he has a much greater possibility of being saved. He is also different because his home is a Christian home with fewer or even, hopefully, none of the problems which can so often exist in a non Christian home.

This verse also says that children who do not have believing parents are "unclean." This means that they are ritually outside the place of spiritual privilege and that they are less likely to trust Jesus Christ.

There are also those who wrongly use this verse to back up their teaching that the baptism of an infant brings him into the Kingdom of God. This teaching is called "baptismal regeneration." It is, of course, completely unscriptural. Baptism cannot save anyone, whether young or old.

There are two **evangelical** views concerning baptism:

- That the infant children of believers are baptised **as a sign** that they are being welcomed into the visible church, and **as a sign** of their parents' belief and faith that one day they will trust Jesus Christ and be saved.
- That those who have trusted Jesus Christ as their Saviour are baptised **as a sign** that they have trusted Christ and as an act of witness and testimony to what they have done.

In both cases baptism is only a sign. It points forward in one case, and backward in the other. But neither group believes, or should believe, that baptism can save, regenerate or bring the one baptised into the Kingdom of God. Baptism is an act performed by man and not by God.

When it is believed that the children of believers are in the Kingdom of God, either automatically or through baptism, they will not be evangelized by their parents or teachers; and this can cause irreparable harm to the children. Why evangelize them if they are already in the Kingdom?

This danger can be illustrated by the words of one leader of an evangelical organisation which works with children:

He writes, "Children from Christian homes can be affirmed as members of the Kingdom until they choose to reject their birthright" and "It becomes more fitting to think of nurture than evangelism for such children."

May God enable us to see the spiritual need of these dear children and may we evangelize them so that they can truly enter the Kingdom of God through faith in Jesus Christ and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

Are the children of believers automatically in the Kingdom of God? Certainly not.

Question 8

Does the Bible give a guarantee that all the children of believers will be saved? Do you believe in household salvation? How do you account for some children of Christian parents who are not following the Lord?

Answer

When parents are saved—or when even one parent is saved—all their children are brought into a position and place of real spiritual privilege. They are not like other children. They have parents who teach them the Word of God, who pray for them and who witness to them by their lives. Therefore these children are more likely to trust Jesus Christ than children who do not have Christian parents. We said in the answer to question 7 that this is taught in 1 Corinthians 7 v14.

"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy" (1 Corinthians 7 v14).

This verse does not teach that children are automatically saved because they have Christian parents—no more than it teaches that a husband is automatically saved because his wife is a Christian. They are sanctified, set apart, and different because of the family member(s) who is (are) saved—but that is all.

The same situation is referred to in Acts 16 v31:

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved—and thy house."

The salvation of the jailer would bring his family into a new position of spiritual privilege. This meant that there would be a very strong likelihood of "the house" or household being saved if he, the father, trusted Christ. And we read in verse 34 that the household were saved, but only when they themselves put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The father's faith had brought all of them into a place of spiritual privilege, and had, thereby, made it both possible and likely that they would trust Christ. But they themselves still needed to trust Christ to be saved. To believe otherwise would be contrary to the clear biblical teaching that salvation is by personal faith alone in Jesus Christ.

In Acts 2 v39 we read:

"The promise is unto you and to your children and to all that are afar off —even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

The promise of salvation is for our children also, but only as and when the Lord calls them. It is not something which happens automatically.

In Proverbs 22 v6 we read:

"Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it."

This verse is an outline of a general principle that the training and influence a person receives, and is given, in childhood will never leave him. But it does not specifically refer to salvation.

One writer explains this verse as not so much a promise as a warning to Christian parents. He writes, "In the Hebrew text the phrase 'in the way he should go' is entirely lacking. The Hebrew says 'Train up a child in **his** way and when he is old he will not depart from it.' "

Jay Adams in his book "Competent to Counsel" writes that this verse is "a warning to parents that if they allow a child to train himself after his own wishes (permissively) they should not expect him to want to change these patterns when he matures."

We could conclude therefore from the above verses (and from others such as Genesis 17 v7 and Exodus 20 v5, 6) that the children of believers are in a special place of privilege and that it is likely that they will trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour. So there are enough Bible verses to encourage parents to trust God for the salvation of their children.

But at the same time I cannot see in Scripture any absolute **guarantee** that they will be saved. There are examples in Scripture of the children of godly parents who did not follow in their parents' ways of godliness:

- The sons of Samuel, the godly leader of Israel, and one of the godliest men in the Bible, did not follow in his ways (1 Samuel 8 v1-15).
- The sons of Eli the priest made themselves vile (1 Samuel 3 v13)—although the Bible makes it clear that Eli bore at least some of the blame for that.
- Several godly kings had children who were not themselves godly. These included Hezekiah (2 Chronicles 29 v1, 2). He was a godly king of Judah. Yet his son Manasseh did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord (2 Chronicles 33 v1, 2)—although he turned to God later in life (2 Chronicles 33 v12).

  The same was true of godly Jehoshaphat who had a godly father

Asa (2 Chronicles 14 v2) but an ungodly son Jehoram (2 Chronicles 21 v6).

The opposite has, of course, also happened. Ungodly fathers have had godly sons and this can also be illustrated in many of the lives of the kings of Judah and Israel.

There have also been examples of children in church history who have not followed in the godly footsteps of their parents, and the same is also true today.

So, while parents are encouraged by the Word of God to trust God for the salvation of their children, there are also verses and examples in Scripture to warn them not to take anything for granted, but to pray, witness to and teach their children so that they can have the privilege of seeing God work in the lives of their children—now or later.

"For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment: that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which He hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18 v19).

There are three points, lastly, which I would like to emphasize:

- Only God knows the hearts of "prodigal sons or daughters" and what is going on there. And only He knows what happens to them in the closing moments of life. There is always the possibility that the sovereign God will regenerate them, or bring them back to Himself at that time, on the basis of what they had been taught by their parents.
- We must never come to the conclusion that, if a child does not follow in the spiritual footsteps of his parents, it is the fault of his parents. It may be, but it does not automatically mean that it is. As we have seen there are many examples of godly parents such as the prophet Samuel who had this heart-breaking experience.
- The Bible makes it clear that all, including the children of godly parents, need to make their own decisions before God, and that they, and they alone, are responsible for those decisions.
  "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezekiel 18 v20).

Question 9

Are all children lost?

Answer

The answer depends upon what you mean by the word "lost."

The Greek word APOLLUMI is translated several ways in the New Testament.

Generally it is translated as DESTROY or PERISH, and the context of these usages clearly teaches that the unsaved sinner is under the judgment of God, and will be lost forever if he dies in that condition.

"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able ***to destroy*** both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10 v28).

"That whosoever believeth in Him should not ***perish***, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotton Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not ***perish***, but have everlasting life" (John 3 v15, 16).

Every person who does not believe, and who rejects God and His salvation is lost, "the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3 v36) and he will perish and be destroyed or judged for ever if he dies in that unbelief.

The sinner who, on the other hand, trusts Jesus Christ as His Saviour will never perish, or be condemned, or be judged.

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never ***perish***, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand" (John 10 v28).

All Christ rejectors are lost in this sense according to the Word of God. The logical conclusion is that children who are old enough to understand, and to be convicted of sin, and to understand in some way that Jesus Christ died for them, and yet reject, and say "no" to, the way of salvation will, if they die, perish—that is be judged, destroyed and separated from God forever. These children are LOST in their condition. They are already under the wrath of God (John 3 v36). They are guilty and accountable to, and in danger of, God's eternal judgment, and they need to be saved.

The word APOLLUMI is also translated a number of times by the word LOST. This translation is usually determined by the context and would seem to refer to position. In other words a person in this sense is "outside." He is in the wrong position and not where he should be. This would be

quite similar to the way we use the word "lost" in our conversation today. An object is lost. It is in the wrong position and we need to look for it. A child is lost. He went for a walk and could not find his way home. So we look for him.

We see the word used in this sense in several verses:

Matthew 10 v6
Matthew 18 v11-13
Luke 15 v4
Luke 15 v24
Luke 19 v10

Those who do not believe are not only lost in the sense of being UNDER GOD'S WRATH, they are also lost in the sense of being far away from God and they are lost in their POSITION.

All mankind are lost in this latter sense. Everyone is born **outside** the Kingdom of God, and is spiritually dead. Everyone is separated from God by nature. This includes all children, who, whether they have reached the age of understanding or not, are lost in their position and outside God's Kingdom. The Lord Jesus makes it clear that His Heavenly Father does not desire or want any of these children to be lost:

"Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish (or be lost)" (Matthew 18 v14).

His desire is the salvation of children.

So we could say that all children are lost as far as their position and their relationship to God is concerned. But only those children who have reached an age of understanding and who reject God's salvation are lost eternally if they die.

Are all children lost? Yes!

Question 10

What happens to a baby if he dies?

Answer

The answer to question 9 goes a long way towards the answering of this question.

The basic biblical fact to remember is that God judges people on the

basis of what they can know, understand and feel—on the basis, that is, of their responsibility.

The Bible makes that clear:

"He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3 v18).

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3 v19).

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3 v36).

Therefore the logical conclusion is that, if it is impossible for a person to know anything, understand anything or feel anything concerning God and sin, it is equally impossible for that person to be judged and sentenced to a lost eternity. Can it be said of a little baby that "he has loved or chosen darkness rather than light?" Surely not.

In addition we can be sure from Scripture that our God would never condemn a baby to eternal judgment and separation from Himself, when that little one is incapable of both understanding and rejection.

It would seem also that David had the assurance that he would, one day, see his little new born baby, who had just died, when he said:

"But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Samuel 12 v23).

The problem we face with the answer I have given is that the Bible makes it clear that only those who are **born again** can enter God's Kingdom (John 3 v5). We have already seen that everyone (including little babies) are outside God's Kingdom, that they are spiritually dead and have a sinful nature. How then can a spiritually dead baby with a sinful nature who is born outside God's Kingdom enter God's Kingdom if he dies? We don't know. Charles Spurgeon, the famous preacher, suggested that infants who die are regenerated by a sovereign act of a gracious God at the moment of death, and are then, on the basis of that sovereign act of regeneration, in God's Kingdom and taken into Heaven. He wrote, "We know that infants enter the kingdom for we are convinced that all of our race who die in infancy are included in the election of grace, and partake in the redemption

wrought out by our Lord." I personally believe that is what happens, but we cannot be dogmatic about the process, because the Bible does not tell us.

But if this is so, and I believe it is, then there are multitudes in Heaven who died as infants. Also if we believe that a child receives his soul at conception (as I do) then those millions of little ones who were aborted before birth would also be in Heaven.

What happens to a baby if he dies? God takes him to Heaven.

Question 11

Is there an age of accountability?

Answer

If my answer to question 10 is correct, and I believe and trust it is, then there must, logically, be an age of accountability.

- **What is an age of accountability?**
  The age of accountability is that age when a child becomes old enough to know what sin is before God; old enough to be convicted of sin and to have a desire to turn from it; old enough to know in some way that Jesus Christ died for him; and old enough to trust Jesus Christ as his Saviour, or reject Him.
  If a child dies before he reaches that age of accountability or age of understanding then God will, I believe, graciously take him home to Heaven. But if he dies in unbelief and rejection after he reaches that age then he will be lost forever.
  We have already seen in the answer to question 10 that a person is condemned by his unbelief and rejection (John 3 v18; John 3 v36); and that includes children, if they are old enough to choose deliberately not to believe and to reject God's voice.
- **Are there any Bible verses which teach an age of accountability?**
  There are very few references anywhere in the Bible to an age of accountability. Most of my conclusions are drawn logically, I believe, from more general biblical verses and the principles contained in them.

"He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he had not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3 v18).
Those who are condemned by God are those who have, deliberately and consciously, not believed.
"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 18 v19).
Condemnation or judgment is related to, and determined by, the loving of darkness and the rejection of light.
However, there are several verses which seem to refer directly to an age of accountability and which seem to imply that very little ones are not accountable.
"Moreover your little ones which ye said should be a prey (probably below 20 years of age according to Numbers 14 v29-31) and your children which in that day had ***no knowledge between good and evil*** (almost certainly those who were considerably younger) they shall go in thither" (Deuteronomy 1 v39).
"Before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good" (Isaiah 7 v16).
"And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?" (Jonah 4 v11).

↗ **At what age then does a child become accountable to God?**
We don't know. The Bible does not give any such age. Also it is obvious that one child differs from another, and that some come to an age of understanding earlier than others. The latter is probably true of children born into a Christian home.
Therefore we should not try to set ages. But I feel we can say clearly and dogmatically that this age of understanding and accountability is a long time before the child reaches the age of 13 or 14. Yet many in our churches and evangelical circles seem to think that all children below **that** age are innocent, not guilty and not accountable.
May God open our eyes to the possibility of children being accountable to God, and under His wrath if they are not saved.

- **Why does God not tell us when the age of accountability is?** It would be easier for us if He did tell us. He does not do so because, as we have already seen, the age varies from child to child. But, secondly, and most importantly, we do not have this information because it is, strictly speaking, "not our business." Our business is to evangelize all children no matter what age they are; and not to spend our time and energy discussing and trying to decide who is accountable and who is not. God knows their hearts, and how they stand before Him. Our job is to evangelize, not philosophize.
  May God so burden our hearts for all children—big and small—that we will take the Gospel to them according to Mark 16 v15 and pray that God will work in their hearts and lead them to trust Christ.

Is there an age of accountability? Yes, but we don't know when it is.

Question 12

Is a child more open to the Gospel than an adult?

Answer

The clear and obvious answer to this question is a resounding "Yes." But we need to give the reasons for this answer; and we also need to examine the consequences of such a positive answer.

How do we know that a child is more open to the Gospel?

- The Bible teaches us that this is so.
  - There are verses which teach us that an adult must become like a child before he can be saved:
    "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18 v3).
    "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as (or like) a little child, he shall not enter therein" (Mark 10 v15).
    A child is by nature simple, humble, tender-hearted and trustful. An adult is by nature complicated, proud, hard-hearted and skeptical. Before he can be saved he must become like a child.

But a child already is a child, and already has the childlike characteristics outlined above. He is, of course, still spiritually dead, but God can use those natural abilities, which the child already possesses, to lead him to Christ.

We could visualize this biblical principle by an object lesson which uses a wooden door to represent the door of salvation. This door would be about four feet high. Is it necessary and possible for an adult to go through this door? Yes. But he must bend and become like a child first of all. Is it necessary and possible for a child to go through this door? Of course it is—but he has an advantage. He does not have to become like a child. He already is one.

- There are Bible verses which indicate that the longer a person rejects truth the harder his heart will become.

  "Again, He limiteth a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time; as it is said, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts" (Hebrews 4 v7).

  "That they (the children) might set their hope in God . . . and not be like their fathers a stubborn and rebellious generation" (Psalm 78 v7, 8).

  The clear implication is that the hearts of children are more tender and more open.
- Solomon encourages children and young people to remember their Creator before they become hardened by sin.

  "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Ecclesiastes 12 v1).

↗ Statistics show us that this is so

It is a recognized and proven fact that the older a person is, the less likelihood there is of his trusting Christ. Statistics show us that most people are saved when young, and that relatively few are saved in old age.

↗ Experience shows us that this is so

Those who work with adults, teenagers and children can easily find out for themselves that the children are the most open and most responsive group to their message. This is true all over the world.

- Christian leaders say that this is so
  Charles Spurgeon for example writes:
  "Capacity for believing lies more in the child than in the man. We grow less rather than more capable of faith; every year brings the unregenerate mind further away from God, and makes it less capable of receiving the things of God. What capacity is wanted? Capacity to believe? I tell you children have more of that than grownup persons. I am not now speaking of the spiritual part of faith but as far as the mental faculty is concerned there is any quantity of the capacity for faith in the heart of the child. His believing faculty has not yet been overloaded by superstition, or perverted by falsehood, or maimed by wicked unbelief. Only let the Holy Spirit consecrate the faculty and there is enough of it for the production of abundant faith in God."
- **What are the consequences of this answer?**
  If the answer to this question is "Yes," as I believe it is, there are several logical conclusions:
  - ✓ We should expect to see more children than adults come to Christ.
  - ✓ We should see the benefits of evangelizing children because they are the most open to our message.
    As a business man invests in that part of his business which brings him most profits, so should churches see the need to invest a substantial portion of time, finance and personnel in the evangelism of children, realizing that this ministry will, in the long run, bring the greatest returns.
  - ✓ We should not fail to evangelize the children. Instead we must ensure that the most fruitful field for evangelism does not become the most neglected field for evangelism.
  - ✓ We must keep a biblical balance. I am not advocating that only children should be evangelized. Adults and teenagers need to be evangelized also. The command of the Lord Jesus is to evangelize everybody (Mark 16 v15). I am saying that because children make up one third of the world's population, and because they are the most open to the Gospel, at least one third of our resources of time, people and finance should be directed to their evangelism. Is that not logical?

Is a child more open to the Gospel than an adult? Definitely yes.

Question 13

Is it better for a person to be saved as an adult, as a teenager or as a child? Why?

Answer

The younger a person is when he comes to Christ the better. I feel that most Christians would give **this** answer to such a question.

- **This is what the Bible teaches**
  - ✓ Jeremiah wrote:
    "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lamentations 3 v27).
  - ✓ Solomon wrote:
    "Remember ***now*** thy Creator in the days of thy youth" (Ecclesiastes 12 v1).
  - ✓ Solomon also wrote:
    "Those who seek Me ***early*** shall find Me" (Proverbs 8 v17).
  - ✓ In Psalm 78 v1-8 the psalmist was obviously concerned that the children should set their hope in God, and obey Him, while they were children and before they became so stubborn and rebellious that they would not be interested in doing so.
- **Common sense tells us that this is so**
  Logic and common sense indicate to us that it is better for a person to be saved before he sinks into the depths of sin rather than for him to sink into those depths and then need to be reclaimed or saved from them. Years spent in sin prior to conversion always leave their mark on a Christian's life even though he has been saved from its condemnation.
  Also we have already seen in the answer to question 12 that a person is more likely to trust Christ when he is young and when he is relatively open to the Gospel. So it is not only better, but also simpler for him to be saved when young.

- **A child saved is a life saved**

  We who work with children are not only interested in and concerned for their souls, and for the salvation of their souls. We are also interested in, and concerned for, their lives and we want to see these lives lived to the Glory of God. A child saved is not only a soul saved but a life saved. When a child trusts Christ at the age of, say, eight, he has, God willing, over sixty or seventy years left to live for Jesus Christ. When an adult trusts Christ at the age of sixty he has just a few years left to give to Jesus Christ. All his best years are gone and have been wasted in the world.

  We can therefore understand the answer D.L. Moody, the well known American evangelist, gave when he was asked the question "How many were saved last night?" His answer "Two and a half" took the questioner by surprise.

  "Oh," he said, "You mean two adults and a child."

  "Certainly not," replied Mr. Moody, "I mean two children and an adult."

  Three souls had been saved; but two and a half lives had been saved.

- **Prevention is better than cure**

  It is also better for a person to come to Christ as a child rather than as an adult because a person's personality and habits are formed in the early years of life. When he comes to his teenage years and especially when he becomes an adult his personality and habits are already fixed and firm, and will require very radical change if, and when, he trusts Jesus Christ. The change in the child who trusts Christ will be much less radical, and his habits will not need to be so greatly changed or broken.

  If a gardener wants to change the shape of a plant or the direction in which it is growing he always does so when it is young and pliable. It becomes difficult, and well nigh impossible, when it matures and is fixed and solid.

  A Christian worker was listening to the testimonies being given by others in a Gospel service. One had been saved from drunkenness, and another from crime. They were interesting and, in many ways, exciting testimonies. The Christian worker came to me, and said sadly, "I wish I had a testimony like they have." I asked her when

she was saved and she told me, "I trusted Christ at the age of 4½ and I know nothing about much of the sin they have been speaking about."

"Margaret," I answered, "You should praise God for that. Yours is the most wonderful testimony of all. I am sure that everyone of those men would give their right arm for a testimony like yours."

Is it better to be saved as an adult, a young person or a child? As a child!

Question 14

How can I know if a child is saved or not?

Answer

We can know that a child is saved, firstly, by what he says. If he says that he has trusted Jesus Christ as his Saviour we should believe him unless, or until, time and circumstances indicate otherwise. Just as the law states that a man is not guilty until he is proved guilty, so a child who professes salvation is seen as saved until he shows he is not.

We can know that a child is saved, secondly, by the evidence or fruits of salvation which can be seen in his life.

"If any man (or child) be in Christ he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5 v17).

Saving faith will always manifest itself in works. If it doesn't, it is not saving faith. If there is no evidence of works then the "faith" is "dead faith" as James calls it in James 2 v17, 20 and 26—and "dead faith" cannot save.

We should not, however, set the standards of such evidence, or of such works, too high. The child is a child; and does not yet have much knowledge, experience and ability to deal with sin. These will grow and develop as the child matures. But there should be at least a little of such evidence:

- some love shown for the Lord Jesus
- some concern for the salvation of others
- some desire to read the Bible and pray
- some desire to please God in word and/or deed

However, we need always to remember again that the child who is saved does not become some kind of angelic being overnight. Saved boys are still boys, and far from perfect. Therefore we should not expect too much from these children. There **will** be evidence (if they are saved), but it will not necessarily be spectacular evidence. This is especially so in the case of children who are born into Christian homes. The change in their lives after they trust Christ could be more difficult for the human eye to see—especially in the short term.

There are several important points to keep in mind:

- It is clear from the Bible and from experience that a child can profess to be saved, without in fact being saved. This is especially possible when a form of evangelism has been practised which puts pressure upon children to "make decisions" for which they are not spiritually ready, and which are the result of the techniques of the evangelist rather than the work of the Holy Spirit. The fruit must not be picked before it is ripe!
- The evidence of salvation in a child's life can be slow in appearing and may be small in size. Don't be too discouraged too soon. Be patient!
- You should teach the children that if they are saved there **will** be evidence. Encourage them to examine themselves—but avoid creating doubts. Such self-examination is biblical (1 Corinthians 11 v28; 2 Corinthians 13 v5; James 1 v22-26).
- Ultimately only God Himself knows the hearts of the children and whether they are saved or not. We must be careful not to become both judge and jury.

Question 15

Do children who trust Christ really stand firm and go on with the Lord or is another later "decision" necessary?

Answer

I presume that we are talking here about children who have truly trusted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and that we are not talking about children who have just professed salvation—for one reason or another. The latter group will not and cannot "stand firm" or "go on with the Lord,"

because they have not made a genuine beginning on the Christian pathway. It is their "going back into the world" which often brings discredit and disrepute upon child evangelism. This is why it is so essential for every children's evangelist to ensure that his evangelism is biblical, solid and thorough, and that he is depending completely upon the Holy Spirit to save children, and not upon himself, his personality and his methods.

The child who has truly trusted Christ is, according to the Bible, born again, justified, adopted, baptized into the body of Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, redeemed, sealed, and has eternal life. These are permanent works of God and cannot be lost.

It **is** possible for a child who is truly saved to go back into the world for a shorter or a longer period. But I believe that God will keep His hand upon him and will restore him again one day. Because he is born again and the Holy Spirit lives in him he cannot be truly happy and contented in the world. He is like "a fish out of water." If he is completely and permanently happy and contented in the world then he is not saved.

Can a child really stand firm and go on with the Lord? Yes, of course he can, but there will often be times of backsliding, doubt and disobedience. Many decisions will be necessary! Every time he falls into sin, a decision is necessary to come back to the Lord and to ask for forgiveness and for new strength. But these are not, in any way, repeats of, or additions to, that one great "decision" he made when he trusted Christ. That only happens once—and stands for eternity.

We could ask ourselves another question which is equally relevant: "Can an adult really stand firm and go on with the Lord?" The answers would be exactly the same as those given to the questions about children.

"No, he will not go on with the Lord if he is not saved."

"Yes, he can stand firm and go on with the Lord."

"Yes, he can go back into the world."

"No, he will not lose his salvation if he is truly saved."

"Yes, God will bring him back again."

It is interesting to read the words of Charles Spurgeon on this matter:

> "I have more confidence in the spiritual life of the children that I have received into this church than I have in the spiritual life of the adults thus received. I have usually found a clearer knowledge of the Gospel and a warmer love to Christ in the child converts, than in the man converts. My conviction is that our converts from among children are

> among the very best we have. I should judge them to have been more numerously genuine than any other class, more constant and in the long run more solid. I speak of those who are tried and kept under the wing of the church."

Question 16

Is making a decision for Christ a genuine salvation experience for a child or is it just one of many steps leading to a more mature understanding which will in turn lead to true conversion at a later age?

Answer

It could be either! The answer depends primarily on that initial "decision for Christ." If it was the work of the Holy Spirit convicting, helping to understand, granting saving faith and regenerating—then it was a genuine salvation experience. This does not need to be repeated. It is not a step leading to a true conversion experience at a later date. It is itself a true conversion experience. Of course it will be followed by many steps in the process of sanctification. These will be steps which will result in a deeper understanding of what has happened to him, and which will also, little by little, change him into the image of Jesus Christ.

However, if the decision was just "a decision," if it was just a human and fleshly response which was not the work of the Holy Spirit, the situation is, of course, completely different. There can be two results from this type of "decision."

- The most common result of such a decision is that the child thinks he is saved when, in fact, he is not. This gives him a false sense of assurance and, as a result, this child can be very difficult to reach with the Gospel and to lead to a true saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. A person once said to me, "It is good for children to make such decisions—even if they are not genuine. Each one will lead him closer to Christ." I believe that, generally, this is not so. The great danger is that through a decision like this the child becomes self-satisfied and very difficult to reach. He may grow up resting his future and eternity on a past decision which did not result in any real change or desire for spiritual things.

Because of this danger two warnings are, I believe, necessary:

- ✓ We must be careful how we evangelize children. They are so open, so interested and so easy to influence. Consequently, it is the easiest thing in the world to put some pressure upon a child that will result in his making a decision which is our work and not the work of the Holy Spirit. This pressure could be physical pressure—pleading and using various techniques to get him to give a quick outward response—and may not be the response of the heart. It could be emotional pressure—using certain types of music or sad stories to bring too much influence on his emotions. It could even be social pressure—trying to get the child to respond because others are visibly doing so, or because it would please the teacher or parent. We put pressure upon children at their peril. Be careful.
- ✓ We need to encourage children to examine themselves whether they are true believers or not (1 Corinthians 11 v28; 2 Corinthians 13 v5; James 1 v22-26). We don't want to create doubts or foster some kind of morbid introspection. But the child should be taught, and should know, that if he is in Christ he is a new creature (2 Corinthians 5 v17); and therefore if he is not a new creature he is not in Christ. We don't want to encourage a false sense of assurance.

↗ There is a second possible, but much more rare, result of a human and fleshly decision. God works in wonderful ways which can often not be explained. Regeneration happens at one moment of time. But like human birth there is a process which leads up to it—as the Holy Spirit helps a child to understand, and as He convicts him of his sin and his need. It may be that while that first "decision" was not a true conversion/regeneration experience, it was a step along the way, which led eventually to a true conversion at a later age. However, this is not the usual result, and the danger of such decisions greatly outweighs any possible advantage.

I would like to say in conclusion that it is sometimes difficult for a person to be absolutely **sure** when he was regenerated.

↗ Some who believe they were regenerated at, say, the age of 22 may discover in Heaven that they were actually saved away back in a Good News Club when they prayed a simple but sincere prayer

of faith. They went back into the world and their experience at 22 years of age was not regeneration but a coming back to the Lord who had kept His Good Hand upon them down through those years.

- Some who believe they were regenerated in childhood may discover that this **was** just a step in the right direction, and that their experience of regeneration took place at a later date.

The answers will be clear in eternity. In the meantime we need to remember the words of the Lord Jesus in John chapter 3 and verse 8: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit."

SECTION II:
Evangelism And The Child

Question 17

Why should we evangelize children?

Answer

I believe that I can give you at least ten good answers to that question. I do not have the space to go into each answer in detail. But they have been dealt with in considerable detail in another book which I have written entitled "Why Evangelize Children?" If you don't have a copy of it please write to the address given at the front of this book, and one will be sent to you.

Here are the answers—in brief outline:

- We evangelize children because the future is in their hands—the future of the church and the future of the country. The evangelism of children is therefore an investment in the future.
- We evangelize children because many of them are able to respond to the Gospel in simple faith. The fact that many of them could be saved if they heard the Gospel encourages us to bring that Gospel to them.
- We evangelize children because they have a spiritual need. Without Christ they are spiritually dead and outside God's Kingdom, and they can only become alive and enter His Kingdom by a saving response to the Gospel. Children also need the power and strength which only comes from Jesus Christ to be able to handle the sin and pressures of this world.

  Also if a child has reached the age of accountability (which is, I believe, earlier than most people think) and has not trusted Jesus Christ he will, if he dies, be lost forever. But faith in Jesus Christ through the preaching of the Gospel gives to such children eternal salvation.
- We evangelize children because they are so open to the Gospel and to the message we have to bring to them. Later on in years they will

become closed to our message, and there will be much less possibility of a response to it. Why should we wait until then, when the Bible, statistics and experience all show us that the child is more open to the Gospel than the adult?

- We evangelize children because they have their whole lives to live. A child saved is not just a soul saved. It is also a life saved. Also it is so much better for a child to come to Christ for salvation before much of his personality and many of his habits are formed and fixed. When an adult comes to Christ he has relatively few years left to live for Christ, much of his life has been wasted, and his personality and habits are already fixed and firm.
- We evangelize children because Jesus Christ loves children and wants them to come to Him. He made this clear when the disciples turned the children away; and He said:
  "Let the little children come unto Me and forbid them not" (Mark 10 v14).
  He also said that when we receive children in His Name it is just as if we are receiving Him (Matthew 18 v5). In addition He emphasized that His Heavenly Father does not want even one of them to perish or be lost (Matthew 18 v14).
- We evangelize children because through them we can reach parents and families who could not be reached in any other way. A child is often the only one who can touch and influence an unsaved father's heart. Through the child, parents can hear the Word of God—and even be saved. Of course we do not just evangelize children so that we can reach their parents. We evangelize children because of themselves, and their needs. But, at the same time and "as a by product" others can be reached through them.
- We evangelize children because the Holy Spirit calls some of us to this ministry. Two of His gifts are teaching and evangelism; and it is reasonable to conclude that He gives to a number of people the gift of teaching children or the gift of evangelizing children, and we exercise these gifts in obedience to His call.
- We evangelize children because the Lord Jesus Christ has commanded us to do so. He said:
  "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to *every* creature." (Mark 16 v15).

Biblical evangelism is to evangelize everybody, and that includes children. This is perhaps the most important reason for the evangelism of children. We evangelize children because He commands us to do so, and we do not really need any other reason.

- However there is one more reason—and perhaps it is even still more important. We evangelize children because we want to see God glorified in their lives. Our greatest desire is that He, and He alone, will be glorified through the salvation and sanctification of children. Can we have any higher reason, goal or purpose than that?

Question 18

What does it mean to evangelize children?

Answer

We have already seen that the Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to evangelize everybody (Mark 16 v15). His disciples were sent out into the world to proclaim a simple yet profound message. This message was, under the power of the Holy Spirit, to turn the world up side down and be the means of deep and profound changes in the lives of countless millions around the world and down through the years of history.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for *it is the power of God* unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans 1 v16).

So our ministry to the unsaved, whether they be adults, teenagers or children must be based upon the Gospel of Jesus Christ as outlined in the New Testament and as preached by the apostles. Therefore the basis of our ministry to children must be evangelism.

There are many dear workers among children who for one reason or another do not see or understand that they are required first of all to evangelize the children who are committed to them.

- Some are satisfied when they can, by one means or another, keep the children reasonably quiet and interested.
- Some make it their goal to engage the children in some kind of physical activity—painting pictures, making models and objects, or even the playing of games.

- Some feel that a good story is the answer, and seek to develop their story telling skills and techniques.
- Some believe that their responsibility is to tell a Bible story in as attractive a fashion as possible, with perhaps an application of some kind added onto the end.
- Some feel it is enough to outline the basis facts of the Gospel, but without urgency, challenge or invitation.

There is much that is helpful and beneficial in what has been outlined above. But none of these statements describe fully what is meant by the evangelism of children.

The person who evangelizes children needs to be sure of his three main responsibilities:

- You need to teach the children the truths of the Gospel. These include the following:
  - ✓ that God is holy and that He loves sinners
  - ✓ that they are sinners and separated from God
  - ✓ that Jesus Christ died and took the punishment for their sin
  - ✓ that He rose again from the dead and is Lord of Lords
  - ✓ that they need to be willing to turn from their sin
  - ✓ that they need to trust Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour
  - ✓ that if they do so all their sins will be forgiven, that God will see them as pure as Jesus Christ, and that they will be "new creatures".
- You need to challenge the children as part of the message, to trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour. They need to be shown firstly that if they do this all their sins will be forgiven, and secondly that they will be born again and have a new nature. You need to pray that the children will respond to this invitation **in their hearts**. This may take place during the meeting, or perhaps afterwards. But you need to be clear that no physical response is involved or needed in coming to, or trusting, Christ.
- You need to make yourself available to individual children and let them know that they may come to you after the meeting concludes if they want, and need, your personal help in coming to Christ.

At no time must pressure of any kind be put upon the children to respond to the Gospel. You can teach, challenge and help—and, of course,

pray; but it is the Holy Spirit who draws the children to Christ; and you must not try to do His work.

Question 19

Is it correct and biblical to evangelize children directly? Or should we evangelize parents and then encourage them to evangelize their own children?

Answer

The Scriptures clearly indicate that the ideal situation **is** a Christian home with Christian parents leading their children to Christ, and bringing them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord.

But, unfortunately, in the world today, a Christian home is the exception rather than the rule. What a shame, then, if only those children who have Christian parents should be evangelized! This would mean that well over 95% of the world's boys and girls would never have the opportunity to hear the Gospel until they themselves were grown up (and would then, probably, be in many cases, no longer interested in hearing it).

I would like to answer this question in two ways:

- I do not feel it is right only to evangelize parents and exclude children from evangelism for the following reasons:
  - ✓ This is not scriptural. Scriptural evangelism is total evangelism according to Mark 16 v15. This means reaching EVERYONE within reach and not one group at the expense of another.
  - ✓ Statistics show that most people are converted before they become adults or parents. Therefore it is not only unscriptural, but also unwise not to evangelize the group which is most open to the Gospel.
  - ✓ Children can often be the means of leading their parents to Christ.
- I do not agree with the concept of evangelizing children only through their parents. This would only give those children whose parents had trusted Christ an opportunity to hear the Gospel and trust Christ for themselves. It is not just unscriptural but also very unfair to make the possibility of one person's hearing the Gospel dependent upon another person's salvation.

It is, of course, essential to understand the importance of the family concept in scripture and, where possible, children should be evangelized as part of the family. But where this is not possible (and this is usually the case) we should still evangelize the children according to Mark 16 v15; even if it might, at a later date, lead to a spiritual division within that family (Matthew 10 v34-39).

At the same time we should try to build up contact with the parents, if at all possible. We should make it our goal to be open with them, and to let them know what we are doing.

It seems to me that behind a question such as this there is a real doubt as to whether God the Holy Spirit can save, and keep, a child in a home where his parents are not believers! Can we not trust Him to do so?

Question 20

Is it right to evangelize a child if we cannot follow him up afterwards? I am thinking especially of a child whose parents are not Christians or a child from an antichristian culture. In both cases he will receive no spiritual help at home and might even suffer opposition and persecution.

Answer

I believe that any reasoning which concludes that a child should not be evangelized is wrong. I believe that we should still evangelize children and, if the possibility arises, lead them to Christ even if follow-up work is, for some reason, not possible.

- The reasoning behind this question disagrees with Mark 16 v15, and the command of the Lord Jesus Christ to preach the Gospel to every creature. There are no conditions attached or exceptions given to that command.
- This reasoning doubts the power of the Holy Spirit to save and keep a child from a godless home or an antichristian culture—even if he is not followed up.
- This reasoning denies the testimonies of those in the Bible who have grown up in such conditions and have stayed true to God e.g. Moses and Naaman's maid. Also today there are many who have

been saved, even with such a background, and despite the impossibility of follow-up work, have stood firm.

↗ This reasoning decries the simple faith and ready response of a child no matter what kind of a home he comes from.

Obviously it is better for a child to live in a Christian home or in a culture which is sympathetic to the Gospel. But the vast majority of the world's children do not have this privilege, and we must reach **them** with the Gospel. God loves all children whether from Christian or atheistic homes and He does not want any of them to be lost (Matthew 18 v14).

Apostolos Bliates, a well known pastor and Christian leader in Greece, was born into a Greek Orthodox family. He described to me how an evangelical neighbour presented the Gospel to him when he was still a young child; and testifies that, at the age of six, he personally trusted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. He told his parents what he had done and incurred their wrath and opposition. But he never wavered in his new found faith, and had the joy, years later, of seeing both his parents put their trust in Jesus Christ.

Byang Kato was the secretary of the African Evangelical Fellowship and was, for years, one of Africa's outstanding spiritual leaders. He told me that he came to the Lord at the age of 12 through the witness of a missionary of the Sudan Interior Mission. His parents were devout idol worshippers and opposed him bitterly; but he also saw his parents and his whole family come to Christ.

We do see the importance and, indeed, the necessity of follow-up work. It is not enough just to lead children to Christ. We must also seek to teach them and feed them so they might grow in their faith. It is as important to follow up the children as it is to evangelize them and we must never neglect this important side of our work.

But what should we do if such follow-up work is absolutely impossible, and if we know this beforehand?

Let me use an illustration. A man is walking along a river bank and he sees, in the river, a child who is obviously in great difficulty and on the point of drowning. The child cries for help! Does the man stop and ask himself the following questions:

- ✓ "Do I have enough dry clothes at home for this child?"
- ✓ "Do I have food in the house?"
- ✓ "Is the house warm?"

If the answer to these questions is "No," does he then decide not to rescue the child and to proceed sadly on his way, leaving the child to drown?

I am sure this would never happen. When a child is seen to be in great danger, our first aim will always be to rescue him. If we have dry clothes, a warm house and plenty of food—so much the better. We should help him as much as possible AFTER we pull him out. But he should not be left to drown just because there are not adequate facilities to take care of him afterwards.

Similarly, if follow-up work is known to be impossible, we should not hesitate to evangelize and to lead children to Christ. Our goal must be to see children saved and then to help and nurture them afterwards if at all possible!

There are two other important facts to remember:

- The Holy Spirit is able not just to save but to keep—even in the most difficult circumstances. Do you believe that? Can we not trust Him?
- One of the most important parts of follow-up work is prayer. Because of prayer we can never say that follow-up work is completely impossible.

Question 21

Which type of evangelism is most important and the one to which we should give priority with regard to our time, finance and personnel? Adult evangelism? Teenage evangelism? Child evangelism?

Answer

I believe that all these types of evangelism are equally important in God's sight and that they should also be equally important to us.

We always need to remember that biblical evangelism is the evangelism of everybody within reach—and that includes adults, teenagers and children.

The Lord Jesus said:

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to ***every*** creature" (Mark 16 v15).

The Apostle Paul said:

"I continue unto this day, witnessing ***both*** to small and great" (Acts 26 v22).

The evangelism of adults carries with it both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that **they** are the people who make the decisions and have the greatest ability to exert influence. One disadvantage is that they are usually quite resistant to the Gospel.

The evangelism of teenagers carries with it both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that they are, compared to adults, relatively open to the Gospel. One disadvantage is that peer pressure will often hinder them from taking a stand for Jesus Christ.

The evangelism of children carries with it both advantages and disadvantages. One advantage is that they are so open to the message of the Gospel. One disadvantage is that they are in many ways still under the control of others.

I believe that we need **to ask God** to show us the type of ministry in which He wants us to become involved. You and I would like to do everything and evangelize everybody, but we cannot. We need therefore to focus on whatever God wants us to do, and on whatever ministry God has gifted us to engage in.

But we must at the same time avoid any attitude which looks down on, or discounts in any way, what God has led others to do.

I do not believe that everybody should be a child evangelist, despite all the advantages we can see in the evangelism of children. That would not be biblical. Everybody needs to be evangelized, and not just the children.

But I would plead for fairness and parity. Children make up one third of the world's population. This rises to one half in many Third World countries—especially in Africa. Therefore is it not reasonable to expect that one third of the total evangelistic effort be directed towards this one third of the population?

- One third of the time
- One third of the finance
- One third of the personnel

I feel that this is both reasonable and fair; and I could not ask for any more than that.

However, I have found that, on the whole, the children do not receive the "one third" which is their due. When I have visited and taught at Bible Schools, I have found, for example, that very few of the students were preparing to reach children with the Gospel—and certainly much much less than one third of them. I also have found that in many of our churches

there are those who do not see the importance of giving the evangelism of children its rightful place in the work and outreach of the church. There are exceptions, of course, and we are thankful for those. But so very often the evangelism of children is seen as **relatively** unimportant and does not receive the investment of time, finance and personnel which it should receive.

At the same time it seems to me that more and more people, pastors, churches and missionary societies are becoming aware of the importance of child evangelism, and are giving it a bigger and more biblical position in their ministry, and we praise God for that!

Question 22

Who should evangelize children?

Answer

I believe there are three possible answers to this question.

- **Everybody** should be ready and available to evangelize children with whom they come into contact—in some simple way. Children are everywhere and everyone is bound to have frequent contact with them.

  No special calling or ability is necessary to evangelize children on such an informal basis. It is often enough just to give a Gospel tract to a child for him to read. There are tracts which have been specifically written and produced for children and these can be obtained from your local CEF Office. Or an invitation could be extended to a child to come to a Good News Club or children's rally. Or an information card could be given inviting the child to contact the local CEF's telephone ministry.

  There is, especially, a great need for believers who will pray for the souls, and for the salvation, of the children of their neighbourhood. And, again, this is something which everyone can do.
- Those who are in special positions of authority and responsibility with regard to children should do what they can to evangelize them:
  - ✓ Parents should evangelize their own children.
  - ✓ Grandparents can enjoy the special privilege of evangelizing their grandchildren.

- ✓ Pastors have a God given responsibility towards the children in their church, and also towards the unchurched children who live in the vicinity of the church. They all need to be evangelized and pastors should do what they can to encourage such evangelism.
- ✓ Sunday School teachers can have the joy of evangelizing the children in their classes on Sundays and also through personal contacts during the week.
- ✓ Men and women who are burdened for the spiritual welfare of the children of their neighbourhood can start weekly Good News Clubs in their homes, or in some other suitable place, and, in this way, evangelize the local children.
- ✓ Young people can reach out to the children of the neighbourhood during the summer months by conducting 5-Day Clubs. These children's meetings are held in the open air on a daily basis for one week.

All of these groups have a special responsibility and privilege to evangelize the children under their spiritual care or oversight.

↗ Then there are those whom God calls to a full-time ministry to children.

God the Holy Spirit guides some men and women to devote themselves completely to the evangelism of children, and they know that **this** is their life's work.

- ✓ Some of them work with their own church or denomination.
- ✓ Some work with children as specialists within, and as part of, a missionary organisation which has an overall ministry to everyone.
- ✓ Others become involved with a missionary organisation whose specific goal is to reach unreached children with the gospel. The largest of these organisations is Child Evangelism Fellowship, the Mission with which I have worked for the last 49 years. The specific aim of our Mission is to reach the unreached children of the world with the Gospel. Child Evangelism Fellowship (or CEF) has, at the time of writing, almost 2,000 full-time workers in over 130 countries of the world, and there are unlimited opportunities for many more such full-time workers.

- ✓ These full-time workers need encouragement, prayer and financial support; and it is possible for many Christians who are in the first two groups mentioned, to become involved in the prayerful and financial support of those in the third group. This makes it possible for many more children to be reached.
  It is God who is the Lord of the Harvest (Matthew 9 v38). He is the One Who decides. We all need to ask Him to show us what He wants us to do to reach the children with the Gospel—and then TO DO IT.

Question 23

How can parents evangelize their children?

Answer

I would like to give eight answers to this question—and I would like to address them directly to parents. These are not alternative answers to pick and choose from. They are all necessary and all go together to make one complete answer.

- ↗ **Be aware** that your children need to be saved, and therefore that they need to be evangelized. The fact that you as their parents are Christians is a great privilege for them and they have advantages other children do not have. But if they are not saved they are as spiritually dead as children whose parents are not Christians, and they are equally outside God's kingdom (John 3 v3).
- ↗ **Believe** that they can be saved when still young. God the Holy Spirit can work in their hearts and can bring them to faith in Jesus Christ. They don't need to wait until they are teenagers or adults before they can be saved. Children can be saved as children (Matthew 18 v6).
- ↗ **Be prayerful**, and ask God to work in their hearts. True conversion is the result of the Holy Spirit's work within your children. He gives conviction and understanding and it is He who regenerates (John 3 v5-8). Therefore you need to pray—faithfully, specifically, regularly and fervently—for the salvation of your children.
- ↗ **Be an example** to your children. It is most important that your deeds speak as loudly as your words. You are the main Bible your

children read, and it is through your life and witness that they will be influenced and drawn to the Saviour (Genesis 18 v19; 1 Timothy 4 v12).

- **Be diligent** in teaching and explaining the Gospel to them. It is helpful if you can have a family time each day when you read the Bible and pray together. During this time you can, from time to time, refer to the Gospel, God's way of salvation, how your children need to be saved, and how they can be saved. The regular teaching and explanation of the Word of God is necessary and helpful. This is, I believe, what is referred to in Deuteronomy 6 v7; Proverbs 22 v6; Ephesians 6 v4b and 2 Timothy 3 v14, 15.
- **Be available** to your children if they want to receive help in how to trust Christ. This means that from time to time you should let your children know that you are ready and willing to speak with them personally, if they wish you to do so, and show them more clearly how to trust the Saviour. But they should come and ask you to do so.
- **Be careful** never to put any pressure upon your children—either to trust Christ, or to come and speak to you about it. Children generally want to please their parents, and if you are not wise and careful your children will "make a decision" just because you want them to, and not as a result of the work of the Holy Spirit.
- **Be sympathetic** towards your children if and when they do trust Christ. Do not expect too much from them. They will not "become angels" overnight. Christian growth is a long and slow process; and your children will need help, love and sympathy rather than criticism (Ephesians 6 v4a; Colossians 3 v21).

Question 24

At what age should children be evangelized?

Answer

The Bible does not give us a specific answer to this question. But it does make a number of important facts very clear:

- The command of Jesus Christ in Mark 16 v15 is "Preach the Gospel to ***every*** creature." "Every" means "every." There are no

exceptions. Therefore little children, and even babies, should be evangelized but in a way suitable to their age group and level of understanding.

It might sound strange to some that we should evangelize babies or very little children. In these cases we would obviously not be preaching at them! But evangelism is more than preaching. It involves the creation of a godly atmosphere. It is helpful for little ones to see their parents pray and to imitate them. Someone has said, "Faith and salvation are not just taught. They are caught!"

- It is recorded by Paul in his second letter to Timothy:
  "From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3 v15).
  The word "child" used here is the word for an infant (BREPHOS), and this word usually describes a little one who is less than two years old.
  So Lois and Eunice "taught" little Timothy from soon after his birth—in one way or another.
  It is difficult to know how much a little child understands. But it is better to start too early rather than too late so that if parents do err they will err on the right side.
- In the Old Testament the very little ones seem to be included on occasions where there was teaching. They would be influenced by the atmosphere of such teaching sessions—even if they did not understand all that was said.
  In Joshua 8 v34 and 35, for example, we read:
  "And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and ***the little ones***, and the strangers that were conversant among them."
- In the Old Testament there are at least two examples of those who were influenced for God at a **very** young age—indeed from infancy itself. This influence was to play a major part in their lives.
  Moses was influenced by, and taught by, his mother from his infancy until possibly the age of three or four (according to most commentators). It seems that Moses learned a lot about God, about

faith and about his people during those few early years, and that what he learned and absorbed were to prove a basis for the vital decisions he made later in life after subsequently spending many years in a heathen atmosphere (Hebrews 11 v24-25).
Samuel was influenced and taught by his mother Hannah until the time of his weaning. This time is usually reckoned by commentators to be around the age of three. God, soon afterwards, spoke to this boy and he responded obediently even though he was so young. At a later date he became God's prophet and mouth-piece for the children of Israel. But it was Hannah who laid the foundation.

At what age should we evangelize children? We cannot start too soon. The earlier and the younger the better.

It is recorded of D. L. Moody the well known American evangelist that he was asked the question by a parent, "When should I start teaching the Word of God to my child?"

Mr. Moody asked her, "What age is your child?"

When the mother replied, "Five years of age," Mr. Moody said, "Hurry home and start now. You are already five years too late."

Question 25

Did the apostles and the early church evangelize children? What about the church throughout the almost 2,000 years since then?

Answer

The first question is easy to answer. The New Testament makes it clear that the apostles followed and obeyed the command of Jesus Christ in Mark 16 v15:

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to *every creature.*"

They evangelized everybody they could evangelize.

Paul emphasizes this fact in Acts chapter 26 verse 22 when he describes his ministry:

"Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing *both to small and great*, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come."

It would seem that the social conditions of those days would have

meant that a large part of the evangelistic ministry of the apostles would have been directed towards adults. But it did not seem to be their intention, in any way, to segregate or select groups to be evangelized according to their age. Nor did they discriminate in any way when they were evangelizing. They had a heart for everybody.

I cannot give a detailed or a well informed answer concerning the early church and their approach to children. There is no evidence, that I know of, that special meetings for children were held in the early centuries of the church. But this, of course, applies to other types of evangelistic ministries as well e.g. youth work or meetings for women.

However, Irenaus, who lived one generation from the apostles said, "Christ came to save all persons through Himself. All, I say, who through Him are regenerated unto God—infants, and little ones, children and youth and the aged."

The Roman Catholic church has **always** seen the importance of reaching and teaching the children. During the Counter Reformation of the 16th century the Jesuits based their task of "reclaiming" multitudes in one single generation from the Reformed faith to Roman Catholicism on their work with children, and they really concentrated on them. They stated that they had "become masters of the present by the men whom they had trained and, by disposing of the future by the children who were yet in their hands, had realised a dream which no one till the times of Ignatius had dared to conceive."

It was Francis Xavier, one of the early Jesuit missionaries to India, who said, "Give me the children until they are seven years old and anyone may take these afterwards"; and he gave "the young and the ignorant" first place in his evangelism of that subcontinent.

There **are** evidences here and there throughout the history of the evangelical church of a real interest in children, and a great desire to teach and evangelize them.

In 1727 Count Zinzendorf prayed fervently for his class of girls between the ages of ten and thirteen. God the Holy Spirit worked in their hearts in a wonderful way, and the blessing spread to many other girls and boys, and there was a real spiritual awakening among them. This, in turn, spread to the adults, and the Moravian revival was born. Many large and small meetings specifically for children were conducted.

John Wesley witnessed this work and was greatly influenced by it. As a result he laid great stress upon work with children and said to his preachers,

"Spend an hour a week with the children in every large town whether you like it or not. Talk with them every time you see any at home. Pray in earnest for them." John Wesley said on another occasion, "God begins His work in children . . . Thus the flame spreads to those of riper years."

Jonathan Edwards, the great preacher and theologian of the Evangelical Awakening in America in the eighteenth century gives a number of accounts concerning children (mostly between the ages of nine and fourteen) coming under conviction of sin and finding peace and assurance in Christ. It is clear that many children were converted under his ministry.

Robert Murray McCheyne, the saintly Scottish pastor and preacher of the early 19th century said, "Most that are ever saved fly to Christ when young . . . so it has been in almost all times of revival of religion—youth is converting time."

He wrote again, "The ministers engaged in the work of God in this place (Dundee) believing that children are lost and may through grace be saved, have therefore spoken to children as freely as to grown persons, and God has so greatly honoured their labours that many children from ten years over and upward have given full evidence of their being born again."

One writer records concerning the nineteenth century awakenings, "It is also true to say that our evangelical forefathers (during revival times) evidently had special meetings for children, and that sometimes the Spirit of God fell upon the children first." This happened both in Wales and Northern Ireland in 1859. And he concludes, "It is therefore evident that God is disposed to bless special gatherings of children."

Charles Haddon Spurgeon, for many years the pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, during the second half of the 19th century, saw the importance of a ministry to children. Many children attended his church services; he started and supervised many Sunday Schools for the children; and he had special meetings for children from time to time in his church conducted by a children's evangelist from USA called Rev. E. Payson Hammond. Up to 8,000 attended these meetings, and many were converted.

It was through Mr. Hammond's children's campaigns in England, over 100 years ago, that God spoke to two men—Josiah Spiers and T.B. Bishop—and gave them a vision of the needs and possibilities for children's evangelism. In response to this vision they founded the CSSM (Children's Special Service Mission) which was to be greatly used by God for years to come to lead many children to Christ.

Dr. Torrey, a well known evangelist in USA, wrote, "It is a well proven fact that no other kind of meetings bring such definite results in the way of conversions as meetings held for the specific purpose of bringing the children to Christ."

In the late 1930s God called J. Irvin Overholtzer, a pastor in California to concentrate on the evangelism of children. He founded Child Evangelism Fellowship which was to become the largest Mission to children the world has ever seen. At the time of writing there are almost 2,000 full-time workers in over 130 countries with many thousands of volunteer workers reaching millions of children, most of them previously unreached.

My wife and I have had the privilege of working with Child Evangelism Fellowship for almost 50 years—first of all as leaders of the work in Ireland for 14 years, then as leaders of the work in Europe for 29 years. We are now back in Ireland in a full-time writing ministry.

Question 26

What is the Gospel message for children?

Answer

It is important to remember that there is no special Gospel message for children which is different from the Gospel message for adults. There is only one Gospel message, and this message is the same for everyone. The methods used in presenting it may differ but the message must always remain the same.

- The Lord Jesus commanded us in Mark 16 v15 to preach **the Gospel** to **every** creature.
- Paul emphasized that there was only one Gospel.
  "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed"
  "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1 v8, 9).

What, then, is this Gospel message?

- The heart of the Gospel message consists of truths concerning Jesus Christ. It is recorded of Paul in Acts 9 v20 that "he preached Christ

in the synagogues." **That** is evangelism.

Two main groups of truths about Christ need to be included in the Gospel message:

- ✓ Firstly, who Jesus Christ is.
  He is perfect man and therefore able to be the substitute for sinful men and women.
  He is also God the Son and able to be the substitute and sacrifice for an innumerable multitude of men, women, boys and girls.
- ✓ Secondly, what Jesus Christ has done.
  He was born and lived a perfect life. He then died an atoning death on the Cross. He voluntarily received God the Father's punishment for our sin so that we, who believe, will not receive it.
  Three days later He rose from the dead. He then ascended to a place of sovereignty and lordship at His Father's Right Hand.

↗ But the good news of a Saviour **from sin** is not understandable or relevant unless there is, first of all, an understanding and conviction of sin. The bad news needs to precede the good news! When evangelizing children we need to teach them:

- ✓ what sin is (a breaking of God's laws)
- ✓ what God must do (He must punish sin)
- ✓ who has sinned (everybody)

↗ But the children cannot understand what sin is unless they know something about God because sin is disobedience to God and His laws. So teaching about God should precede teaching about sin. Children need to be taught that God is their Creator, and that He is holy and just and must punish sin. Then they are ready to hear the wonderful truth that God loves them and wants to save them from their sin.

What is the Gospel message for children?

- ✓ Teaching about God
- ✓ Teaching about sin
- ✓ Teaching about Jesus Christ

That is the logical and biblical order.

But that is not the complete Gospel message. It **is** good for the children to hear and understand the teaching concerning these three

groups of truths. But hearing and understanding these truths are not enough. These truths demand a response, and salvation comes to an individual child only as he responds to these truths, realizing, of course, that it is God the Holy Spirit Who works in his heart and enables him to respond.

- The fourth area of Gospel truth, then, concerns the way of salvation. Jesus Christ invites children to come to Him and to trust Him for salvation. That is an essential part of the Gospel message. For the child to be saved he needs to be willing and ready to turn from his sin (to repent) and he needs to put his trust in Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. It is not enough just to believe that Jesus Christ died for him, or for his heart to be touched concerning that truth. The crowning act of faith is to trust Jesus Christ with a heart commitment to Him as Saviour.

  Then as soon as the child trusts the Lord Jesus Christ the Bible teaches that at least two things happen. Both of these results should be taught to the child before and after he trusts Christ.

  - ✓ He will be justified. **All** his sin will be forgiven and God will **see** him as pure and as clean as Jesus Christ.
  - ✓ He will be regenerated. He will be a new person with new desires and a new direction in his life.

What is the Gospel message for children?

- Teaching about God
  - ✓ He is creator.
  - ✓ He is holy.
  - ✓ He is love.
- Teaching about sin
  - ✓ Sin is the breaking of God's laws.
  - ✓ God must punish sin.
  - ✓ Everybody has sinned.
- Teaching about Jesus Christ
  - ✓ He is perfect man and God the Son.
  - ✓ He lived, died for sin, rose again and is Lord.
- Teaching about the way of salvation
  - ✓ Jesus Christ invites children to come to Him and trust Him.
  - ✓ Children should come in repentance and faith.
  - ✓ Those who trust Jesus Christ will be justified and regenerated.

That is the Gospel. **That** is the Gospel message for children. It is a wonderful message. It is a powerful message (Romans 1 v16). It is an extensive message. It is impossible **to teach** all of it at one time. It is better in a regular ministry to teach parts of it in depth and link these with the other parts we have already taught. But in a one-off opportunity to evangelize children you should try to cover as many of the essential points as thoroughly as is possible.

Question 27

Should I speak to children about sin? Should I speak about Christ's death on the Cross? Might I not frighten them—especially if they are little?

Answer

Before giving specific answers to these three questions I would like to make several relevant points:

- We are commanded to "preach the Gospel to every creature" (Mark 16 v15).
- We have seen that the Gospel includes teaching about God, teaching about sin, teaching about the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, and teaching about the way of salvation.
- There is **only one** Gospel message for everyone.
- The method used in presenting the message may vary according to the circumstances (including the age of those being evangelized)—but the message should always remain the same.

Should I speak to children about sin?

Of course you should. Teaching about sin is a necessary part of the Gospel message and of evangelism. How can you present Jesus Christ as a Saviour if you don't, first of all, show why a Saviour is needed?

So much depends, of course, on how you teach about sin.

- You should do so with love and compassion.
- You should remember to explain carefully what sin is and what it does.
- You should not teach harshly or critically.

Experience with children helps us to learn two lessons:

- Many of them **do** understand what sin is. The problem is not usually getting children to understand sin, but getting adults to understand it.
- Children generally are very sensitive as far as sin is concerned. They are more sensitive than adults. This is a help to us in our evangelism. But we must not take too much advantage of this sensitivity and we must not lay too much emphasis on sin and its consequences. Balance is needed at all times.

Should I speak to children about the death of Christ on the Cross?

Of course you should. This is the central truth of the Gospel message. This is the best news any child can hear. Jesus Christ died for them and for their sins, and is willing and able to forgive them and to change them—RIGHT NOW.

It is also necessary to do what the apostles always did, and as soon as we teach the death of Christ, present the glorious truth of His Resurrection.

We need to remember, of course, that we are speaking to children. Therefore we will not want to stress, especially to younger children, some of the more horrifying aspects of the death of Christ such as the scourging.

Might I not frighten the children?

If these truths are faithfully presented in the right way and with the right attitude we will not frighten them. We certainly won't frighten them in the way that children are so often frightened by what they see on television and in videos.

Most children are not as sensitive as we sometimes think, and also many have been desensitized to some extent by what they see on television. Some of those who object to children being taught about sin or the death of Christ will allow their children to watch really frightening programmes on television!

At the same time we must always remember we are speaking to children, and we must be careful not to become unbalanced in our presentation and cause emotional harm to the children.

Question 28

Should I speak to children about God's judgment?

Answer

Some Christians think we should only speak to children about God's love, and for them God's judgment is a forbidden, and even forgotten, truth.

However, I believe that we should speak to children about God's judgment and I want to give you three reasons for my answer:

- The Gospel message includes teaching about sin and includes the teaching that sin separates us from God and leads to His judgment (Acts 17 v31). The Gospel must be preached to every creature (Mark 16 v15). This includes children.
- The Bible makes it clear, at times, that children should be present when God's judgment is presented and promised.

  "And after he read all the words of the law, the blessings and cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women, and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them" (Joshua 8 v34-35).

  These verses show us that the little ones were to be present when both the blessings and the cursings of the Law were read out.

  Similar warnings to groups which included children were given in Jeremiah 6 v10-13 and Joel 2 v16 and 17.

  In the New Testament we also note that when the Lord Jesus spoke about God's judgment in Matthew 18 v7-14, He had a child in His arms. And when Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus which included children (Ephesians 6 v1) he wrote about the wrath of God (Ephesians 2 v1-3).

  When Paul was speaking to the elders of the church at Ephesus he said concerning his ministry in the church there (and this church included children):

  "I have not shunned to declare unto you ***all*** the counsel of God" (Acts 20 v27).

- It is right and correct ethically to warn those who are in danger. Children **are** in danger (or will be in danger) of God's judgment. For me not to warn them about this would be morally and ethically wrong. If I knew that a bridge which carried the road over a steep and rocky gorge had collapsed, I would feel morally bound to warn anyone who was travelling on the road towards that bridge. For me to go away and keep quiet about the danger would be wrong. If I saw a child hurtling on a bicycle towards the collapsed bridge it would be wrong for me to say nothing, because I might frighten him!

It must be remembered that there is a right way and a wrong way to speak to children about God's judgment. I must not purposely try to frighten them. My duty is to warn, not to frighten. I should avoid any teaching, or method of teaching, which is loud, harsh and critical, to scare children into "making a decision for Christ." When warning children of God's judgment I should always do so with love, tenderness and compassion, and with carefully chosen words and illustrations. At the same time I must lay special emphasis upon the love of God, and the fact that He does not want to judge us.

Much wisdom is needed at all times.

Question 29

What does a child need to do to be saved?

Answer

There are several expressions used in the Bible to describe the response which God demands to the Gospel message:

- **Receive** the Lord Jesus Christ
  "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1 v12).
- **Come** to the Lord Jesus Christ
  "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6 v37).
- **Call** to the Lord Jesus Christ
  "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10 v13).

- **Repent** and be converted
  "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out . . ." (Acts 3 v19a).

All of these responses are biblical and you should feel free to use any one of them if it fits in with the teaching of the Bible lesson being presented.

But the most common expression, and therefore the one you should use most often, is to trust the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Trust (or believe in) the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16 v31; John 3 v16).

Justification, the Bible teaches, is BY FAITH (Romans 5 v1; Ephesians 2 v8; and Galatians 2 v16). Therefore the child who wants to be justified needs to trust the Saviour. It is better to use, and to explain, the word "trust" rather than the words "believe in." The latter words may give some children the idea that if they just believe something or someone, they are saved. However, saving faith is one which actively trusts and puts confidence in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ.

The Bible makes it very clear that the sinner who trusts Jesus Christ for salvation also needs to repent, or to be willing to turn from his sin (Acts 2 v38; Acts 3 v19; Acts 17 v30, Acts 20 v21; Acts 26 v20). The child needs to have a desire and a willingness to be different. How can he trust Christ if he doesn't see that he is moving in a wrong direction and if he doesn't want to be different from what he is?

Repentance is not an act separate from faith. It is part of true saving faith. Repentance and faith are the two sides of "the coin of conversion." Both are aspects of that experience which the Bible calls conversion. Conversion is a turning, and it only occurs once with regard to salvation. But it involves two aspects or sides:

- what we turn from (repentance)
- who we turn to (faith)

A child is saved by faith and by faith alone; but such saving faith must always include repentance. Without it, it is not saving faith.

Consequently, Paul stressed the importance in his ministry of:

"Testifying both to the Jews and also to the Greeks *repentance* towards God and *faith* towards our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20 v21).

That is what God expects from the children, and **that** is what they need to do to be saved.

Question 30

What is meant by saving faith?

Answer

The Bible makes it very clear that salvation is by faith alone. This teaching is emphasized throughout the New Testament (John 3 v16; 5 v24; Acts 10 v43; Romans 5 v1, Galatians 2 v16; Ephesians 2 v8).

But we need to understand what is meant by the faith which saves. This faith involves and includes three elements:

- Knowledge.
  A child cannot put his faith in someone if he knows absolutely nothing about him. Some knowledge of who Jesus Christ is, and what He has done (Romans 10 v14) is therefore a necessary prerequisite to, and part of, faith.
  But knowledge on its own is not enough. The demons believe from that point of view. They know who Jesus Christ is and what He has done, but they are not saved (James 2 v19).
- Assent and conviction
  There is an emotional content to faith. This is when the child feels in his heart that that which he has heard **is** true and assents to it. He is convicted of sin, his heart is gripped by the truth, and he believes it. But this is still not enough. This still falls short of saving faith. James 2 v19 tells us that the demons did not only believe; they trembled and their emotions were affected, but they were not saved.
- Trust
  John Calvin called "trust" the crowning act of faith. Faith is not just a belief in facts or an emotional feeling or assent concerning those facts. Saving faith is primarily a personal trust in Jesus Christ as Saviour. If the sinner does not actually put his trust in Jesus Christ he is not saved. Having come to understand something about Jesus Christ and what He has done for him; and having felt in his heart that this is true, the sinner then trusts or commits himself to Jesus Christ in faith. **That** is salvation.
  Saving faith is, therefore, personal trust in, and commitment to, Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins and a new direction in life.

The Greek words for "believe in" as used in John 3 v16 and many other verses are PISTEUO EIS. These could, I understand, be better translated "TO BELIEVE INTO." These two words have the sense of a trust or confidence which is directed towards, and rests in, the Lord Jesus Christ as a person. Such faith always results in salvation (Acts 16 v31).

Salvation has at least two integral parts:

- ✓ Justification
  Justification has, in turn, two consequences for the sinner who trusts Christ.
  - All his sins (past, present and future) are forgiven (Acts 13 v38, 39).
  - God sees him as pure and as righteous as Jesus Christ is. He is, as it were, covered or cloaked with the righteousness of Christ (Romans 3 v 22, 24).
- ✓ Regeneration
  The sinner is now a new creature (2 Corinthians 5 v17). He is not perfect; but he has a new nature and a new direction in his life. This will lead him step by step in the process of sanctification.

The Bible teaches that saving faith always results in salvation and that this salvation always results in good works. The sinner's position is changed through justification. But his nature and personality are changed through regeneration and this change will always show itself. The evidence of saving faith, small and gradual though it might be, **will** always be there; and it is this evidence which shows that the faith exercised was true saving faith.

James speaks about another kind of faith which is not saving faith.

- ✓ It is faith which is claimed by word of mouth (James 2 v14, 18).
- ✓ It is faith which gives no evidence in works or fruit (James 2 v18).
- ✓ It is dead faith (James 2 v17, 20, 26), and not saving faith (James 2 v14).

Question 31

What is repentance? Is repentance part of the Gospel message? Is it possible for a child to repent?

Answer

Conversion is one of the names given in the Bible to that moment in life when a person trusts Christ and starts a new life with Him (Matthew 18 v3; Acts 3 v19). The word conversion means "a turning." Conversion is a round about turn which well describes what occurs at the beginning of the Christian life (1 Thessalonians 1 v9). This "turn around" takes place at one time but it has two aspects or sides:

- that which we turn from
- that which we turn to

It is impossible to do one without the other. At the moment of conversion the sinner in his heart turns from sin and the sinful direction in which he is going and, at the same time, he turns to Jesus Christ. It is the turning to Jesus Christ which saves—and that only; but such a turning is only possible when the child has a desire to turn from sin.

The main Greek word which is translated repentance means "a change of mind" and in Greek thinking "a change of mind" was only valid if it led to a change of direction.

The context in which the word is used explains what this change of mind means and involves. It could be a change of mind concerning God, concerning Jesus Christ, or a change of mind concerning sin. All three are connected and related to each other. But the word is most used, both in the Bible and also in our own conversations, with regard to a change of mind concerning sin (Matthew 11 v20-24; Luke 15 v2, 7, 10, 18-21; Jonah 3 v4-10 with Matthew 12 v40, 41).

Repentance is not the shedding of tears or not being able to eat or sleep. It is not just feeling sorry for sin, although that is usually involved in it. Repentance is a change of mind primarily concerning sin which leads **to a desire** to turn from it and a **desire** to be different. It involves:

- The mind—"I know that I have sinned"
- The emotions—"I am convicted of my sin"
- The will—"I want to turn from my sin—and I want to be different"

The Bible makes it very clear that repentance **is** part of the Gospel message.

- The Old Testament commanded it:
  "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (Isaiah 55 v7).
- The Lord Jesus preached it:
  "And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel" (Mark 1 v15).
- The Lord Jesus commanded that we should preach it:
  "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24 v47).
- Peter preached it:
  "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2 v38).
- Paul preached it:
  "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20 v21).
  "But shewed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judaea, and then to the Gentiles that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." (Acts 26 v20).
- God commands it today:
  "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent" (Acts 17 v30).
- It is one of the essential foundations of the Christian life:
  "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God" (Hebrews 6 v1).

Consequently, we must ensure that we do not omit repentance from our Gospel message when we are evangelizing children.

The child who comes to Christ does so in repentance and faith—in response to the Gospel message. But, while it is the child's responsibility to repent and believe, both of these are only possible as God the Holy Spirit works in the child's heart. Without Him both repentance and faith are impossible.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2 v8).

"When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11 v18).

"In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Timothy 2 v25).

Question 32

How should repentance be taught and explained to children when evangelizing them?

Answer

I will commence my answer by giving five preliminary points:

- You need to be convinced from the Bible that repentance **is** an essential part of the Gospel message.
- You yourself need to understand what repentance means and how important it is.
- You need to ask God to give repentance to the children (Acts 11 v18; 2 Timothy 2 v25). This is not something you can do. Nor is it something the children can do without the Holy Spirit's help.
- You need to teach this truth simply and with illustrations. You do not need to use the word "repentance." It is the concept and principle you are teaching and not the actual word.
- You need to teach it in connection with other truths such as "the holiness of God" and "salvation is by faith." You should not teach it in isolation.

How can repentance be taught?

- By simple explanation
  - ✓ Teach what sin is.

- ✓ Teach that all are sinners and pray for the Holy Spirit to convict the children of sin.
- ✓ Challenge the children. Do you want to be different? Are you sorry for your sin? Do you want to turn from your sin and please God?
- ✓ Show the children that they need to trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour.
- ✓ Let them know that if they do so there will be two results:
  - all their sin will be forgiven
  - they will be changed
- ✓ Teach them that Jesus Christ will help them to be different when they trust Him.

It is important therefore to realise that the challenge or invitation to children to trust Christ has two integral parts, and both should be included:

- ↗ Do you want to have your sin forgiven?
- ↗ Do you want to be different?

The child who trusts Christ should say "Yes" in his heart to both questions.

- ↗ By teaching Bible lessons which clearly show and illustrate what repentance is:
  - ✓ The story of Zaccheus (Luke 19 v1-10).
  - ✓ The parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15 v11-32).
  - ✓ The conversion of Saul (Acts 9 v1-22).
- ↗ By using illustrations from missionary stories, church history or from the experience of children today.
- ↗ By teaching and explaining Bible verses such as Acts 3 v19; Luke 15 v10 and Isaiah 55 v7.

Objections to the teaching of repentance

There are those who object to the teaching of repentance as part of the gospel message, despite the fact that it is clearly biblical and despite the fact that it has been the practice of the evangelical church down through the centuries. Statements like the following are sometimes made:

"Salvation is by faith alone—not by faith plus repentance."

Salvation **is** by faith alone, but saving faith must include understanding, conviction, repentance and result, later, in good works.

"Teaching repentance makes the Gospel message too complicated."

This is not so, provided the truth is clearly understood by the teacher, and taught simply and clearly to the children.

"The child will not be able to repent."

Our responsibility is to teach him that he needs to. Only God can grant "repentance unto life" (Acts 11 v18).

"It is impossible for an unsaved person to turn from sin."

That is true. But the child needs to be willing to turn from sin. Remember that it is God who gives him this desire, and also, after he trusts Christ, it is God who gives him the ability to do so.

"If you teach repentance you are making it difficult for children to come to Christ."

It is no more difficult than what the Bible teaches. There are two extremes. One makes it too easy, and the other makes it too difficult. Teaching repentance and faith is a realistic balance.

"Fewer children will respond."

Yes, that is probably true. But they will know clearly what they are doing. One of the English Puritans wrote, "We must weigh our converts; not count them." We do appreciate quantity and numbers of course, but quality is more important.

Question 33

When a child trusts Christ as his Saviour is he also acknowledging Him as his Lord? Or is this a later step for him to take after his conversion?

Answer

The Bible makes it clear that coming to Christ is not only a step of faith, but it is also a step of obedience. The one who has trusted Christ has trusted Him in obedience to the Bible's command to do so (Acts 16 v31). The child who comes to Christ does so in obedience to Christ's command to do so (Matthew 11 v28). The child who trusts Jesus Christ as his Saviour and comes to Him has in doing so therefore bowed his knee to Jesus Christ, and has taken the **first** step in a life of obedience.

Jesus Christ is now his Lord—even though he does not understand all that is involved in that lordship, and even though the implications of that

lordship will need to be worked out throughout the remainder of his Christian life. At salvation the child acknowledges and submits to the lordship of Christ as best as he can at that particular moment. He is not a rebel any more. He is now a subject of the King of Kings. But his recognition and submission to Christ's lordship will need to grow and deepen as the child, more and more, sees and understands at a later date all that is implied in what he has done. But a start has been made!

The Bible teaches that the Christian life is a life of obedience and discipleship right from the beginning, even though such obedience and discipleship is still very limited and in great need of development. Obedience and discipleship do not come at a later stage and as a second step. They start at conversion and then they grow and develop.

- The Lord Jesus made it clear in His ministry that coming to Him and following Him involved obedience, and that there was a cost to consider before doing so. This can be clearly seen with regard to the rich young ruler (Mark 10 v17-21), the Samaritan woman (John 4 v15, 16), the three people who approached him in Luke 9 v57-62; and the multitude in Luke 14 v25-33. None of these challenges can be described as challenges to believers to become disciples. They were addressed to unbelievers.
- The apostles when they were evangelizing often underlined the importance of baptism (Acts 2 v38, 41; 8 v6, 12, 36; 9 v18; 10 v47; 16 v15, 33; 18 v8; 22 v16). Their main purpose in doing so was to show their listeners beforehand that if they trusted Christ He would expect them to confess Him publicly before others. The apostles also emphasized in their evangelism that if their listeners trusted Christ they would be expected to turn from their sin (Acts 3 v26; 14 v15); and they also used the word "converted" (Acts 3 v19; 15 v3). It can also be seen that, in the Acts of the Apostles, the word "disciple" is used interchangeably with the word "Christian" (Acts 11 v26).
- The apostles in their preaching to unsaved people emphasized the lordship of Christ. They did not only speak of Him as Saviour, but also as Lord:
  "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2 v36).

"Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5 v31).

"The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (He is Lord of all)" (Acts 10 v36).

"And they said, Believe on the ***Lord*** Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16 v31).

This truth is also underlined in Paul's letter when he relates the lordship of Christ (and obedience to Him) to the Gospel and evangelism (Romans 6 v16, 17; Romans 10 v9, 10, 12, 13; 2 Corinthians 4 v5; Colossians 2 v6).

It is interesting to note that Jesus Christ is called Lord 747 times in the New Testament. In the Acts of the Apostles itself He is called Lord 92 times and Saviour twice!

- Those who wrote the letters which were sent to the churches emphasized that the Christian life was a life of obedience right from the start:
  - ✓ They wrote about "obeying the Gospel" in 2 Thessalonians 1 v8 and 1 Peter 4 v17.
  - ✓ They wrote about "the obedience of faith" in Romans 1 v5; Romans 16 v26.
  - ✓ They wrote about "obeying the truth" in 1 Peter 1 v22.

There are those who say that we should not speak about Jesus Christ wanting to be Lord of the child's life, until **after** he has trusted Christ. But it seems to me that this is not correct—either biblically (as we have seen) or ethically. Surely the evangelist should make it clear to the child all that is involved in trusting Jesus Christ as his Saviour **before** he does so. Then when he takes this step he does so with his eyes open. This seems to me to be the fair, right and ethical way to evangelize. It was the way the Lord Jesus evangelized; and it was the way the apostles evangelized.

It can be seen that the answer to this question is closely related to the answer to question 32. Teaching repentance, as a desire to turn from sin and to please God, is obviously linked to teaching children that if they trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour He will also want to be Lord of their life. The unsaved child should know that, if he trusts Christ, God will expect to see a change in his life. He knows, beforehand, that the Christian life is not

free of problems and difficulties. And in trusting Christ he is therefore fully aware of what he is doing.

Of course we must be balanced. While we don't want to make it easy for children to trust Christ, we don't, at the same time, want to make it difficult for children to trust Him. We also need to tell children what God will do for them if they trust Christ, and that the Holy Spirit will live in them, change them, strengthen them and make it possible for them to submit to their Lord and Saviour.

Question 34

How much does a child need to know before he can be saved?

Answer

This is a difficult question to answer. We have already seen in the answer to question 26 that the Gospel is a very extensive message and covers many interrelated truths. How many of these truths does the child need to understand before he can trust Jesus Christ?

The Bible does not tell us how much a child or anyone else needs to understand to be saved. It should be obvious that he does not need to understand **all** the truths outlined in answer 26. We must not make conditions like that. It is also obvious from experience that some children (and adults!) come to Christ with a very minimum understanding of Gospel truths while others come with a good background of evangelistic teaching.

The Bible emphasizes the mystery of the new birth and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit.

"The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth. So *is everyone that is born of the Spirit*" (John 3 v8).

God is sovereign in salvation and sometimes saves those who have a very limited understanding. But we as teachers and evangelists must never take advantage of that possibility. Our responsibility is to be good teachers and evangelists; and to teach the Gospel message to children as comprehensively as we can. When children come to Christ it is in response to the Word of God (Romans 10 v17; 1 Peter 1 v23). We often find that children who come to Christ on the basis of a good preparation, and a comprehensive teaching and understanding of the Gospel, have fewer initial problems in their Christian life and are more stable spiritually.

However, we must realise that children can trust Christ and be saved with a minimal understanding of truth, and therefore we must not be dogmatic upon this issue.

- It should be obvious that all children who trust Christ must have a sense of **need** and a conviction of sin. Otherwise they would not want to be saved.
- In addition they must have some **understanding** of who Jesus Christ is and what He has done for them. Otherwise they would not know that they could be saved.
- Then they need to know that Jesus Christ wants them to **come** to Him for salvation and how they can do so. Otherwise they would not know how to be saved.

Question 35

Can a child trust Christ the first time he hears the Gospel?

Answer

We need to keep three facts in mind:

- Salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit, and as we have seen in the answer to question 34, the Bible makes it clear that regeneration is a mystery entirely brought about by Him alone. He is sovereign in salvation. Can He save a child the first time he hears the Gospel? The answer must therefore be "yes."
- There are times in the Bible when a person or a group of people were saved the first time they heard the Gospel. Thousands were saved on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2 v41) and that was the first time they had heard the Gospel. But we should also point out that Peter did spend, it would seem, much time that day in his preaching of the Gospel (Acts 2 v14-39) and in extensive and further explanation of it (Acts 2 v40).
  Also the Ethiopian eunuch was saved the first time he heard the Gospel (Acts 8 v26-40). But, again, it should be pointed out that Philip, it would seem, spent quite a time in faithful explanation of the Gospel and in detailed exposition of the Word of God (Acts 8 v35).
- There have also been those who down through the years of church history have been converted the first time they heard the Gospel and a faithful explanation of it.

So, the answer to the question must be "yes." It is possible for a child to trust Christ the first time he hears the Gospel.

But, having said that, experience shows us that such conversions are more unusual than usual. The vast majority of people who have come to Christ do so after a period of preparation by the Holy Spirit through the teaching of the Word of God. Sometimes this period is short, and sometimes it is long. But a time of preparation is the norm.

The Bible compares conversion to birth. It is called a "new birth" (John 3 v3-8). Birth takes place at one moment of time. But it is preceded by a period of nine months of preparation and gestation. This principle is usually true also with regard to the New Birth although the length of that period of preparation is not necessarily similar to that which precedes physical birth. The Puritans referred to this as "prevenient grace." This is the grace which operates in the heart and life of a sinner before he comes to Christ, and which prepares him for that coming.

Question 36

Is it enough just to teach the facts of the Gospel and leave the results in the hands of the Holy Spirit? Or is there something more I should do?

Answer

It is, of course, necessary for the evangelist to teach the facts of the Gospel (see answer 26) and to teach them well. The child comes to Christ on the basis of the Word of God as it is taught to him and as it is understood by him (Romans 10 v17). These Gospel facts or truths include teaching about God, teaching about sin and teaching about Jesus Christ.

But we have already seen in answer 26 that we should also teach the children the way of salvation, and what they need to do to be saved. It would be wrong just to teach the facts of the Gospel and omit the response which God requires to those facts:

- Jesus Christ invites the children to come to Him.
- They need to come to Him in repentance and faith.
- If they do so they are justified and regenerated.

It is your responsibility therefore to teach the way of salvation. If I may say so reverently, the Holy Spirit will not do that. He is the One who

convicts of sin, who helps the children to understand the Gospel, and who leads the children to Christ—but He does so on the basis of the truths you have taught.

When you are evangelizing children you are responsible to explain three basic biblical principles:

- "You **need** to be saved"—because of your sin and because of God's holiness.
- "You **can** be saved"—because of the Death and Resurrection of Christ.
- "You **will** be saved"—if you come to Christ in repentance and faith.

Do not omit this third principle because that is where you show the children how they should respond to the facts you have taught.

This was the way the apostles evangelized. After they preached the facts about God, about sin and about Jesus Christ they included a clear application to the listeners: "Now this is what you need to do."

"Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2 v38).

"Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins might be blotted out" (Acts 3 v19).

"If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayst" (Acts 8 v37).

"Whosoever believeth on Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10 v43).

"By Him all that believe are justified from all things" (Acts 13 v39).

"Turn from these vanities to the living God" (Acts 14 v15).

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16 v31).

"God . . . now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17 v30).

It is obvious from these verses that the apostles did not only explain and teach the way of salvation. **They also challenged their listeners to respond to it and invited them, and even commanded them, to do so.**

What Are Your Responsibilities When Evangelizing Children?

- You need to teach the facts of the Gospel to the children.
- You need to explain the way of salvation to them.
- You need to challenge them.
- You need to invite them to respond by trusting Jesus Christ.
- You need to be sincere, urgent and warmhearted in your presentation—just like the apostles.
- But you must never put any pressure upon the children to respond.

When you have fulfilled your responsibilities you can, and must, leave the results in the hands of the Holy Spirit.

It is sometimes difficult for us as child evangelists to achieve the correct balance between what we are expected to do in our evangelism, and what we can ask, and trust, the Holy Spirit to do. There are those who swing to one extreme and try to do everything themselves, and they often put pressure upon the children to respond. There are those who swing to the opposite extreme and do nothing except teach the facts. The best and most balanced position is between these two extremes. While this balance is sometimes difficult to find, we must endeavour to do so.

Question 37

What does it mean to "give the invitation" to children?

Answer

You need to understand that there are two viewpoints concerning the giving of the invitation; and it is up to yourself to determine which you should put into practice when evangelizing children.

- The first viewpoint is that the invitation is what we give or say to the children **after** we have taught them the Gospel message. It is, in this sense, part of our methodology. The children are asked to close their eyes and are then invited not only to trust Christ but to indicate this in some way—by raising a hand, coming to the front or by looking at the teacher. When this method of invitation is used there is a strong link between coming to Christ and the physical response which is asked for, even if it may be followed by counselling.
- The second viewpoint is that the invitation is actually part of the Gospel message and is not something which comes after the end of

that message. It is an invitation to come to Jesus Christ for salvation. The response to this invitation takes place in the child's heart and does not need or involve any physical response.

The second viewpoint is the one I personally believe and follow. I don't want to be critical of those who follow the first viewpoint. God has blessed these dear children's workers, and He has blessed children through them. But this is a matter concerning which everyone needs to make his own decision.

There are two main reasons why I adopt the second viewpoint:

- I believe it is biblical. When the apostles preached the Gospel in the Acts of the Apostles they challenged and invited their listeners to repent or/and trust Christ. This invitation was part of their message. They did not feel that it was enough for them just to explain the Gospel. They invited those who were listening to respond—earnestly and directly. Their invitation was addressed to the hearts and the wills of their listeners. They never asked for any kind of physical response. Yet many trusted Christ.
- I believe that when we evangelize children there is always the danger of our influencing the children to respond, and this influence may even, in some cases, be a form of pressure. Children are so open and ready to respond. While this is a great help and advantage to us in our ministry, it can also be a problem, because it is so possible and easy for children to respond without it being the work of the Holy Spirit. Consequently, I believe that asking children to respond physically to the invitation of Jesus Christ might influence the children to respond. Indeed it might even constitute a type of pressure, especially if, as sometimes happens, it is accompanied by earnest and even emotional pleading. It also might encourage children to "follow the leader." There is a possibility that when a child sees other children responding physically and openly, he will do the same.

As I understand it, the invitation is from Jesus Christ to the children to come **to Him** for salvation. I am only the person who "brings" or gives the invitation to the child, and who encourages the child to come to Jesus Christ. If someone asks me to invite one of his friends to his wedding, I do so. I say to that person, "Your friend wants you to come to his wedding" and, if necessary, I tell him how to get there. If he hesitates I might even

encourage him to go—but that is all. His response and what he does is a matter between the two of them. It has really nothing more to do with me, unless the person who receives the invitation asks me for help and direction so he can find his way to his friend's wedding. I should offer him that help. Then I should give him that help if he wants it.

I believe that when I am evangelizing children my responsibility is to give them the invitation to come to, or to trust, Jesus Christ. It is an essential part of my message. I have not really evangelized the children if I do not give them Christ's invitation.

Consequently, as I am teaching and explaining the Gospel to the children I would say something like this:

"Jesus Christ wants you to come to Him for salvation. You cannot see Him, but if you come to Him in your heart and tell Him that you want to trust Him as your Lord and Saviour, He will save you. The Bible says "Trust Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16 v31). That is His promise. Trust Him today. You can come to Him and trust Him just now as you sit there; or afterwards, or at home. The important thing is that you do trust Him—and, if you do, you will be saved—today. Don't wait. Why not trust Him today?"

With these words I **have given** the children the invitation. **That** is, I believe, the invitation, Christ's invitation, and I have passed it onto the children. I have not asked for a physical response to the invitation for the reasons I have already given and also because I do not feel that this is necessary.

This invitation is an essential part of my Gospel message. I pray, then, that the children will respond to His invitation in their hearts. It is a matter between them and Him.

This is, I believe, the biblical way, and the wisest way, to give the invitation to children.

(But it is important that you read carefully my answers to questions 40 and 41).

Question 38

Should I always give the invitation when evangelizing children?

Answer

If you agree with what I have outlined in answer 37 then the answer must be "Yes." You cannot evangelize children and teach them the Gospel message if you don't give them the invitation.

Why? Because Christ's invitation is an essential part of your Gospel message, and should never be omitted.

The Acts of the Apostles show us that the apostles were never content with just presenting the facts and the truths of the Gospel. They always challenged their hearers to respond on the basis of what they had heard, and **that** challenge is the invitation.

As I have said in several earlier answers the greatest need for us as children's evangelists, and perhaps the greatest problem we face, is to be **balanced** in our evangelism and to avoid extremes.

With regard to the invitation there are, I believe, two extremes to avoid:

- There are those who never invite children to come to Christ. They present the facts and truths of the gospel but no more than that. There is no challenge and no invitation. The main reasons for this attitude could be any one of the following:
  - ✓ They lack understanding and knowledge concerning what they should do.
  - ✓ They have doubts concerning the salvation of children.
  - ✓ They fear emotionalism and in their reaction go to the other extreme.
- There are also those who are so enthusiastic and so keen to see children respond to the message that they lay too much stress upon the invitation and exert pressure upon the children to respond. The frequent result is a very large number and a high percentage of "decisions." One person who did this said to me, "But making a decision like this will not do the children any harm. After all, it is a step in the right direction." But I believe it can do the children harm. There is the danger that children might think they are saved when they are not—because of what they have "done." And these children could be very difficult to reach for Christ at a later date.

Question 39

How can I encourage children to trust Christ—without putting any pressure upon them?

Answer

The apostles are our role models as far as evangelism is concerned, and we can see a clear outline of both the message they preached and the methods they used in the Acts of the Apostles:

Their preaching of the Gospel was characterized by:

- its biblical content
- its simplicity and clarity
- its sincerity and warmth
- its logic and persuasiveness
- its directness and application
- its sense of urgency

Consequently, we should in our evangelism of children follow their example:

- Our presentation should be based upon the Word of God.
- What we say should be simple and easy to follow.
- The children should feel the warmth and sincerity of what we are teaching.
- We should present our Gospel message logically, building it up step by step, and seeking to "persuade" the children so they can see how reasonable it is for them to trust Christ.
- We need to be direct in our application of the truth. The invitation to come to Christ should be clearly directed towards those who are not saved with the liberal use of the word "you."
- There needs to be a sense of urgency in our presentation emphasizing to the children the importance of responding in their hearts to the work of the Holy Spirit, and to trust Jesus Christ **today**, and not tomorrow.

If we follow those apostolic guidelines backed up by fervent prayer that God will work in the children's hearts we can safely leave the results in the hands of the Holy Spirit. We can be especially encouraged when we see what the Holy Spirit did when the apostles evangelized as they did.

It is also helpful to understand what the apostles did not do in their evangelism:

- They never put pressure upon people to trust Christ. They encouraged them to do so but did not, in any way, try to compel them. This principle is even more relevant when we are evangelizing children because they are so open and susceptible to all kinds of influence and pressure.
- They never asked for a physical response to their message. This is especially important to remember when we are evangelizing children. It may be comparatively easy for an evangelist to get a physical response of some kind from children; but this may not always be the work of the Holy Spirit.
- At the same time it is obvious that, in some way, the listeners felt that the evangelists would be available and willing to show them more clearly how to be saved. So Peter's listeners asked him what they should do (Acts 2 v37), the Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip for help (Acts 8 v31) and the jailer asked Paul and Silas to show him how to be saved (Acts 16 v30).
- They never offered inducements of any kind to those who would respond. Indeed the opposite was true. Their listeners were usually informed that if they trusted Christ they would be expected to be publicly baptized. We should not offer inducements of any kind to children. Nor should we emphasize the benefit of salvation to the exclusion of the changes God will expect to see in their lives afterwards.

Clarity, warmth, honesty and urgency are required—but no kind of physical or emotional pressure.

Question 40

Is it part of my ministry to counsel individual children and lead them to Christ? How? When?

Answer

The children's evangelist has two main responsibilities:

- To present and teach the Gospel to groups of children as he has opportunity—in a church, Sunday School, children's rally, Good News Club, open air meeting, or wherever.
- To be available to speak with, and counsel, any individual child who wants to be saved, but is not yet sure how to be.

Most people, and that includes, I believe, most children, are saved "on their own." They have heard the Gospel and they trust Christ during the meeting, or at home or on their way home. But there are some children who feel, for some reason, that they cannot do this. They don't understand, or are confused, or have questions. And as a result they need personal help. It is part of the responsibility of the children's evangelist to give that help, or at least to offer to give it. At the same time he must make it very clear that the child does not **have to** talk to him to be saved. He is not a mediator or a priest. He is only a helper for those who need and want help.

There might be a child in your meeting, club, class or, even home, who falls into this latter category. He would like to be saved, but is not sure how to be; and he is probably too shy to approach you or anyone else on the subject. Talking to this child personally, on a one to one basis, and being able to answer **his** questions could help him know how to come to Christ.

Therefore you have a responsibility to let children such as this one know that you are available to them, and that you are ready to help them if they wish. And you need to make it very clear when you will be available, where you will be available, and what they should do if they want to receive this help.

Consequently, at some time during your presentation, you might say something like this:

"If there is a boy or girl here this afternoon who is not saved and would like to be, but is still not sure how to be, I would be glad to speak with you and help you know how to trust Christ. If you are a child like that and you would like to speak with me, then after the meeting is finished you

come and sit in one of the chairs in this front row. If I see you sitting there I will know you want me to help you."

The child now knows exactly what he needs to do if he wants personal help and counsel. He knows you are ready to help him and he knows where he should go, and when. The decision is in his hands. There has been no pressure or undue influence. You have simply conveyed this information to him, and you leave the next step with him.

It would seem to me that in the New Testament the apostles and preachers were always available to concerned listeners, and were both ready and willing to help them if they were asked to do so.

- Many of the listeners on the day of Pentecost asked Peter and the apostles for further help in coming to Christ (Acts 2 v37).
- The Ethiopian eunuch asked Philip for personal help in understanding the Gospel and the way of salvation (Acts 8 v31).
- The Philippian jailer asked Paul to explain what he needed to do to be saved (Acts 16 v30).
- It is also obvious that people felt they could come and speak with the Lord Jesus on a personal basis, to ask Him questions and request help (Matthew 19 v16; Luke 13 v23; John 3 v2; John 6 v28). No one seemed to have any problem or hesitation in doing so.

In other words, they were seen to be approachable, and that is what we are talking about here. With children, of course, the question of approachability or availability needs to be made very clear, and this usually requires for it to be verbalized.

I call what I have outlined in this answer "MAKING YOURSELF AVAILABLE." I always want my children to know that I am available. If I am conducting open air meetings or children's meetings where the children change, come and go, then I should make myself available **every time** I present and teach the Gospel to unsaved children. If I am teaching the **same** children every day or every week, I will keep reminding them from time to time, but not necessarily in every lesson, that I am available. It is essential, however, that they always know that I am available.

Question 41

Is what you have outlined in answer 40 (making yourself available) not the same as what you outlined in answer 37 (giving the invitation)?

Answer

Definitely not. We are speaking about two completely different subjects.

Giving the invitation is an essential part of your Gospel **message** and must always be given. It is the invitation to come to **Christ**. It is responded to in the heart of the child, at any time, and does not need or involve any physical response. This invitation is given with urgency and warmth and is usually towards the end of the Gospel message and before closing with prayer.

Making yourself available (or giving an opportunity as it is sometimes called) is part of your methodology when you make it clear to children that you are ready to speak with them personally if they want your help in coming to Christ. It should always be clear that you are available. You should make yourself available **every** time you speak to children in one-off meetings, or in a series of meetings where the children "come and go." And in your regular ministry the children should always know that you are available. It is an offer of help, and not an invitation. It is "responded to" physically when the child afterwards comes to a certain place to talk with you. It consists purely of information and is presented without urgency or warmth; and it can be included at any time during the programme. It is only necessary that the children know that you are available, and where you will be after the meeting, if they wish to speak with you.

I believe it is essential to keep these two subjects completely separate.

- They should be separate in your understanding.
  You need to be clear what they both mean, and what you should include in your presentation. In other words, you need to do two things:
  - ✓ You should invite children to come to Christ
  - ✓ You should make yourself available to children who want help in coming to Christ

- They should be separate in your presentation.
  It is better to keep these two matters separate so that there is no danger of the children confusing them. The invitation usually comes at the end of the lesson. Therefore you should make yourself available earlier—perhaps half way through the lesson, or at the start of the lesson, or in some other part of the programme. The only condition is that the children know you are available—and that they know where you will be and when.
- They should then be separate in the understanding of the children. You don't want the children to think that if they "respond" to one of these they are at the same time automatically responding to the other. That is the danger when you put these two matters so closely together that they seem to be one. Then the child may feel that if he responds physically to what you say (e.g. by lifting his hand or by coming to the front) he is at the same time responding spiritually to the call of Christ. This is not necessarily so.

Summary: I see it as my two-fold responsibility when evangelizing children to invite them to come to Christ (and I need to explain to them how they can do so) **and also** to let them know that I am available to help them to come to Christ if they want that help (and I need to inform where I will be and when).

SECTION III:
Helping Christian Children To Grow

Question 42

What is my responsibility towards children who have trusted Jesus Christ? How can I best help them? What is meant by follow-up work? Should I lead a child to Christ if there is no possibility of following him up?

Answer

One of the basic truths concerning children, which has been repeated, or implied, over and over again in the answers I have given so far, is that there are two kinds of children—those who have trusted Jesus Christ as their Saviour and those who have not. Unsaved children are spiritually dead; saved children are spiritually alive. Unsaved children need life; saved children need food.

It is therefore equally obvious that children's workers have two responsibilities:

- To evangelize the unsaved children, praying that they will trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour.
- To feed the saved children praying that they will grow spiritually.

If you have saved children in your class **your** responsibility is to feed them with "the sincere milk of the Word, that you (in this case, they) may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2 v2). And it was Peter, who wrote those words, who had been previously commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ to "feed My lambs" (John 21 v15). So if you yourself have led a child to Christ it is your responsibility to do all you can to "follow him up."

Follow-up work is helping a saved child to grow through the teaching of God's Word.

You have four main responsibilities in follow-up work:

- You should teach the Word of God to saved children in your Good News Club or Sunday School class. You need to find, and teach, one central truth in every Bible lesson so that the saved children

will understand it; and then you need to apply it to their every day lives in a way which is relevant. At the same time you need to pray that the children **will** apply it to themselves, and that through the teaching and application of that Bible truth they will grow spiritually. For example if your lesson was based upon Acts chapter 2 (the Day of Pentecost) your central truth could be "The Holy Spirit lives in every believer." The application to the saved children could be "He who lives in you will give you the strength to overcome temptation."

- You should make yourself available to saved children to speak with them on an individual basis if they want your help, or have any questions or problems.
- You should pray for each one of the saved children regularly, personally and specifically.
- You should be a good witness and an example to them of how a Christian should live, act and speak.

Some children's workers hesitate to lead a child to Christ when they conclude that there would be no possibility of follow-up work afterwards. I do believe that follow-up work is essential if at all possible, and that we should do all we can to keep in contact with the children we have led to Christ, and help them to grow. But what if it is not possible to do so? I feel that the following illustration will answer that question.

A man was walking along a river bank when he saw a child who had fallen into the river and was in considerable difficulty. What should the man do?

- Should he ask himself questions such as:
- Do I have dry clothes which would fit him?
- Do I have warm food which could satisfy him?
- Can I take him home and help him to recover from his ordeal?

If the answer is "No" to all these questions should he then walk on and leave the child to drown?

Or should he jump into the river and save the child from drowning—even if he doesn't have the possibility of helping him afterwards?

What would you do? That will answer your question.

Question 43

What change(s) should I expect to see in the life of a child who has trusted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour? What should I do if a child shows no sign whatsoever that he is saved?

Answer

Firstly, the Bible makes it clear that there **will be** a change in the life of everyone who trusts Jesus Christ. The Bible speaks about a new birth (John 3 v3-8), a new creature (2 Corinthians 5 v17) and a new way of thinking (Romans 8 v5-8). The Bible also makes it clear that faith is not real or alive unless it demonstrates itself in works and fruit (James 2 v17-26).

Secondly, the scale, depth and speed of such changes can, and usually do, vary from child to child. In some children there is a marked and swift change, but for many the change is slow and sometimes almost imperceptible. The latter is especially true for children born into a Christian home.

Thirdly, the greatest danger for most of us is that we expect too much from the child who has trusted Christ and, as a result, we are disappointed and discouraged if we continue to see sin and disobedience in his life. We need to remember that sanctification is a slow process, and we must learn to be more patient. Children who trust Christ do not "become angels" overnight. Growth always takes time.

What then are the evidences which you should expect to see in the life of a converted child—even if they appear slowly and partially?

- A love for the Lord Jesus Christ should appear (and should grow), especially as the child is exposed more and more to your teaching concerning the Lord Jesus, and as the Holy Spirit warms his heart.
- A love for the Bible, God's Word. He will have **some** desire to read it and to listen to it being expounded. But, again, be careful. Don't expect too much too soon.
- A concern for the salvation of others. These might be his friends or even his family. But as you speak about God's judgment of the unsaved, you pray and trust that God will burden him for the salvation of others. He might even start to witness to them, and he will need some help and instruction in how to do this.

- A sensitivity towards sin, and some desire to be good and to please God. I emphasize once more how necessary it is not to expect too much.

There is, however, something important which I need to add. It is difficult for a baby to grow if he is not fed. You cannot throw all the responsibility for growth and change over onto the child. You have your part to play:

- You need to teach the children about the need for change and what God expects to see in their lives.
- You need to teach the children how these changes can be effected through the power of the Holy Spirit living within them.
- You need to teach children what to do when they sin so that they do not become discouraged.

If, after watching the child carefully for some time, you can see no evidence of salvation, you need to speak personally with the child. You could ask him if he is sure he is saved, and why; you could talk to him about his conversion and what he did; and you could explain that trusting Christ always results in some change in his life. Ask him if he is conscious of any such change. You could tell him honestly that you have not seen any. You should, by this time, be fairly sure whether he has truly trusted Christ or not. If he hasn't, offer to counsel him and lead him to Christ. If he has, try to help him with whatever problem he has been experiencing.

Question 44

What should I do, or what conclusions should I come to when a saved child loses his temper or curses, or tells lies or steals? Does this show that he is not saved?

Answer

First of all you should not jump to a hasty conclusion. We often expect too much from our saved children and when they don't live up to our expectations we quickly conclude that they are not saved. Do we jump to the same conclusion when an adult Christian loses his temper or tells a lie?

Perhaps these **are** evidences that the child is not saved. Or perhaps they are just the results and evidences of his old nature which have surfaced.

You need to remember that children are different from adults in a number of ways:

- Children have less experience in controlling their emotions than adults. Adults are better able both to control and to hide emotions and bad tempers. How the child feels and reacts is on the surface. His emotions are clearly visible, and not hidden.
- Children are very much under the influence of their homes and parents. Children from an ungodly home are often simply doing what they see being done, and saying what they hear being said, in their home.
- Children are under the control of their parents and some of the things they do are at the command of their parents.

You should speak with the child about the sin you see in his life, and ask him if he himself sees any change in his life. Remind him of what you have taught in class—that if "any man be in Christ he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5 v17). Let him tell you of the "new things" in his life. If he says there aren't any and there is absolutely no change, then you have the right (on the basis of God's Word) to tell him that you feel he is not saved, that he really needs to trust Christ, and that he will then be changed.

If he does see changes in his life and is sure he is saved, you need, in this case, to speak with him about the wrong and sinful things he is doing, and what God wants him to do, so as to conquer, and be victorious over, these sins.

It is most important to realise your great responsibility concerning saved children. In your regular ministry you should be teaching him and the other Christian children three vital truths:

- How to know the difference between right and wrong
- What to do when they sin
- How they can conquer sin in their lives

Practical teaching like this will be a great help to them and could make it unnecessary to ask a question such as this one.

Question 45

Will saved children grow and develop spiritually as well as, better than, or less than an adult?

Answer

I cannot give a statistical answer to this question as I don't know of any proven percentages.

It is interesting to read some of the statements made on this subject by Charles Spurgeon, the well known English pastor of the 19th century:

"My conviction is that our converts from many children are among the very best we have."

"I have more confidence in the spiritual life of the children that I have received into the church than I have in the spiritual life of the adults received."

"I have sometimes met with a deeper spiritual experience in children of ten and twelve than I have in certain persons of fifty or sixty."

"The best converts, the clearest converts we have ever had have been the young ones."

One of the main criticisms which have been levelled at child evangelism is that a number of children who profess salvation do not mature spiritually, but go back into the world. Surely the main reason for this lies in faulty evangelism. If children "make decisions" under a pressurized type of evangelism but are not truly saved, they will not, and indeed obviously cannot, grow spiritually. This is why it is so vital for us always to ensure that our evangelism is biblical and thorough. At the same time we need to realise of course that no matter how well and how thoroughly we evangelize there will always be those who profess salvation but don't possess it. We know that from our Lord's parable of the four soils (Matthew 13 v18-23). But we certainly don't want to encourage this to happen.

Another problem which has hindered the spiritual development and growth of a number of Christian children has been the failure to feed them, to nurture them and to follow them up thoroughly. If a mother does not feed and look after her new born baby he will run into problems and his growth will be hindered and stunted. We should remember also that saved children have less opportunity to find spiritual food for themselves than adults have.

But, having looked and considered these two possible dangers, we should find that children, if truly saved, and if they are fed and followed up,

will develop spiritually as well as adults. In one sense they have fewer inherent problems than adults have, because they are so much younger and therefore less under the control of bad habits and of sin. Also their ways are less settled than those of adults and they are in the process of personality formation.

I will conclude with one last thought. It is a recognized fact that a substantial percentage of adults who profess salvation do not grow spiritually but go back into the world. We do not know how many of them were truly saved. But do we hesitate to evangelize adults because of this leakage? Of course not. Therefore let us not be discouraged, as far as child evangelism is concerned, just because some of the children go back into the world and do not go onto spiritual maturity.

Question 46

What is the main problem which Christian children face and which I need to address in my teaching?

Answer

The major problem faced by a Christian child is the problem of sin in his life. Sometimes the child feels that because he is a Christian he will not sin again. This fallacy is sometimes due to unwise phraseology used by the teacher. So when he does sin he begins to feel that he is not therefore a Christian.

There are at least four truths concerning sin which we want Christian children to understand, and which therefore you should teach often and thoroughly.

- **The reality of sin**
  You need to teach Christian children that, although they have trusted Christ, sin is still a reality in their lives. God sees them as perfect because they are justified (Romans 5 v1) but they themselves are not perfect (1 John 1 v8, 10). As new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5 v17) they do not want to sin, but, because of the old nature which they still have, they do, and will, sin.
- **The consequences of sin**
  The children need to know that there **are** consequences when they sin. The consequence is not that they lose their salvation. That is

not possible (see answer 49). The child who is truly justified cannot lose that justification.

But sin, especially if it is persisted in, can cause a loss of joy, a lack of peace, and a breakdown in fellowship with God. There is even the possibility that God will lovingly chastise or correct him (Hebrews 12 v5-11).

- **The confession of sin**

  The child needs to be taught that when he sins he should, as soon as possible, confess it to God his Heavenly Father, and the Bible makes it clear that he will be instantly forgiven (1 John 1 v9). At the same time he should ask God for strength not to do it again.

- **Victory over sin**

  You need to teach the child continually that God wants to help him conquer the sin in his life. There are two principles he needs to understand and put into practice.

  - ✓ The child needs to know that the power of God is available to help him; and he should pray that God will help him conquer whichever sin is causing him a problem. David prayed in Psalm 141 v3:

    "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

    He asked God to help him control the words he spoke. This same sin is often a problem with Christian children.
  - ✓ The child needs to want to overcome the sin, and to be willing to discipline himself, and to do what he can to conquer the specific sin. God provides the power; but the child must provide the desire and the discipline. This principle can also be seen in the life of David when he makes a resolve in Psalm 39 v1:

    "I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my mouth and I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked is before me."

God's power plus our desire and our discipline = victory

This truth could be illustrated for children by a motor car which its driver wishes to stop. How can he stop it?

- The **power** comes from the car's brakes. They will stop the car. But they will not do so on their own.

- The **desire** and **decision** come from the driver's foot. It must be placed firmly on the brakes to operate them. His foot cannot stop the car on its own.

The brakes plus the driver's foot = success

Question 47

Are there other major problems in the life of a Christian child which I need to address in my teaching?

Answer

There are at least two other major problems which can cause a Christian child many difficulties and heartaches. And many of these difficulties arise because the child has not been shown the answers to these problems from the Word of God.

- There is, first of all, the question of assurance of salvation. This problem is closely linked to, and is often caused by, the problem dealt with in the previous answer.
  So many Christian children have never had this assurance; and others have lost their assurance. This seems to be a special problem with many children; and often results in their wanting to be saved again—and again—and again.
  The Bible teaches that assurance of salvation is given by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8 v16; Galatians 4 v6). We cannot give the child assurance. Only He can. But we need to teach the child how he can know he is saved.
  The Holy Spirit uses two means to witness to children and enable them to know that they are the children of God:
  - He uses the Word of God to give them assurance. God has clearly stated that the child who trusts Jesus Christ has everlasting life (John 3 v16), and that the child who has called to Jesus Christ and asked Him for salvation is indeed truly saved (Romans 10 v13). When God makes a promise that promise can always be depended upon.
    If the child has trusted Christ he can be sure he is saved because God says so in His Word (John 20 v31; 1 John 5 v13).

- He helps the children to know they are saved by the change they see in their lives. This aspect of assurance is given special emphasis in John's first epistle. For example, John explains that one evidence of being spiritually alive is that the person concerned has a love for other believers (1 John 3 v14), and he writes that this will help him to know he is alive. He also teaches that we can be sure that we know Jesus Christ if we have a desire and some ability to keep His commandments (1 John 2 v3). The person who is in Christ is a new creature (2 Corinthians 5 v17). Therefore if he sees he is a new creature, this helps him to know that he is in Christ. The child is not as good as he should be. He is not as good as he would like to be. But he is not as bad as he used to be. And that is an encouragement and a means of assurance to him.

↗ The other major problem which I have witnessed in the lives of a number of Christian children, and especially older children, is the difficulty some of them have in their family relationships and in their relationship with their parents, especially if the latter are not saved. You need to explain to Christian children what the Bible teaches and commands concerning their responsibility to their parents. When Paul wrote to the churches at Ephesus and Colosse he addressed the children directly. Because he was writing specifically to the saints in these two cities the children he addressed must also have been saints or Christian children. In both letters he gave the same command:

"Children obey your parents in the Lord for this is right" (Ephesians 6 v1).

"Children obey your parents in all things; for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Colossians 3 v20).

I believe that Paul gave this command to the children for two reasons:

- ✓ Obedience to parents is a good basis for a family relationship, and a good witness to the world.
- ✓ The child who has learned to obey his parents is better able and more ready to obey God.

You should however teach the Christian children that, while the Bible teaches them to obey their parents, their obedience should be "in the Lord." If the parents command him to do something which the Bible clearly states is wrong (e.g., telling a lie or stealing) then

he should obey God rather than his parents but, at the same time, explain lovingly to his parents why he cannot obey them.
In all other matters, whether he agrees with his parents or not and no matter what it costs, he is responsible to obey them. Also he needs to do so in the right way, not unpleasantly or grudgingly, but, as God helps him, with a gracious spirit.

Question 48

Should I encourage Christian children to have a daily Quiet Time? How can I do this?

Answer

Yes, you should certainly encourage every Christian child to set aside a short time each day to be alone with God. You need to show them WHY they should do this; and you also need to take time in your regular ministry to the children to teach them WHEN, WHERE and HOW to do it.

↗ **Who should have a daily Quiet Time?**

Every Christian child should be encouraged to have a Quiet Time each day.

↗ **Why should he have it?**

- ✓ Taking time to be alone with God will help him to live for God throughout the day, and enable him to overcome the temptations which are sure to come.
- ✓ Neglecting a Quiet Time will often result in discouragement and sin.

A Quiet Time is not some kind of "magic formula." But it does give help and encouragement to the Christian child.

↗ **When should he have it?**

- ✓ He should plan to do so on a daily basis.
- ✓ The best time is in the morning when the mind is comparatively fresh, and as a preparation for the day that lies ahead. But we must not be legalistic in this matter. The morning might not be a suitable time for some children. The important thing is that he/she has a daily Quiet Time, and, if the afternoon or evening is the only possibility, that is fine.

- **How long should it last?**
  You should encourage the children to have, rather, a shorter Quiet Time to start with—say 5 minutes. Then they can build upon this and increase it gradually. If they start with a longer time which is not realistic and which therefore continually gets shorter they will feel guilty and become discouraged.
- **Where should he have it?**
  The answer will, of course, vary from child to child. He should try to find a place which is quiet and where he can be alone. In many homes today this can be quite difficult, even impossible, especially in the morning! That is why it may be better for some children to have their Quiet Time later in the day when it is easier to find a quiet spot. One child, for example, had his Quiet Time in the local library on his way home from school each afternoon.
- **How should he plan his Quiet Time?**
  You could teach him to divide his Quiet Time into three parts:
  - ✓ First of all he should read the Word of God. There are two possibilities here.
    - He could follow a Bible reading plan. There are a number of these available for children, and you could supply him with one, if he is old enough to read for himself.
    - He could read through a Bible book verse by verse, asking God to show him something about Himself, and/or also something He wants the child to do. A good place for a child to start reading is the Gospel of Mark, to be followed by the Acts of the Apostles.
  - ✓ You could teach him, as the second part of his Quiet Time, to take just a few moments to worship God, and to thank Him for what He is and all He has done. This would be most effective if it could be based upon what the child has previously read in his Bible reading.
  - ✓ Then, thirdly, you should encourage the child to pray for other people, their needs, and for himself and his needs. These other people would include family members, school friends, teachers, the pastor, the rulers of the country. You should also show him how to keep a record in a little "prayer book" of the names of those he should pray for each day, and those he should pray for once each week.

Question 49

Should I be ready to counsel Christian children on a personal basis? Why? How? When?

Answer

The obvious answer is "Yes."

WHY?

You should, in your teaching, always be seeking to meet the spiritual needs of Christian children through your regular weekly ministry, while you minister to them as a group in their Sunday School class/Good News Club. Counselling should never be a substitute for good teaching. Consequently, you should make it your goal to deal with the problems Christian children face in your teaching time.

But no matter how well or how thoroughly you teach, there will always be children who do need personal help and counsel on a one to one basis. The same principle applies to the counselling of saved children as to the counselling of unsaved children. Some don't need counselling, and some do; and you must be prepared to help those who do.

HOW?

The Christian children who need personal help and counsel will, generally, **not** come to you themselves and ask you for help. You need to follow the same principles outlined in the answer to question 40 concerning unsaved children. You need to let them know three facts:

- that you are ready to help them, to pray with them and to answer their questions
- where they can meet you if you wish
- when this rendezvous can take place

You may wish to say something like this:

"If there is a boy or girl here, and you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Saviour—and you have a problem or a question—I would really like to help you. I would be glad to talk with you and pray with you after Good News Club is finished. Would you like me to? Then when the others are leaving just come over and sit on this chair. If I see you sitting there, I will know you want to talk with me, and I will be glad to help you."

WHEN?

It is better not to make yourself available to Christian children at the same time as you make yourself available to unsaved children. Keeping your two expressions of availability separate from each other will avoid confusion. You will not necessarily make yourself available to Christian children every week. You will do so from time to time—and especially when it fits in with your lesson. The important fact is that the Christian children should always know that you are available, and that they know, and feel, you are approachable. Many of these children have no one else who is able or willing to help them in this way. So it is a great privilege, and a great responsibility, for you to do so.

Question 50

Is it possible for a Christian child to backslide and to go back into the world? Is it easier for him to do so than an adult?

Answer

Yes, of course it is possible for a Christian child to backslide. It is possible for a Christian of any age to go back into the world, as many know from their personal experience. The old nature is still there, and it is fighting with the new nature. The devil does not want the Christian to grow spiritually or to be effective in his service for Jesus Christ. So there is a war on, and battles in that war can, and will, be lost.

It may seem easier for a Christian child to backslide, than an adult, because he does not generally have the same possibilities for teaching, help and follow-up work as the adult has, and is so dependent upon us for teaching. He is more limited in what he can read or the services and conferences he can attend. And also, unfortunately, many Christians don't see the need to follow him up properly.

On the other hand it may be easier for a Christian adult to backslide than a child because he has spent many more years previously in sin, and has adopted so many more fixed habits during those years which may still continue to cause a problem. There is also so much in the world to attract and tempt Christian adults.

So it is really not possible to compare children and adults with regard to backsliding. Backsliding can be witnessed in both groups and there is no

evidence that I know of which proves that it occurs more frequently in one group than in another.

The important truth for us is that we must do all we can to teach, feed, help, nurture and encourage the Christian child so that there will be less likelihood of him backsliding.

Question 51

Does the backsliding child lose his salvation?

Answer

The clear teaching of the Word of God is—No!

He loses his peace, his joy and his fellowship with God. But if he has **truly** trusted Jesus Christ and has therefore been **truly** justified and regenerated, he cannot possibly lose the results of those two great works of God.

- Justification is the forgiveness of **all** sin—past, present and future (Acts 13 v39; Romans 5 v1; Romans 8 v33). How could he lose that? If **all** his sins had already been forgiven (from an eternal point of view) and he "lost" that forgiveness, then **all** his sins had not been forgiven. This would be a denial of God's promise.
- Regeneration or the new birth is the radical change effected in him by the Holy Spirit (John 3 v3-8; 1 Peter 1 v22, 23)? How could he lose that? Does the Holy Spirit cause the one who is born again to die and reverse the radical change? Surely not.

Also if he has **truly** trusted Jesus Christ he has received eternal life (John 3 v16; 3 v36). How could he lose that? If he did lose it, then the life he had received would not have been eternal and God's promise would have been null and void. The Lord Jesus makes it absolutely clear that the one who receives eternal life from Him cannot ever perish:

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand" (John 10 v28, 29).

Notice my emphasis on the word "**truly**." I am not necessarily speaking here about children who have "made a decision for Christ." There are many who "make decisions," but time and circumstances show that these

were human emotional decisions which were made sometimes under pressure. Such decisions don't last, and couldn't last. When the child who just "makes a decision" such as this goes back into the world, he doesn't lose his salvation. He never had it.

The child who has truly trusted Christ has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and is a new creature in Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 5 v17). He has a new nature; and, while he may go back into the world, he cannot be completely or permanently happy or content there. His new nature and the indwelling Holy Spirit tell him that he is in the wrong place. He is like "a fish out of water." He is not in his natural habitat.

If he is completely and thoroughly happy in the world, and if he completely and deliberately turns his back upon Jesus Christ, that, I believe, is evidence that he was not saved.

SECTION IV:
The Local Church And Children

Question 52

Should the evangelistic programme of the local church include separate ministries to adults, young people and children? Which should receive priority?

Answer

There are three simple principles which need, first of all, to be understood:

- The ministry of the local church should not only be directed to adults but to the whole community (almost 1/3 of which are children).
- The ministry of the local church should not be just to the children whose parents attend the church, but also to those outside the church.
- The ministry of the local church to the children is not just to provide a recreational programme for them; not just to tell or teach Bible stories. It is the responsibility of the local church to **evangelize** those who are unsaved, to **edify** those who are saved and to bring them, wherever possible, into the life of the local church.

The primary purpose of the work of the local church is to minister to the spiritual needs of **all** those people in the locality with whom they can come into contact. That is why the local church is there. These people include adults, young people and children. So the local church is responsible to minister to **all** of these three groups.

There is a temptation in many local churches to minister only to those who come to the church, and these often come from a distance. Many of those who come to the church do not live in the locality surrounding the church. This can lead to the neglect of those who live close by.

There is also a temptation to minister in the Sunday School only to the "church children"—that is the children of those who already come to the church. This Sunday School ministry is a good and valid ministry. But the children who benefit from it are those who need it least, because most of their parents are usually believers. The children who most need the

churches' help and ministry are those who are outside the church—the unreached children.

There are therefore two important questions which every local church should ask:

- Are we reaching out to all the people of the district surrounding our church?
- Are we ministering to the needs of the unreached children around us, or are we just teaching and helping our "church children?"

The biblical command to the local church and to all believers is contained in Mark 16 v15:

"Go ye into ***all*** the world and preach the Gospel to ***every*** creature."

We, as believers, in the local church, are expected and commanded to reach out and evangelize everyone within reach. That includes adults, young people **and** children.

When such a comprehensive command has been given, it is difficult to prioritize. Should we set our priorities upon the adults because they would have the ability, experience and finance to strengthen and build up the church? Should we focus more on the young people because our future depends upon them and there are so many others seeking to win them? Should we focus upon the children because they are so open to the Gospel, and because the majority of those people who come to Christ do so before the age of 14?

Perhaps, rather than focusing on, or giving priority to, one group at the expense of the others the local church should seek, as best as they can, to meet the spiritual needs of **all** these groups. It is therefore absolutely essential that no group be excluded or neglected because of an overemphasis upon another group.

Question 53

How can the local church meet the spiritual needs of children?

Answer

The first step is for the local church, and especially for the leaders of the local church, to understand that the children both inside and outside the church do have a spiritual need. If they have not trusted Jesus Christ as their Saviour they are spiritually dead, outside God's Kingdom, and, if they

have reached an age of understanding and accountability and have in their hearts said "No" to God, they would be lost for ever if they were to die.

They also need to understand that many of these children could trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour if they heard the Gospel and if the Holy Spirit worked in their hearts. They don't need to wait until they become adults, or even teenagers.

In addition they need to realise that children are very open to the Gospel, and that if they come to Christ they have their whole lives to serve Him.

The first step then is understanding. The second step is action. What can the church **do** to reach children?

There are, I believe, two answers:

- The church should conduct a Sunday School for the children. If they already have one they should seek to develop it. This can take place before the morning service, or on Sunday afternoon. Some churches conduct them during the morning service; but this means that the children, and the teachers, miss that service, which is the most important service of the week.

  While many of the children who come to Sunday School will be "church children" (the children of church members and believers) an attempt should be made to encourage other children to come from outside. This would involve much work on the part of church members—visiting the homes around the church, and, where necessary, ferrying the children to Sunday School in cars.
- The church should organize mid-week activities to reach children. These can take several forms:
  - ✓ Meetings in the church on a week-day afternoon or evening to which both church children and "outside children" are invited. These could be purely evangelistic meetings, or they could be uniformed organisations such as Boys' Brigade or Campaigners. If they are the latter they should, however, not just be an opportunity for games and recreation but there should be a strong emphasis given to evangelism and Bible teaching.
  - ✓ Meetings held in the homes of church members once a week on a week-day for the children who live around those homes. These are called Good News Clubs and could be held in the afternoon or evening. Children who do not go to any church

or Sunday School will often come into a home if invited and can be taught God's Word there.

- ✓ Meetings held in the open-air during the summer in the local area and conducted by church members. This is a good opportunity for the young people in the church to get involved in service.
- ✓ A one-week Summer Bible Club can be conducted in the church for children from both inside and outside the church.
- ✓ Special rallies or/and evangelistic campaigns can be conducted in the local church for all children within reach.

Question 54

What do you see as the main purpose and function of the Sunday School?

Answer

I feel that the Sunday School has two main functions:

- ↗ Its first function is to teach the Word of God systematically to the children of those who attend the church. This is the easier function to perform, as the parents are responsible to bring and fetch their children, and the work of the Sunday School staff is only to teach. However, it should always be emphasized that the Sunday School should supplement and complement the teaching which the children are already receiving at home, and that it should not become a substitute for the ministry of parents to their own children.
- ↗ Its second function is to reach out to the children in the locality around the church, many of whom do not attend either church or Sunday School, and to invite those children to come and attend the Sunday School.

  But this function will involve much more work and responsibility than the first function. First of all, people will be needed to engage in a visitation programme to the surrounding homes to invite parents to send their children, and also in the distribution of invitations to children. Then, secondly, it will often be necessary for people to go and bring the children who want to come to Sunday School—by foot, or in cars or even in a bus (especially bought or rented for this

purpose). Thirdly, personnel will be needed to teach the children in the Sunday School, and this can be a real challenge because there obviously may be discipline problems. Fourthly, the children need to be taken back home again. All of this involves much time, much work and much responsibility. But it is well worth it.

The Metropolitan Tabernacle in London has built up its Sunday School ministry into a very successful evangelistic outreach to the children who live nearby. Each Sunday afternoon a large team of Sunday School workers brings hundreds of otherwise unreached children to the church for Bible instruction and evangelism. And God has richly blessed their ministry.

It should also be pointed out that using the Sunday School as an evangelistic outreach to the local children, can cause problems. Those concerned need to realise that many of the children who come will have very little Bible background, may not be dressed in Sunday attire, and may not be accustomed to the disciplined background and programme which every Sunday School needs and should have. So this will be a challenge! But it will be a really worthwhile challenge—with eternal results.

Question 55

What other ministries to children can a local church organize—apart from the Sunday School?

Answer

There are many such possibilities—and a number have already been listed in the answer to question 53.

- Weekly meetings for children can be held in the church or in some related property. These can be meetings to sing, learn Bible verses, listen to Bible lessons—or they can take the form of a uniformed organisation. But in the latter case adequate time should be given to Bible teaching. Quite a number of church members would be needed to help with these meetings.
- Week-day Good News Clubs can be held on a weekly basis, usually in the late afternoon, in the homes of church members. They would be taught by someone from the church, with helpers also from the

church, using attractive visual aids to teach the Word of God and to evangelize the children. Usually the number of children coming to such a Good News Club in USA and in many of our European countries is quite small (between 6 and say 15) and therefore reasonably "easy to handle." But in other parts of the world, especially Africa, the numbers coming can be much larger.
Most of the children who come would be otherwise unevangelized and have little knowledge of the Bible. In this way the homes of church members can become "mission stations" to reach the unreached children in the area where they live.

- Summer time is a good time to reach children **outside** the church with the Gospel. Church members could be encouraged to go out into the open air in small teams of 2, 3 or 4 and share the Gospel in meetings with groups of children where they live. This is a ministry which is especially suited to young people—especially those at university and training college or in the last years of Grammar School. They usually have much free time during the summer.
  There are two possibilities:
  - ✓ To go to one place at the same time each week for the whole summer and have a weekly open-air meeting there.
  - ✓ To go to one place at the same time each day and have a 5-Day Club for one week.
- More and more churches have introduced the idea of Holiday Bible Clubs. These were pioneered in USA using the name "Daily Vacation Bible Schools." Children are invited to come to the church, or to one of the church buildings for 2, 2½ or 3 hours each morning during one week of the holiday period; and an interesting programme is planned for them which includes handwork, recreation and Bible teaching. This can be a very effective ministry.
- Periodically (perhaps once each year) a special series of meetings or a children's mission, or an evangelistic campaign for children could be held in the church each evening or late afternoon for one week. An evangelist who is an experienced children's worker could be invited to lead and speak at these meetings. I myself have had the opportunity, and privilege, to conduct a number of these campaigns in local churches, and God has blessed. However, it should be emphasized that a large number of helpers would also be needed to fetch the children, to sit with them, to help with discipline, to

counsel children who want spiritual help and to be ready to look after the multitude of necessary responsibilities.

An alternative to a week long series of meetings would be one special Gospel rally for children from time to time.

- Another alternative (and this would be possible for every local church which has a heart for the children) would be to organize a systematic distribution of attractive, well written and well produced Gospel tracts to every child in the locality. The distribution of tracts can be a very effective form of evangelistic ministry; and one of its great advantages is that anyone can get involved in it!

  Each tract should have a tear-off portion for the children to send to the church if they would like more information about the Bible and the Gospel.

  You could get more information about good evangelistic tracts for children from your local Child Evangelism Fellowship office.

I believe that every local evangelical church could and should have some kind of outreach to the children in their area.

The full-time workers of Child Evangelism Fellowship are always ready to help the local church in all the outreaches which have been outlined, and to train the teachers who are willing to get involved in them.

Question 56

Should a ministry to children be an outreach of the local church or under the control of an interdenominational organisation such as Child Evangelism Fellowship?

Answer

I am convinced that the local church is the centre of God's plan and programme for evangelism in the New Testament. Therefore a ministry to children should be, ideally, an outreach of the local church. The workers involved should be members of that local church, and the entire programme should be seen as part of the church's ministry. It should therefore be under the control and supervision of the local church and its leadership.

But I feel that an organisation such as Child Evangelism Fellowship can be a great help to the local church in its ministry to the children. CEF workers have extensive experience in this work, have teaching materials

which are especially produced for it, and can provide training for the teachers which the church would not be able to give.

I believe therefore that the **ideal** answer to this question would be a co-operative outreach between the local church and Child Evangelism Fellowship.

The local church would have the following responsibilities:

- To provide the homes and teachers for Good News Clubs
- To provide young people for 5-Day Club ministries
- To finance these two ministries
- To pray for these ministries
- To receive the children into the more regular ministries of the church as opportunities allow
- To see this outreach to the children as part of the church's ministry and therefore under the control and supervision of the leadership of the church

Child Evangelism Fellowship would have the following responsibilities:

- To train the teachers on a regular basis
- To make teaching materials available
- To visit the teachers periodically to encourage and help them
- To collect reports of what is happening for their own records and to give these to the local church

An interdenominational Mission such as Child Evangelism Fellowship should be the servant of the local church, and should help the church to reach unreached children and bring them eventually into the church, through a church-related programme like the one outlined above.

Where there are several such local churches, CEF would seek to be the servant of each one, and would make it their goal to help each one build up its own outreach to the children. There could be, in this case, the possibility of combining the training programmes so that the teachers from all the churches could attend **one** CEF training programme and thus avoid duplication of effort.

In areas where there are no evangelical local churches or where the churches do not want to work with an interdenominational organisation such as CEF, the organisation concerned should go ahead and organize its own programme to reach the children.

But a co-operative church-related programme is the ideal way to reach out to the children and should be developed if at all possible.

Question 57

What is a church-based Good News Club? Who should be involved in it? How can one be started? What happens in it?

Answer

- A Good News Club is a meeting held for children:
  - ✓ in a home (or any other available place)
  - ✓ on a week day
  - ✓ usually in the late afternoon (or early evening)
  - ✓ for the children of the locality
- A Good News Club has three purposes:
  - ✓ To evangelize the local children.
  - ✓ To help those who trust Christ to grow.
  - ✓ To guide the children, whenever possible, into the ministry of a local evangelical and Bible-believing church.
- It is helpful for several people to be involved:
  - ✓ one to open her/his home (the hostess)
  - ✓ one to teach the club (the teacher)
  - ✓ one to help (the helper)
  - ✓ one to pray (the prayer partner)

  It is of course also possible, and more usual, for one person to be engaged in more than one of these four activities.
- The programme of the Good News Club usually lasts for 60 minutes and can include the following activities:
  - ✓ Singing Gospel choruses
  - ✓ Repeating and learning a Bible verse
  - ✓ Having a Bible quiz
  - ✓ Praying
  - ✓ Building up interest in missionary work
  - ✓ Studying some of the main biblical doctrines
  - ✓ Teaching a Bible lesson

  The teacher (and helper) will seek to lead all of these activities in an attractive way, and using visual aids.

Attendance at a training class taught by the local director of Child Evangelism Fellowship is important because the teacher will receive much help there for his/her Good News Club ministry.

- The steps to take in starting such a Good News Club include the following:
  - ✓ A home needs to be found and staff recruited for each club. The need for personnel could be presented by the pastor (or the local CEF director if invited) at a church service.
  - ✓ A day and time need to be chosen which would be suitable both to those who will conduct the club and to the children who will attend.
  - ✓ The club needs to be publicized in the area, and the children invited to attend. This would involve, firstly, and most important of all, personal visitation of the surrounding homes to explain to the parents what is being done and to encourage them to let their children come. This would be followed by the distribution of personal invitations to the children.
  - ✓ The next step is to start the club, and then to ensure that it keeps going. Mistakes will be made, lessons will be learned, but unreached children need to be reached; and a Good News Club is one of the best ways to reach them.

These Good News Clubs could become little "mission stations" in the locality and a means not only of evangelizing the children, but of bringing them into the ministry of the local church.

Question 58

What is a church-based 5-Day Club? Who should be involved in it? How can one be started? What happens in it?

Answer

There are many children whom the church will never reach through ministries conducted in the church, or even in Good News Clubs. To reach these children it is necessary to go outside, into the open air, where these children are, and to reach them there.

- **There are two types of open-air work with children:**
  - ✓ Weekly meetings in the open air.
    These meetings are held at the same time on the same day (each week) in the same place right throughout the summer. They are basically open-air Good News Clubs. They can be very effective and can encourage the participation of busy people from the church as they would only be committed to participate once each week.
  - ✓ 5-Day Clubs in the open air.
    These Clubs are held on a daily basis for one week at the same time in the same place. They can also be very effective. However, it can sometimes be difficult to find workers who are available for a whole week, unless you have the meetings in the evening when more people are free. But this can be a wonderful ministry for the young people in the church who have usually much time free during the day and throughout the summer.
- **The purpose** of a 5-Day Club is to evangelize children.
  The emphasis is upon evangelism and the 5-Day Club is an attempt to reach children with the Gospel who are not being reached in any other way.
- **The personnel** needed in a 5-Day Club should be recruited from the local church.
  The minimum number of workers is two, so that when one is teaching, the other one can look after any problems or emergencies which might arise. They can also share the responsibility for the different parts of the programme of the club.
- **The programme** of a 5-Day Club is quite simple and straight forward:
  - ✓ Singing helps to attract attention and is an interesting way to learn Bible truths.
  - ✓ Memorizing a Bible verse is an important part of the programme.
  - ✓ A Bible quiz based upon the previous day's Bible lesson can be both attractive and effective.
  - ✓ The Bible lesson, using flashcards, is the climax of the programme.

- **The process** to be followed in setting up the 5-Day Club consists of the following steps:
  - ✓ The place(s) where the 5-Day Club(s) will be held need(s) to be selected. It/they can be conducted in playgrounds, parks or beside swimming pools (if permission is granted) or in public places (such as the grassy area in the centre of many housing areas), or in the gardens of private homes. One of the advantages of the latter is that no permission is needed from the authorities.
  - ✓ The workers need to be recruited. This can be done by the pastor (or the local CEF Director) at a church service; or, even better, at the regular meeting held in the church for its young people.
  - ✓ The young people involved need to be prepared, and trained, and this can best be done by the local CEF director.
  - ✓ The meetings need to be advertised and publicized beforehand in the area where they will be held. This should involve the visitation of all the homes, asking the parents to allow their children to come, and the distribution of printed invitations to the children.
  - ✓ Then—GO AHEAD!

Question 59

What is a church-based Holiday Bible Club? Who should be involved in it? What happens in it? How can one be started?

Answer

- **What** is a Holiday Bible Club?
  A Holiday Bible Club or Daily Vacation Bible School is a series of meetings held for children during holiday time (usually the summer holidays). It generally lasts for one week of five days—although occasionally it is extended to two weeks. It is held on a daily basis, often in the mornings, but sometimes in the afternoons or even the evenings; and it is conducted each day for a period of anything between one hour and three hours.
  It is usually best for Holiday Bible Clubs to be church-based and to

be under the control of the local church who will provide the needed resources to run the club effectively.

- **Where** should it be held?
  The best location for a church-based Holiday Bible Club is on church property if this is at all possible. One of the primary aims of the Holiday Bible Club is to bring unreached children into Sunday School and the other ministries in the church. So it is logical to link the club as closely as possible to the church. Also the church can usually provide ideal facilities for the Bible Club.
- **Who** should be involved in it?
  A number of teachers are needed—at least one teacher for every 8/10 children who attend—plus several helpers. They should all be recruited from the church itself.
  A certain amount of funds will also be needed to finance the handwork, and the daily refreshments for the children. The church should be responsible for this finance.
  Possible programme outlines and handwork ideas can be obtained from a specialist organisation such as Child Evangelism Fellowship. The local Child Evangelism Fellowship director would also generally be available to help train the teachers.
- **What** happens in it?
  The length of the programme will vary. But a two-hour programme might be planned as follows:

  10:00–10:45 a.m. All the children meet together (with the exception of the preschoolers who are in a room by themselves, with their own teachers) under the leadership and teaching of one or more teachers who are gifted and capable of handling a large group.
  During these 45 minutes there should be singing, the learning of a Bible verse through repetition and the teaching of a Bible lesson; and sometimes a missionary lesson or presentation.
  10:45–11:00 a.m. A short break for the children when simple refreshments can be served and children can go to the toilet!
  11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. The children are divided according to age into small groups of 8 to 10. Each group has its own teacher.
  During this hour there should be three main activities:

  - ✓ A short Bible lesson or application lesson to link with, and follow through on, the main Bible lesson.

- ✓ A short Bible quiz to test the children on the Bible lesson from the previous day.
- ✓ A period of handwork when the children have the opportunity to make something, or to do something. The handwork should also be linked with the main theme of the morning as taught in the two Bible lessons.

↗ **What** steps should be taken?

- ✓ Recruit the workers and decide on the dates.
- ✓ Plan the programme carefully well beforehand.
- ✓ Invite the local CEF director to give guidance and training.
- ✓ Arrange a series of special prayer meetings.
- ✓ Publicise the school through visitation and the distribution of invitations.
- ✓ Trust God that the three goals of the school will be reached:
  - The salvation of children
  - The spiritual growth of saved children
  - The involvement of children in the Sunday School and other activities of the church
- ✓ Realise that the school can be also a means of reaching parents and a special rally could be planned for the closing evening to which they could be invited.

Question 60

Are church-based evangelistic campaigns or rallies for children a possible way to reach children today?

Answer

The answer is "Yes." They can be a very effective way to reach unreached children.

A evangelistic campaign for children usually lasts for one week with a meeting early each evening (or late in the afternoon) conducted by someone who is a gifted children's evangelist. Usually it is necessary to invite someone to come from outside the church to be the evangelist. The children's evangelist invited is often full-time in this type of ministry. Children are invited to come to the meetings each evening from the area around the church, or are brought in cars driven by church members. These meetings

should be made as attractive as possible, without becoming entertainment, and they should be solidly and biblically evangelistic.

A children's rally is similar, basically, to an evangelistic campaign, but is held only on a one-off occasion. Otherwise it follows the same principles as outlined above.

I believe that the answer to the question asked is "Yes." These campaigns and rallies could be a very effective way to reach unreached children. But certain conditions need to be fulfilled:

- The church as a whole needs to see this as a vital part of their ministry with many church members being willing to get involved in it, in some way.
- A gifted children's evangelist should be invited to come, and he should receive all his expenses plus a substantial gift.
- A series of prayer meetings should be organized (and attended) for several weeks preceding the campaign/rally.
- A systematic visitation programme should be organized to cover the whole area, with parents being encouraged to send their children, and many children being invited to come.
- Church members, and especially the Sunday School teachers, should attend the meetings as often as possible. Also a number of them should be prepared to help in some way. For example, a group of Sunday School teachers should be ready to counsel children who want to be saved, and should be willing to come to classes previous to the meetings to be trained for this purpose. And those adults who come should sit here and there among the children to watch for, and deal with, any discipline problems which might arise.
- After the campaign is over the church should be ready to follow up the results of that campaign:
  - ✓ by starting, or building up, regular week day meetings for children in the church.
  - ✓ by encouraging the children reached to come to Sunday School, and to be willing to bring them.
  - ✓ by visiting the homes of newly-reached children to get to know the parents, and to encourage the children to keep in contact with the church.
  - ✓ by keeping in personal contact with children who have trusted Christ. The ideal person to do this would be the Sunday School

teacher who counselled the child, but other church members could also be involved.

I am sure that all the work and time put into such a campaign or/and rally would prove to be a good investment for the church and for its future.

SECTION V:
Parents And Children

Question 61

What is the responsibility of Christian parents towards their children and how can these responsibilities be best fulfilled?

Answer

First of all it needs to be seen clearly from the Bible that Christian parents do have a responsibility to their children, and that it is not right for them to expect the local church or an organisation like Child Evangelism Fellowship to do what they are supposed to do.

A number of truths can be found in the Bible concerning parents and their responsibilities:

- God's commendation of Abraham as a godly and responsible father in Genesis 18 v19 gives an example for parents to follow.
- God's commands to parents in Deuteronomy 4 v9, 10; 6 v3-9; 11 v18-21 need to be obeyed.
- God's instruction to parents in Proverbs to train (22 v6), discipline in love (13 v24) and guide (17 v2) their children needs to be understood and put into practice.
- God's commands to parents in the New Testament (1 Timothy 3 v4; Ephesians 6 v4; Colossians 3 v21) demand obedience.
- Children whose parents are believers have a great privilege, but parents are responsible to take advantage of that privilege (Joshua 24 v15; Acts 11 v14; Acts 16 v31; 1 Corinthians 7 v14).

It can be seen from many of these verses that special stress is laid upon the responsibility of the father (Genesis 18 v19; Ephesians 6 v4 and Colossians 3 v21). But this does not discount the godly influence and teaching of mothers like Eunice and even grandmothers like Lois (2 Timothy 1 v5).

Above all, Christian parents should understand and obey the three main responsibilities which they have towards their children as outlined in 2 Timothy 3 verses 14-17.

- They should teach the Scriptures to their children.
  Verse 15 states that Timothy had known the holy Scriptures since he was a child (or infant—as the Greek word makes clear), and in verse 14 he is encouraged to continue in the things which he had learned (many of these at his mother's knee). This responsibility of parents to teach the Word of God to their children is also emphasized in Deuteronomy 6 v7 and Deuteronomy 11 v19.
- They should evangelize their children on the basis of what they have taught them.
  Verse 15 makes it clear that the first purpose of these scriptures is to make those who hear them "wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."
  Parents therefore need to believe that it is possible for their children to be saved, and to explain lovingly and systematically the way of salvation to their children, showing them exactly what they need to do to be saved. They could also let their children know that if they ever want help, guidance or counsel with regard to salvation the children should feel free to come to them and let them know.
  However, there should never be any pressure exerted by parents upon their children to trust Christ. Conviction and regeneration are the work of the Holy Spirit, and the parents must not trespass onto His territory.
- They should teach the Scriptures so as to help their children who have trusted the Lord as their Saviour to grow spiritually.
  The truths or doctrines which the children have learned should be used to reprove, to correct, to instruct (verse 16) and to equip (verse 17).

The same thoughts are expressed, but more succinctly, in Ephesians 6 v4 and Colossians 3 v21. Both verses emphasize that fathers should not provoke or exasperate their children. In other words, they should not be harsh, demanding or expecting too much from them. Then in Ephesians 6 v4 the fathers are commanded to bring their children up (or rear them tenderly) in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

- "Nurture" means training and disciplining and applies primarily to what is done to the children.
- "Admonition" means warning and teaching and applies primarily to what is said to the children.

But both of these concepts are qualified by the words "of the Lord" to point out both the quality and the purpose of what is done and taught. Someone has said, "The heart of Christian nurture is to bring the heart of the child to the heart of the Saviour."

Before the child has reached seven
Have him taught the way to heaven
Better still the truth will thrive
If he knows it ere he's five
Best of all, if at your knee
He learned the way before he's three

One last, but very important thought! All that the parents teach is useless if it is not backed up by their godly lives and examples. The MAIN responsibility of Christian parents is to witness to their children by the lives which they live before them, and to ensure that there is no contradiction between what they teach, on the one hand, and what they are and do on the other.

Question 62

How important is it for a family to worship together on a daily basis? What form should this worship take?

Answer

It is helpful, and essential, for a Christian to spend time alone in his quiet time with God on a daily basis. But it is also helpful and essential for the family to spend time **together** with God each day. Someone has said that "A family which prays together stays together" and this is true. Someone else has said, "A family without prayer is like a house without a roof. It is open and exposed to storms and rain."

It is essential for every Christian father to plan a definite time each day when he will lead his family in Bible reading, prayer and worship. This **is** part of his responsibility. When the father is not a Christian, or is no longer alive, or is not with the family, then it is the mother's responsibility to do this.

The best time for a family worship time may vary from family to family. It should be a time when the family are ordinarily together, but also when

time is available for family worship, and to avoid any kind of haste or pressure.

Generally the morning is not the best time for obvious reasons (although it **is** usually the best time for an individual quiet time). Many families find that the best time for family worship is in the evening, at the table, at the conclusion of the evening meal.

It should not be too short or perfunctory. At the same time it should not be too long—especially if the children are young. The length and content of the family worship time should be especially geared to the youngest present. 15 minutes might be a good time to aim at.

Family worship time could consist of several parts:

- The reading of a few Bible verses by the father with **brief** comments by him. Or he could read a section from a good Bible story book especially prepared for this purpose e.g. "Leading Little Ones to God" by Marion Schoolland. The children could also be asked for comments, or questions.
- A time of prayer when anyone who wishes can take part. Before this time of prayer, all present could be asked if they have any special need or request for which they would like prayer.
- This could be followed by a time of prayer for missionaries known to the family. It is a help to have their photograph or prayer card, and also to read excerpts from their most recent prayer letter. These missionaries could be prayed for systematically—one each day.
- The father could close the family worship time by briefly expressing worship, thanks and love to God for all He is and for all He has done.

It is vital that this time spent together is a **family** worship time and not just a "**father** worship time"—with the father doing everything and the children becoming more and more bored and more and more restless. It is essential for the father to involve the children. This can be done in each of the first three sections outlined above:

- Ask the children for comments and questions on what has been read. And then deal with these as thoroughly as you can. Never criticize or make fun of their comments or their questions or they will never do so again.
- Encourage the children to express their needs and to pray.

- Encourage the children to pray for the missionaries. But do not put pressure upon them to do so.

Question 63

What is the role and spiritual responsibility of grandparents towards their grandchildren?

Answer

It is a great privilege to be a grandparent, but with that privilege come many responsibilities.

- **The blessings and advantages of being grandparents are many:**
  - ✓ You have usually more time for your grandchildren than you may have had for your children because you were so busy when they were young.
  - ✓ You have more experience than when you were just parents. You learned your lessons with your own children. Now you can put what you have learned to good use.
  - ✓ You have (or should have) more patience now than you used to have!
  - ✓ You have less responsibility. You can help them, enjoy them and be with them, and then leave them in the hands of their parents.
  - ✓ You can find that close links and a special bond can often, with time, grow between grandparents and grandchildren.
- **A biblical example of a grandparent**
  In 2 Timothy 1 v5 we read about Timothy's mother Eunice, but we also read about his grandmother, Lois, and her influence on him:
  - ✓ She was a godly grandmother.
  - ✓ She taught the Word of God to Timothy from his earliest days.
  - ✓ She influenced Timothy greatly and helped to prepare him both for his conversion and for his future ministry.

  I myself had a godly grandmother and was greatly influenced by her, even though I only realised this afterwards.
  Praise God for godly grandmothers (and godly grandfathers).

- **The responsibilities of grandparents**
  - ✓ You need to understand the needs of your grandchildren:
    - their spiritual needs (for salvation or for Christian growth)
    - their social needs (because of the many pressures in today's world
    - their possible physical needs (health problems) or mental needs (learning problems)
  - ✓ You need to see your responsibility to do something to help meet those needs.
  - ✓ You need to pray for each of them by name at least once or twice each day and with specific requests.
  - ✓ You need to enjoy them and minister to them:
    - by building a good relationship with them
    - by listening to them
    - by talking to them
    - by playing games with them
    - by telling them Bible stories
    - by teaching them Bible truths
    - by gently evangelizing them, with no pressure
    - by helping them to grow spiritually
- **Dangers for grandparents to avoid**
  - ✓ You should not interfere with, or go against the decisions made by, the children's parents. Go to **them** and speak with **them** if you are not happy with their decisions. But try to do so in a positive way. Give good reasons for your viewpoint. Do not be negative or critical.
  - ✓ You should be involved with your grandchildren, but not too involved. They are the parents' children and not yours!
  - ✓ You should not criticize the parents if they do things differently from what you think they should do.
  - ✓ You should ensure that your relationship with the parents is good at all times so that you will always have full and free access to your grandchildren.

Section VI:
Ministries To Children

Question 64

What do you see as the necessary qualifications for someone who wants to work with, and evangelize, children?

Answer

Teaching and evangelizing children is a very important ministry, and it is a great privilege for those who are engaged in it. It is obvious therefore that there should be qualifications for those who want to do this work, and I will outline five of these. However, it needs to be remembered that no one is perfect, and that some of these qualifications are qualities which will develop and mature through prayer, obedience and experience.

- **The teacher must be converted.**
  You must know Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Saviour. You cannot introduce children to Him unless you know Him yourself. The teacher must be able to say with assurance "I know Whom I have believed" (2 Timothy 1 v12).
  How tragic it is that there are teachers trying to instruct children about the Lord Jesus Christ when they do not, themselves, personally know Him!
- **The teacher must be consecrated.**
  You should be seeking to give Jesus Christ first place in your life, endeavouring to walk in fellowship with Him, and aiming to live a life which is separated from the world and from sin.
  Before the Lord Jesus commissioned Peter to feed the lambs He asked him, "Simon son of Jonas lovest thou Me more than these?" Peter replied, "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee." Upon this confession of his love for Christ, the Lord Jesus then said to him, "Feed My lambs" (John 21 v15).
- **The teacher must have a three-fold conviction:**
  - ✓ Concerning the Word of God.
    You need to be sure that the Bible is inspired and without

mistake. Consequently, you should be a fervent student of the Word of God so that you can better teach it to the children (2 Timothy 2 v15).

- ✓ Concerning the Work of God.
  You need to understand that God is sovereign and that He can be trusted to do His work in the hearts of children as you teach them the Word of God (Isaiah 55 v11).
- ✓ Concerning the Will of God.
  You need to know that God wants the children to know His Word and to be evangelized, that they are important to Him and that He does not want any one of them to perish or be lost (Matthew 18 v14).

↗ **The teacher must be compassionate.**
You may not be a very good speaker but, if you have love, compassion and a burden for the souls of the children, these will overcome many failings. They will also encourage you to pray for the children on a regular and personal basis. This was the kind of compassion which the Lord Jesus had (Matthew 9 v36).

↗ **The teacher must know he is called.**
The reason you are teaching children is because God, the Holy Spirit, has laid this ministry upon your heart, and He has called you to get involved in it. It makes all the difference when you realise that this is God's work, and not yours; and it helps you to keep going in difficult circumstances (Acts 26 v19-22).

These are therefore five qualifications:

CONVERSION—I KNOW
CONSECRATION—I LOVE
CONVICTION—I AM SURE
COMPASSION—I CARE
CALL—I OBEY

Question 65

I want to reach children with the Gospel. What can I do? Where do I start?

Answer

I am thankful to know that you have a concern for children and a desire to reach them with the Gospel. I would make the following suggestions:

- Spend time in prayer and ask God to guide you as to what you should do.
- Ask your pastor or the Sunday School superintendent if there is a possibility for you to teach a group of children in your Sunday School. These children may not seem to be needy and unreached children, but you could gain good experience with them which will help you when you "move outside" to reach children who are more needy. At the same time I am sure that there are many of them to whom you could give spiritual help.
- Look for the possibility to teach a Good News Club. This is a weekly week day meeting for local children in a home or in some other available place (e.g. a school, hospital or hall of some kind). Read the answer to question 57 for more detail.
  This Good News Club could even be held in your own home.
- When summer-time comes explore the possibility of going out into the open air to evangelize the children. A number of children will come and listen to you. This is the most difficult form of children's work, and will cause you to be nervous. It would be helpful if you could find someone else to accompany you and help you in this ministry.
  These open air meetings can be held on a weekly basis in one place throughout the summer; or on a daily basis for one week.
- You could distribute attractive Gospel tracts to children. Child Evangelism Fellowship has produced many of these. This is not a difficult ministry and can be very fruitful.
- You will find that other possibilities will soon materialize if you have the time for them:

- ✓ you could serve as a counsellor at a children's camp.
- ✓ you could teach in a Holiday Bible Club.
- ✓ you could assist in a children's evangelistic campaign or rally.

There are four pieces of advice which will be of help to you:

- ↗ Be sure to attend a regular training class such as those taught by the local CEF director in your area, and go to conferences and courses for children's workers so that you can learn as much as possible. Also you should read books which will help you, such as the series of which this book is a part. If there are any books listed on the first page of this book which you do not have, write to the address given and they will be sent to you.
- ↗ Spend time in prayer, that God will use you in the lives of children.
- ↗ Endeavour, if possible, to work in association with others who have the same burden and vision as yourself. That is much better than working alone.
- ↗ Be sure to teach attractively. But, at the same time, don't become an entertainer. God has called you to evangelize; and you need to ensure that you are teaching the biblical Gospel using biblical principles.

Question 66

What should I see as the primary goals in my work with children?

Answer

- ↗ **You need to understand that there are two groups of children:**
  - ✓ There are, firstly, children who have not trusted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.
    The Bible is clear about the condition of children without Christ. They are born with a sinful nature (Psalm 51 v5). They have all gone astray (Isaiah 53 v6; Matthew 18 v12 and 13) and they are lost as far as their position is concerned (Matthew 18 v11). Their sin separates them from God.
    These children are spiritually dead (Ephesians 2 v1), spiritually blind (2 Corinthians 4 v4) and under the dominion and power of sin (Romans 6 v17). If they have reached an age of accountability, responsibility and understanding and have not

trusted Christ they are also guilty before God (Romans 3 v19), and if they die in that condition they will be lost for ever (John 3 v36).

These children need Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

- ✓ There are also children who have trusted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

  The Bible teaches that children—even young children—can trust the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour (Matthew 18 v6). When they do so He gives them spiritual life (John 6 v47), spiritual sight (Acts 26 v18), forgiveness of all sin (Ephesians 1 v7), the indwelling Holy Spirit (Acts 2 v38), and eternal life (Luke 19 v10, John 3 v16); and, at the same time, He breaks the overall power of sin in their lives (Romans 6 v18) and changes them (2 Corinthians 5 v17).

  These children do not need spiritual life; they already have it. They do not need to be evangelized. They need spiritual food so that they can grow spiritually (1 Peter 2 v2). God's command to them is to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3 v18).

- ↗ **You as the teacher of children need therefore to have two goals:**
  - ✓ You need to pray that the unsaved children will trust Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.
  - ✓ You need to pray that the saved children will grow spiritually.
- ↗ **You as the teacher of children need therefore to have two ministries:**
  - ✓ You are a fisherman.

    While you are teaching you are **fishing** for children who are not saved. Your first and primary role is that of an evangelist, and you want to apply your teaching to unsaved children to encourage and enable them to trust Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour.

    The Lord Jesus called Simon Peter to be such a fisherman. "Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4 v19).
  - ✓ You are a shepherd.

    While you are teaching you are **feeding** children who are saved. You want to apply your teaching to saved children to

help them to grow spiritually.
The Lord Jesus called Peter three years after his first call—to be a shepherd.
"Feed My lambs . . . feed My sheep . . . feed My sheep" (John 21 v15-17).

Every teacher and children's worker has two ministries and two responsibilities:

- To fish
- To feed

You are called to work among children by hook and by crook!

Question 67

How can I evangelize unsaved children, and feed saved children at the same time and in the same class?

Answer

It would obviously be easier, and simpler, to teach children if all of them were in the same group—that is if all of them were either saved or unsaved. But, while this might happen occasionally, that is not the usual situation. The children you have in your class generally fall into two groups with two quite different and separate needs—and therefore you have two ministries (see the answer to question 66).

However, it is not as complicated, as it might seem, to minister to both groups in the same lesson.

Your first purpose in teaching a Bible lesson is to teach the central truth of that lesson to the children. Your Bible story is not just a story which outlines an interesting narrative. It is a lesson which teaches one main relevant truth. The story is just the vehicle or channel which helps you to teach that truth. The story is not the end. It is the means to the end.

This central truth needs to be taught throughout the Bible lesson to **all** the children—both saved and unsaved.

But, because the needs of the two groups of children are different, that one central truth needs to be applied in two ways:

- It should be applied to the unsaved children to show them that they need to be saved, and how they can be saved.

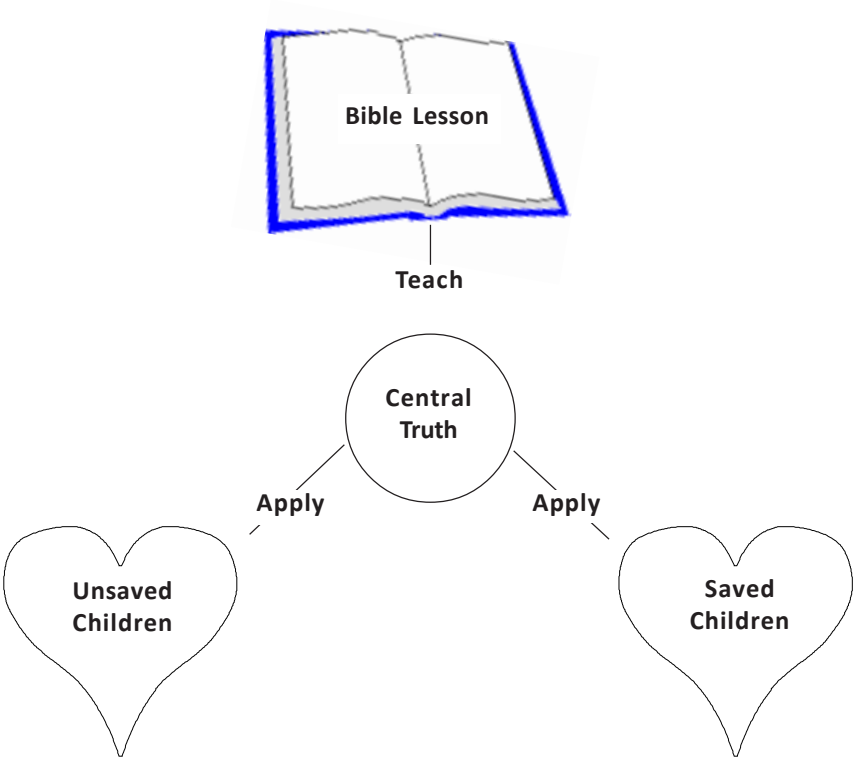
- It should be applied to the saved children to help them to grow.

Both these applications will be made towards the end of the lesson after the truth has been thoroughly taught. Generally speaking it is better for the two applications to be kept separate from each other. Also the teacher should make it clear to whom he is speaking when he applies the truth:

> "If you have not trusted Jesus Christ as your Saviour . . ."
> "If you have trusted Jesus Christ as your Saviour . . ."

Each application should conclude with a challenge to the children in that particular group to respond to the truth—either to trust Jesus Christ as Saviour, or to take a step forward in the Christian life.

Let me visualize what I have outlined:



The same principle applies to the other parts of your teaching programme as well. You teach the memory verse, teach the missionary lesson, teach a doctrine and teach choruses to **all** the children, but you will seek from time to time to make different applications, wherever possible, to each of the two groups of children.

Most Bible lessons can be taught in the way which has been outlined—with one central truth and two applications. If, however, it is only possible to apply the central truth to one of the two groups of children (and this does not happen very often) there should then be teaching and application for the other group in some part of the teaching programme apart from the Bible lesson.

Question 68

Could you give me some simple steps in the preparation of a Bible lesson, and could you explain more fully your answer to question 67?

Answer

There are two introductory thoughts to remember:

- Your task is not to tell a Bible story but to teach a Bible lesson. You will usually tell a Bible story but you should use the Bible story to teach truth to all the children so that it will help meet the needs of **all** of them.
- Your responsibility is to exegete and expound the passage on which your Bible lesson is based. You should **teach** the truth(s) which is (are) in that passage, and not try to teach truths which are not in the passage. You start off with the passage, and bring out the truths which are in the passage. That is what exegesis means. You should never feel that you must insert truths into the passage so that you can teach them.

There are seven steps which you should take in your preparation of a Bible lesson:

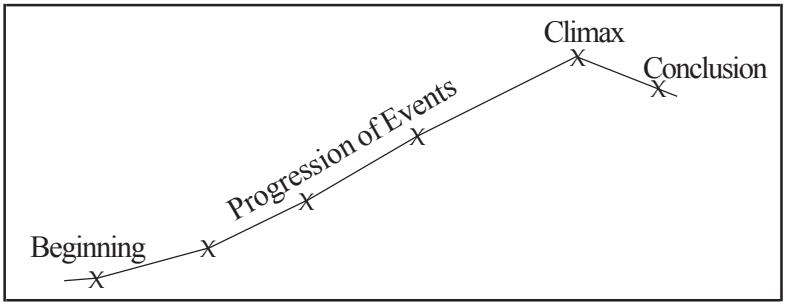
- **You need to find the truth, the central truth, in the passage you are teaching.**

  What is God teaching through this passage?

Why is it in the Bible?
What is the truth which the Holy Spirit brings home to you personally?

There may be other truths, but choose the one which you feel is the main truth, and the one which will be most helpful to the children. Then write it down as a short and simple sentence.
For example, the central truth of the Creation story in Genesis 1 and 2 could be ***"God is great, and can do anything."***

↗ **You should make a lesson plan which has a beginning, a progression of events, a climax and a conclusion.**
Write out the skeleton outline of this plan under these four headings. Under the first, third and fourth headings you will write a short and appropriate paragraph with a few related sentences to remind you of what you will say at those three points. Under the second point you will outline a number of sentences, one underneath the other, which will remind you of what happened, step by step in the story.



↗ **You should decide where in that plan you can teach easily and normally the central truth.**
It would be helpful if you could teach this truth at least 4 or 5 times at different places in the lesson. It would also be good if each time you teach this central truth you do so in more depth, so that it is not just verbal repetition. This means that you are repeating your central truth over and over again, and that helps the children to understand it. But your repetition is not always the same, and so it does not become boring. The central truth can also be introduced into other parts of the programme (e.g. when singing)—to really drive it home.

Your lesson plan could look like this—with X indicating where you would teach the central truth.
You could, for example, teach different aspects of the central truth of God's greatness and power six times in the Creation story—one for each day of creation.

- **You should decide on your application for the saved children.** Then write it out and plan where in your lesson you will give this application. The application must be directly linked to the central truth. It should include the word "you," and you should be able to use the word "therefore" before it. It is obvious that you cannot apply the central truth before you teach it. So this application will come later in the lesson—possibly at the third or fourth or fifth time the central truth is taught.
  *For example, the application of the central truth of the Creation story (**God is great and can do anything**) to saved children could be: (Therefore) **He can help you control your temper and tongue**.*
- **You should decide on your application to the unsaved children.**
  The application should always be closely linked to the central truth and be a logical conclusion which can be drawn from it. It would be joined with, and drawn from, the teaching of the central truth and be included later in the lesson. It is better for the two applications to be given separately and at different times in the lesson. If most of the children are unsaved it would be best to have this application linked to the last teaching of the central truth.
  *For example: The application of the central truth of the Creation story (**God is great and can do anything**) to unsaved children could be: (Therefore) **He can save you no matter how bad you are**.*
- **You should feel free to introduce other truths.**
  As you make this application to the unsaved children you should feel free to introduce other truths which will help you to make this central truth and application clear to them. But there is no need to find these truths in the passage. You are not teaching them. You are introducing them (briefly) to help teach and apply the main truth.
  For example, as you teach about God being great and being

able to save, you could mention that the child's salvation is only possible because Jesus Christ died for him, and that he needs to trust the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved.

- **You need to challenge the children to respond to the truth and its application.**
  Having taught the truth to all the children present, and having applied it to each of the two groups present, you also need to challenge both groups to respond to the application each has been given. These challenges should be clear, warm and enthusiastic—but without pressure; and they will not usually be given together.
  E.g.
  - ✓ ***"God is great and can do anything. Are you willing for God to take control of your tongue? Will you say "Yes, Lord" to Him today and trust Him to help you?"*** *(Challenge to the saved children).*
  - ✓ ***"You can trust Jesus Christ today. He has promised to save you no matter what you have done. God is great and can do anything. Why not ask Him to save you—right now?"*** *(Invitation to the unsaved children).*

Question 69

How can I make my Bible lesson so interesting that the children will really listen and not be restless?

Answer

There are several simple rules to follow which should make your Bible lesson interesting to the children:

- **Be relevant.**
  Make sure that your Bible lesson has content which is relevant to the child and his needs; and avoid the continual repetition of the same phrases at the same moment in every lesson.
  Exegesis is the art of finding out exactly what a passage of Scripture actually means and teaches. If you exegete and expound the Bible passage properly, and apply it thoroughly there will be good content, and also there will be variety from week to week as you move from one Bible passage to another.

- **Spend much time in preparation.**
  You need to prepare your lesson thoroughly and know exactly what you will say and when, the truth you will teach, the applications you will make and the illustrations you will use. The teacher who is well prepared is relaxed, knows what he is doing, and his lesson flows well.
- **Be alive.**
  You, yourself, are the best visual aid of all. Make the story and the lesson come alive. Don't freeze or be still. Use your hands, your face, your voice, and even perhaps your feet, to provide an attractive and interesting presentation. But DON'T OVERDO IT!
- **Use visual aids.**
  Visual aids can be a great help in keeping the children's attention and also in explaining incidents or truths which are difficult for the child to imagine or understand. The flannelgraph is probably the best visual aid of all to use; it is attractive and the pictures on the board keep changing. Flashcards can be very helpful, especially in the open air where flannelgraph cannot be used. Other helpful visual aids include overhead projectors, object lessons and chalk talks.
  Remember, however, that these are only aids to your teaching. It is what you say and what you teach which really counts.
  "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10 v17).
  Remember at all times that you are there to evangelize the children and to teach them the Word of God. You are not an entertainer.
- **Use illustrations.**
  An illustration is a story or an incident which will help the children to understand what you are teaching. The Lord Jesus often used parables to do just this. One child said about Charles Spurgeon, the 19th century English pastor and preacher, "I enjoy that preacher because he has so many 'likes.'" Illustrations are like windows which let the light into the building. If you have a lesson which is all bricks but no windows, there will not be too much light, but there will be lots of restlessness. At the same time, you don't want to have a building which is all windows and no bricks. It will be of little value.
  I would suggest that you should include at least two short and relevant illustrations in every Bible lesson.

- **Be simple.**
  Be sure that the children understand what you are saying. Avoid long or complicated words (without explanation). Avoid theological terminology (without explanation). You cannot be simple enough—especially when so many children today have little or no Bible background. You cannot expect children to listen to you if they don't know what you are talking about.
  Remember the advice the young lady was given who was starting her ministry to children:

  K-I-S-S. (Keep it simple, sister).

  It may also be good to remember the advice the older man was given before he started to speak:

  B-B-B-B-B (Be brief, brother, be brief).

Question 70

I find that the children listen well to my Bible story. But I as I come to the end, and try to tell them what the story means for them they get very restless. What should I do?

Answer

Your problem is, I am afraid, a very common one and one we have all experienced, myself included.

The general rule is that children will listen well when a story is being told and the narrative is both interesting and exciting. Unfortunately they do not listen so well to "what it means," and especially to applications.

Let me use an illustration to help answer your question.

A mother wanted her little boy to take a pill. She asked him to open his mouth; she put the pill in; but immediately the boy spat it out again. He did not like pills.

So she tried once more. She knew that her son liked raspberry jam. So she hid the pill in the middle of a spoonful of this jam and offered the jam to her son. He took it, enjoyed the jam and then when he came to the pill he spat it out again.

But mothers are very clever. She made another attempt. First of all she ground the pill into a fine powder. Then she mixed that powder with a spoonful of raspberry jam which she offered to her son. He took it, enjoyed

it and swallowed it. He didn't know that he had swallowed the pill also, because it was mixed through the jam.

That is not really a very good illustration! The Gospel and the truths of the Word of God are not pills. Certainly not! But I think you will understand what I mean.

In your lesson the child may think of the truth and its application as the pill. He may see the story and the narrative as the jam. If you tell a story, and then, afterwards, try to teach and apply the truth you may have lost him. But if you "break up" the truth (and its application) and spread them through the Bible lesson the children will generally listen to both the narrative and the truth. This is called "weaving the truth" into the lesson, a method which I outlined in my answer to question 68.

Two simple instructions will help you to hold the children's attention when you come to that final application:

- Use an illustration of a child who responded to the truth and what happened. This helps to explain the application and also encourages the child to listen more carefully.
- Don't have an application and conclusion which are too long. If you have taught the truth thoroughly in the lesson, and have given the application clearly, there is no need to keep going on and on. A good lesson always has a reasonably short conclusion and finishes with the children ready and willing to hear more.

Question 71

Why do you emphasize that we should teach one central truth in a Bible lesson? Should we not try to teach several truths—four, six or even more—especially in light of the fact that the children know so little and need to learn so much?

Answer

One of the main principles of teaching is the principle of concentration. In other words our teaching is more effective if we teach less and teach it thoroughly. We want the children to learn something really well and to apply it to their lives.

I face two problems in my ministry of teaching:

- As a teacher I do not have the time (in a 15 or 20 minute Bible lesson), or the ability, to teach a number of truths. Teaching demands explanation, simplification, illustration, repetition and application, and it is impossible for me to teach a number of truths effectively in such a short time. Mentioning a truth, or including a truth, or referring to a truth, is not teaching it. We must avoid the philosophy that all we have to do is to say something, and believe that that is teaching. However, I feel that I could teach **one** truth in the time available so that all the children would understand it and, I trust, apply it to their own lives.
- Most children do not have the ability to understand and apply a number of truths which are presented to them in a 20 minute period. This is especially so when we are teaching children who have a very limited Bible background, and to whom most of what we are teaching is completely new. The number of children who are biblically illiterate is becoming greater all the time, and it is these children we always need to keep in mind.

I want my children really to understand something and really to know how to apply what they have understood to their own lives. Both I and the children need time for that to be accomplished. If I try to teach a number of truths in my lesson, the possible result is that I don't **really** teach anything, and they don't **really** learn anything.

It is important to remember that **teaching** one central truth does not eliminate other truths. You should be absolutely free to mention and bring in other truths if they help you to teach and apply the central truth. It is not at all necessary for these other truths to be in the passage from which you are teaching.

You should always remember the TMO formula when you are teaching:

> ***T****each one truth.*
> ***M****ention other truths which help you teach that one truth.*
> ***O****mit all other truths.*

Many years ago when I was teaching a Bible lesson I made it my goal to include, and try to teach, seven or even eight truths in each lesson. The first six truths were gospel truths for the unsaved child and my aim was to find all six truths in the passage being taught and to include all six in every lesson. Then I included a truth for the saved child (which was quite separate and distinct from the six gospel truths) and, at times, I tried to include some

teaching concerning one of God's attributes. I also taught my students to follow the same pattern.

This method did have some advantages. The system was easy to understand and relatively easy to follow. And I have no doubt that God used it in my ministry and in the ministry of others.

But I became more and more uneasy with this method of Bible lesson presentation. Firstly, because good and careful exegesis of each Bible passage did not always allow me to find all these six truths in it, and it was therefore difficult to include them naturally. But, secondly, I felt more and more that to try to teach so much thoroughly in one Bible lesson was difficult (even impossible) both for me and for the children.

So I started to look for a better way to present my Bible lesson so as really to TEACH truth. Eventually I arrived at the system which I have explained in these answers. This method is to teach a central truth to all the children, and then to apply **that** central truth to both the saved and the unsaved children.

I found this to be an effective way to teach the Bible lesson and also I discovered that it was relatively simple and easy to put into practice. I also saw that it gave unity to the lesson. The lesson became unified around its central truth. This seems better to me than having two quite separate themes or teachings in a lesson, one directed to the saved children, and one to the unsaved children, with often no connection or link to each other.

Question 72

But is it not necessary to ensure that all the main gospel truths should be inserted into every Bible lesson?

Answer

First of all, I need to make something very clear. I work with Child Evangelism Fellowship and God has called me to be a children's evangelist. Therefore every time I teach a group of children, some of whom are unsaved, I should evangelize them. That is an important part of my ministry and I must not omit it.

But that does **not** mean that I must insert a certain given number of gospel truths into every Bible lesson, and it certainly does not mean that I have to find a fixed number of truths in every passage.

In the Acts of the Apostles the Gospel was preached by the apostles on a number of occasions to unsaved people. But a study of their evangelistic messages shows that **they** did not on every occasion include a fixed number of gospel truths. They taught and emphasized the gospel truth(s) which they felt were needed by and appropriate to those who were listening. Paul, for example, in Acts 17 v22-31, and when preaching to heathen Gentiles, laid emphasis upon God as the Creator, upon man's responsibility to Him, and upon the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Peter, when preaching to Jews in Acts 2 v14-40 laid emphasis upon the humanity of Jesus Christ, His death as part of God's plan and especially upon His resurrection as foretold in the Old Testament.

The details often differed in the messages preached by the apostles but the common factors were:

- The death, resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ
- The challenge to repent and/or trust Christ

Every children's evangelist should be a good exegete of the Scriptures and should teach what is in the Bible passage upon which his lesson is based. Exegesis is bringing out from the text of the Bible passage the truths which are in it. Eisgesis is the putting into the passage of truths which are not there. We are to exegete—not eisgete. This means that we are to "bring out" and not "put in."

The steps to follow when evangelizing through the Bible lesson in your regular ministry are:

Understand clearly the message of salvation and the gospel truths contained in that message. CEF has produced an official statement outlining these.

- Study the passage to be taught carefully and see if the central truth is one of these gospel truths.
- Teach that truth in, and throughout, your Bible lesson.
- Bring in and mention other truths which would help teach and clarify that central evangelistic truth. These do not need to be in the passage.
- Apply the central truth to the unsaved children to show them that they need to be saved and how to be saved. Again you can mention other truths if they help you in your application.
- Challenge them to respond to what they have heard.

I can see at least four problems with a system which requires teachers to try to teach a certain fixed number of gospel truths in the teaching of every Bible passage.

- The exegesis of the passage—especially if it is in the Old Testament—may not allow this to be done normally and naturally. The danger is that it could lead to a rather artificial and forced insertion of truths into the passage which are not there. I feel that good exegesis is of primary importance in preparing a Bible lesson. The official statement of Child Evangelism Fellowship on the subject of evangelism states, "Teach the truths of salvation found in the Scripture portion without forcing the interpretation to include truths which are not there."
- The insertion of exactly the same gospel truths into every lesson can result in a certain similarity in every lesson. What I have outlined earlier gives much more flexibility, and could make the lessons more interesting.
- There would be a difficulty in deciding which of the over 30 gospel truths which are included in our official CEF Statement should be inserted into each lesson.
- It is a proven fact that the more truths we include in a lesson the less we teach. Mentioning gospel truths is not teaching them.

With reference to this question the leadership of Child Evangelism Fellowship have made it clear that it is **not** absolutely necessary to include the Gospel, or a number of gospel truths, in every Bible lesson—if the passage on which the lesson is based does not naturally allow you to do this.

The official CEF statement on evangelism includes the following statement:

"Present the message of salvation (the need of salvation, the way of salvation and the appropriation of salvation) as fully but as simply as possible each time you have the opportunity to evangelize the child or a group of children. While the Bible lesson is the best place to do this **if necessary you may use the whole programme to present this message**."

This statement makes three points very clear:

- It is our responsibility to teach the essential parts of the message of salvation to children every time we have the opportunity.

- The Bible lesson is the best place to do this.
- If good exegesis of the passage (on which our lesson is based) does not allow us to teach any of the main gospel truths we must do so in some other part of our teaching programme.

Question 73

Is one method of Bible lesson presentation suitable for every occasion when we are teaching children?

Answer

While there are basic principles which should be followed in every Bible lesson it is, surely, obvious that there can be no one presentation and method which is suitable for every occasion.

We have already seen that in the Acts of the Apostles there was a certain amount of flexibility in the structure and the content of the evangelistic messages preached by the apostles. For example the gospel message preached by Peter on the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 was quite different in a number of ways from the Gospel message preached by Paul in Athens in Acts chapter 17. Why? Because the people to whom they were preached were so different. Peter was preaching to Jews who knew their Old Testament and who already understood much truth about God. This was truth which he could take for granted. So he started preaching about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But the Athenians in Acts 17 had no Bible background and knew nothing about God. So Paul had to go back "to the beginning"—and preach, first of all, about God as the Creator. Then, later, he started to speak about Jesus Christ and His resurrection, before, it would seem, he had to stop because of their interruption and negative reaction.

Every gospel message must focus upon the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, and should challenge the listeners to respond to Him in repentance and faith. But the method used to introduce those truths and the structure of the presentation can vary according to the following circumstances:

- The natural meaning of the passage
  We should teach, when evangelizing, whatever is in **that** passage. So this will result in some differences and some variety from lesson to lesson.

- The time available.
  The amount of teaching, and the number of truths taught, will depend upon the length of time available, and this will also cause variety. We must always adapt our lesson to the time which is available.
- The background and needs of the children
  The content and structure of the lesson may well vary from one group of children to another. For example, the lesson we teach to a Sunday School class in the local evangelical church may not (and indeed should not) be the same as the one taught to a group of Moslem children in the open air.
- The circumstances
  There are basically three different sets of circumstances which could influence our teaching:
  - ✓ A regular ministry.
    This is a ministry where we are teaching basically the same children week by week. This is the ideal situation for using the central truth method of lesson presentation explained in earlier answers. This method allows us to teach the gospel truths in much more depth and one at a time. It also enables us to link these truths closely together from week to week.
  - ✓ A one-time evangelistic meeting
    There are times when we have just one opportunity to speak to a group of children. In a situation like this, you should choose a special evangelistic lesson which would enable you to teach (as well as possible) several gospel truths—especially those concerning the need of salvation, the way of salvation and the appropriation of salvation. This is obviously not the ideal **teaching** situation because you are not able to **teach** as thoroughly as you would wish. In addition, there are only some passages/lessons with which you could use this method. But it is necessary to adapt yourself to this special situation.
  - ✓ A series of evangelistic meetings
    There are times when you have, more or less, the same group of children for a number of consecutive days e.g. a 5-Day Club plus a substantial number of other children who are infrequent in their attendance. Some children come and go but the core remains constant. This situation is somewhere in between the first two situations. The five lessons used should

be carefully chosen to allow you to teach several key gospel truths in each lesson (for the children who come and go). But, at the same time, it would be helpful to give a special emphasis on, and more teaching each day to, one of these truths (for the children who are constant in their attendance).

The official CEF statement which outlines the message of salvation and the principles for teaching this message clearly agrees with this answer by including two separate principles—numbers 5 and 6.

Principle 5: "For a one time children's meeting choose a Bible lesson with a definite evangelistic thrust."

Principle 6: "With a group of children who are taught on a regular basis your teaching of salvation truths should be in more depth."

Question 74

Could you give me some idea as to what to look for in a central truth, and how to find it?

Answer

There are several steps for you to follow:

- **Pray for guidance**
  Pray that the Holy Spirit will enable you to see and understand the truths in the Scripture passage and to know which central truth **He** wants you to teach the children in that particular lesson.
- **Understand what is meant by a central truth**
  The central truth will fit into one of the five following categories:
  - ✓ A doctrine to believe
    Is there some truth in the passage which you want the children to understand, learn and believe? This is probably the most common form of central truth:
    e.g. "God is everywhere"
    or "Jesus Christ is coming back again"
  - ✓ A warning to heed
    Sometimes a lesson emphasizes a sin which God is teaching us to avoid.
    It may be a warning to the Christian child:
    e.g. Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5—"Do not lie to God."

It may be a warning to the unsaved child:
e.g. Achan in Joshua 7—"Be sure your sin will find you out."

- ✓ A command to obey
  It may be a command which is obeyed in the narrative.
  e.g. The Good Samaritan in Luke 10—"Love your neighbour as yourself."
  It may be a command which is disobeyed in the narrative:
  e.g. The rich young ruler in Matthew 19—"The Lord Jesus says, 'Follow Me no matter what it costs.'"
  It may be both of the above:
  e.g. The Ten Virgins in Matthew 25 "Be ready for the Lord's Return."
- ✓ A promise to claim
  This could be a promise for saved children.
  e.g. "God promises always to be with His children" (Joshua 1 and especially verses 8 and 9).
  This could be a promise for unsaved children.
  e.g. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16 and especially verse 31).
- ✓ An example
  The lesson could be about a Bible character whom you would like the children to imitate and follow.
  This could be an example for saved children.
  e.g. "Christians should be willing to do anything for the Lord Jesus—as Stephen did" (Acts 7).
  This could be an example for unsaved children.
  "You should turn from your sin to God—like the prodigal son" (Luke 15).

↗ **Study the Bible passage carefully**

- ✓ Ask yourself questions such as these:
- ✓ What truths do I discover as I go through the passage verse by verse?
- ✓ Is there one which appears several times?
- ✓ Why did God include this passage in His Word?
- ✓ What has God taught me through this passage?
- ✓ Is there a truth here which my children really need?

- **Write your central truth down so that it forms a simple, concise, complete statement.** You may want to preface it with the words "The Bible says" or "God wants you to" or "God does not want you."
- **Now you are ready to prepare a lesson which will help you to teach and apply this truth to the children.**

Question 75

How would you close your evangelistic Bible lesson? How would you phrase your invitation? Would you always give the invitation in your Bible lesson?

Answer

There are two key principles to remember, and to put in practice when you are evangelizing children:

- ✓ You **should** invite the children to trust Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, and you should do so with warmth and compassion.
- ✓ You **should not** put the children under any pressure to trust Christ. Do not try, in any way, to do the work of the Holy Spirit.

However, before answering the three questions given we need to think again about what is meant by "the invitation."

I believe that the invitation is an essential part of the gospel **message**. It is that moment when we do three things:

- We tell the children that Jesus Christ wants them to trust Him.
- We tell them how to do so.
- We encourage them to do so.

If we have followed those three steps we have given the invitation. The response to that invitation, therefore, takes place in the child's heart when he trusts Jesus Christ as his Saviour. The invitation, as explained here, does not need, or look for, any kind of physical response e.g. raising a hand, looking at the teacher or waiting behind.

In addition to giving the invitation (which is an essential part of our gospel message) we should also make ourselves available to children who want personal counselling and who need personal help in coming to Christ. We can do this, for example, by asking children who want this help to wait

behind after the meeting for counselling. This is part of our methodology and needs to be kept separate, both in our thinking and in our teaching, from the invitation.

I would always close an evangelistic Bible lesson with the invitation. This is the final challenge to the children to respond to what Jesus Christ wants them to do.

"And so the jailor trusted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour. What a wonderful night it was for him! This could be a wonderful night or day for you also if you are not saved. The Bible says, "Trust the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." Jesus Christ wants you to trust Him. If you do so you will be saved. Would you not like to do so today? He is the only One who can save you. But you must ask Him to do so; you must put your trust completely in Him today. You can speak to Him in your heart and say, "Lord Jesus I am a sinner, I want You to forgive me and change me. Just now I trust You as my Saviour. Amen." Why not ask Him to save you today? Let us pray:

'Dear Heavenly Father I pray that some boy or girl here in this class might trust the Lord Jesus today as their Saviour. Amen.' "

With these words I have given the invitation.

I would not lead the children in the prayer contained in this invitation. Its purpose is to let them know how they should pray. You can then leave it to them whether they do so or not—now or later. I believe that if I ask them, at this point, to repeat such a prayer after me I run the risk of putting them under pressure, and encouraging them to do something for which they are not yet ready.

Every time I present the Gospel to unsaved children I need to include the invitation in my message. It is an essential part of my message. How can I be faithful in evangelizing children if I don't tell them what Jesus Christ wants them to do to be saved and how to do it?

Earlier in my presentation I would have informed those who want personal help to wait behind afterwards. However, I may not necessarily **make myself available** in every lesson. It depends on the circumstances. If it is a one-off meeting or a 5-Day Club where the children come and go and are not all regular attenders, I would make myself available every time. If I am teaching the same children every week I would make myself available from time to time; but I would ensure that the children **always** know I am available by reminding them of this fact, frequently and regularly.

Question 76

You speak often about the work of the Holy Spirit in evangelism. What is my responsibility in evangelism? How can I achieve the correct balance between what He does and what I do?

Answer

You do have a number of responsibilities when evangelizing children:

- You need to prepare your lesson thoroughly and well.
- You need to present it as efficiently and as effectively as possible.
- You need to make the gospel message very clear and easy to understand.
- You need to encourage and invite the children to put their trust in Christ.
- You need to make yourself available to children who need and want personal help and counsel.
- Above all, you need to pray that God the Holy Spirit will work in the children's hearts.

The Holy Spirit will **not** do any of these. They are **your** responsibilities.

You should then pray and trust that the Holy Spirit will work in the following ways:

- That He will help you to know what to teach.
- That He will give you help and power as you teach.
- That He will give the children a spiritual understanding of what you teach.
- That He will convict the children of their sin and their need to be saved.
- That He will give them a desire to be different and a desire to trust Christ.
- That He will help them to trust Christ, and experience His work of regeneration.

It is most important that you see the balance that needs to be kept between these two areas of responsibility. I must confess that this question of balance has always been my greatest problem in child evangelism. Indeed this problem of knowing and fulfilling completely your responsibilities without infringing on the work of the Holy Spirit is one we all face and must resolve.

There are two dangers and extremes to be avoided at all times:

- On the one hand there are those who "leave everything" to the Holy Spirit. They teach a Bible lesson and even include the gospel message in it, but there is no invitation, no encouragement of children to trust Christ, no making of themselves available, and no indication to the children that they can trust Christ **now**.
- On the other hand there are those who feel they should "do everything." This results in their wanting to "get decisions," and they often bring pressure to bear upon the children to trust Christ because they are not willing, or able, to be patient and leave "the results" in the Hands of the Holy Spirit.

The correct position is a balance between those two extremes. This is a balance which combines the faith and trust of the first group with the urgency, warmth and enthusiasm of the second group, but these must always be kept in balance.

Question 77

What is the wordless book? How do you use it when evangelizing children?

Answer

The wordless book is a little book with four double pages of different colours inside a green cover.

The four colours are black, red, white and gold, and each colour (including the green cover) can be used to teach biblical truths to the children. It has been proved to be a very effective and attractive tool and an excellent way to present and teach the gospel message:

- The gold page speaks about God (Isaiah 6 v3):
  - ✓ He created and owns the world (gold speaks about wealth).
  - ✓ He is the King of Kings (gold speaks about thrones and crowns).
  - ✓ He is pure and holy (gold is a metal with all the impurities removed).
  - ✓ He lives in Heaven (where the street is pictured in the Bible as of gold).

- The dark page speaks about sin (Romans 3 v23).
  (Don't use the word "black." The Bible speaks about sin as darkness and does not use the world "black." Also if you use the latter word you may offend listeners who have black skins).
  - ✓ Sin is disobeying God and His commands.
  - ✓ God is just and must punish our sin.
- The red page speaks about the Precious Blood of Christ (Romans 5 v8, 9).
  - ✓ He died to save us from our sins.
  - ✓ He took God's punishment for all the wrong things we have done.
- The white page speaks about justification and the imputed righteousness of Christ (2 Corinthians 5 v21). It is biblical and correct to use the word "white" with regard to salvation and the righteousness of Christ (Psalm 51 v7; Isaiah 1 v18; Daniel 12 v10; Revelation 3 v4; Revelation 7 v14).
  - ✓ When we trust Jesus Christ as our Saviour, God forgives all our sins.
  - ✓ He also sees us as pure and as clean as Jesus Christ.
- The green cover speaks about growth (2 Peter 3 v18).
  - ✓ The grass, flowers and trees all grow. And so God expects and wants the child who has trusted Christ to grow spiritually.
  - ✓ As these children read, study and obey the Word of God they will grow.

I use the wordless book in three ways:

- I use it on its own to give a short, simple and logical presentation of the Gospel. If I am asked to give a children's talk in a church service, or I am invited to give a short ten minute presentation to children, I will often use the wordless book for this purpose.
- I find the wordless book a great help when counselling a child and leading him to Christ. I would use the wordless book in the early stages of my counselling to explain the Gospel to the child, and to ensure that he really understands it. But I would use the Bible, and especially a Bible verse, when leading the child to Christ.
- I find the wordless book very helpful when teaching a Bible lesson. If I want to explain more simply and clearly the gospel message, I

would take the wordless book out of my pocket, or out of a little pouch specially made for it on the inside back cover of my Bible, and go through the pages, step by step, for several minutes to clarify the gospel message. Then I would put it away again and continue with the Bible lesson.

Question 78

What is doctrine? Is it important for children to understand and be taught doctrine?

Answer

Doctrine is what we **believe**. Doctrine is not what we do. What we do is the application and result of what we believe (or doctrine).

For example:

Doctrine	Application
↗ Jesus Christ is coming back again	Watch and pray
↗ God is holy	God wants you to be holy
↗ Salvation is by faith alone	Trust Jesus Christ and be saved

It is **very** important to teach doctrine to children for the following reasons:

Doctrine is the basis of what children are and do.

↗ Children need to understand and believe the main doctrines of the Bible if they are going to be what God wants them to be.
What the children believe determines:
- ✓ What they are. Character is based on doctrine (1 Peter 1 v16).
- ✓ What they do. Doctrine is the foundation for actions (1 Corinthians 6 v15 and 19).

2 Timothy 3 v16 shows that doctrine should have first place in the understanding and teaching of Scripture, and that it could then lead to at least three applications—reproof, correction and instruction.

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Timothy 3 v16).

- Children generally know and understand so little about doctrine. There is a great dearth of doctrinal understanding among children. Many have never been taught doctrine and are biblically illiterate. Many have been taught false doctrines and this creates an even more difficult situation. Even in some evangelical churches children are often taught Bible stories and Bible facts, but relatively few of the Bible truths which can be learned from those stories and facts. More and more children in our world today understand and believe less and less doctrine (Hosea 4 v6).
- The Bible shows us clearly that the teaching of doctrine needs to be the basis of all ministry.
  - ✓ The Lord Jesus taught doctrine (Matthew 7 v28).
  - ✓ He commanded us to teach it (Matthew 28 v19, 20).
  - ✓ His apostles taught it (Acts 5 v21, 25, 28 and 42).
  - ✓ His apostles commanded us to teach it (1 Timothy 3 v2; 1 Timothy 4 v13; 1 Timothy 4 v16; 2 Timothy 4 v2; Titus 1 v9).
  - ✓ The early church was based upon it (Acts 2 v41, 42).
  - ✓ The epistles show an ideal combination of doctrine and application. The first eleven chapters of Romans, for example, are doctrine and the last five chapters applications.

  Therefore we should teach doctrine to children:
  - ✓ To the saved children to help them to grow spiritually (1 Peter 2 v2) and not to be confused (Ephesians 4 v14).
  - ✓ To the unsaved children as a basis for our evangelism (John 8 v32). The gospel message itself consists of a series of key doctrines.

Question 79

Is it right to teach doctrine to unsaved children? I have been told I should not do this because it is impossible for unsaved children to understand it.

Answer

There **are** those who say that we should only teach the gospel message to unsaved children and that we should not teach them doctrine. They also say that we should only teach doctrine to saved children.

I do not agree with this statement for the following reasons:

- The gospel message is itself doctrine.
  - ✓ God is the Creator of the universe.
  - ✓ God is holy and just, and must punish sin.
  - ✓ Everyone has sinned and broken God's law.
  - ✓ God loves the world and sent His Son Jesus Christ.
  - ✓ Jesus Christ took God the Father's punishment for sin.
  - ✓ Jesus Christ rose again and is alive today.
  - ✓ Jesus Christ is Lord and wants obedience to His command to trust Him.
  - ✓ Salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone.
  - ✓ Salvation results in the forgiveness of all sin and in a new nature.

  These statements are all essential parts of the message of salvation. Yet it can be clearly seen that all of them are doctrinal statements which we want the unsaved child to understand and believe.
- Much of the wider scope of doctrine can also be used by the Holy Spirit to speak to the hearts of unsaved children, and can be applied evangelistically by the teacher to those children:
  - ✓ God is all powerful. Therefore He can save you.
  - ✓ God is holy. Therefore you cannot enter Heaven as you are.
  - ✓ God is faithful. Therefore He will keep His promise and save you if you trust Jesus Christ.
  - ✓ Jesus Christ is perfect man. Therefore He was able to take the place of sinful people like you on the Cross.
  - ✓ Jesus Christ is coming back again. Therefore you need to be saved today.

- ✓ The Bible is the Word of God. Therefore you should read it and find out how to be saved.
- ✓ The Holy Spirit lives in and helps believers. Therefore if you trust Christ He will live in you and help you to live for Him.

And so on.

- **Nothing** can be understood, spiritually, by unsaved children unless the Holy Spirit illuminates these children. This is made clear in 1 Corinthians 2 v10-14. But this principle includes the basic doctrines of the gospel message as well as any other doctrine. If I were to follow through on the reasoning contained in the question you ask, I should not teach the Gospel to unsaved children either because they could not understand it. But I do teach the Gospel to them, as thoroughly and as well as I can, and I pray and trust that the Holy Spirit will help the unsaved children to understand the gospel truths (spiritually and in their hearts) and that He will enable the children to respond to them.
- We generally have both saved and unsaved children in our groups. Therefore it is not logical, or even possible, to teach one group without teaching the other. We teach the central truth of the lesson (and that is often a doctrine) to all the children. But we must apply it in two ways. We should apply that doctrine to the saved children (making it clear that we are speaking **to them**) to help them to grow. We should also apply it to the unsaved children (making it clear that we are speaking **to them**) to show them how to be saved. In this latter case we will usually bring in other truths which will help the unsaved children to understand the central truth better and how to apply it to their spiritual need.

Question 80

When and where should I teach doctrine to children?

Answer

Because doctrine is so important you should be continually looking for opportunities throughout your 60 minute teaching programme to teach doctrine.

There are three main opportunities for the teaching of doctrine:

- **Doctrine should be taught in every Bible lesson.**
  The best place and the best way to teach doctrine is through the regular systematic expository teaching of the Word of God to children, teaching them the truth(s) which is (are) in the particular passage on which your Bible lesson is based.
  In many Bible lessons the central truth which you will want to teach is a doctrine. Therefore you need to ask yourself three questions:
  - ✓ Which one truth does the lesson actually teach which I would like the children to understand?
  - ✓ What is the application of this truth?
    - to the unsaved children
    - to the saved children
  - ✓ What other truths can I mention, better to teach and apply this truth?

  When teaching a series of Bible lessons there are two possibilities:
  - ✓ The Bible lessons can be taught in chronological order but it is unlikely that the doctrines taught through those lessons will be in a systematic order.
  - ✓ The doctrines can be taught systematically and logically but it is unlikely that the Bible lessons you choose to teach them will be chronological.
- **Doctrine can be taught through flashcard lessons each of which concentrates on one doctrine.**
  Each lesson would consist of 8 or 9 sheets of white light cardboard each with a sentence and a visual to illustrate that sentence. By using these flashcards one after the other, as you speak, you can give a good systematic presentation of one doctrine. This type of lesson is not only effective but relatively easy and inexpensive to produce. We are producing a number of simple visualized flashcard lessons such as these. Please write to the address given at the front of this book if you would like to receive some of these lessons.
- **Doctrine can be taught in other parts of the 60-minute teaching programme.**
  This method of teaching doctrine can be especially effective when linked with the central truth of the Bible lesson.

- ✓ Through the explanation and singing of songs such as:
  Love, love, L-O-V-E (Doctrine—God is love)
  Do you know that you've been born again?
  (Doctrine of Regeneration).
- ✓ Through the teaching of Bible verses such as:
  Isaiah 53 v6 (Doctrine—The universality of sin)
  Ephesians 2 v8 (Doctrine—Salvation is by faith alone)
- ✓ Through teaching the doctrines of prayer in preparation for prayer time.
- ✓ Through the telling of missionary stories using incidents in the missionary's conversion, call and service to teach and illustrate doctrine.
- ✓ Through well planned revision of previous lessons reminding the children of the truths already taught.

Question 81

How should I teach doctrine to children?

Answer

There are seven basic principles to understand and put into practice when teaching doctrine to children.

- ↗ It needs to be taught **simply**.
  You need to teach doctrine in language which is easy for the children to understand, and using concepts and ideas which are not too complicated. Many of our children have no Bible background whatsoever, and theological language is therefore a foreign language to them.
- ↗ It needs to be taught **attractively**.
  It is important for the children really to listen to what is being taught and for this to happen an attractive presentation is needed. It is especially helpful when your doctrinal presentation can be visualized, and when frequent, simple and vivid illustrations can be used.
- ↗ It needs to be taught **logically** and **systematically**.
  Biblical doctrine is logical and it all fits together in a clear logical and systematic way. It should therefore be taught in that way. It is a help to you when you teach in a logical way; and it is also a help

to the children as it is then easier to follow each step in the lesson because it is logically based upon the previous step.

- It needs to be taught **specifically**.
  One of the major mistakes we are all guilty of is that we generally try to teach too much at any one time. It is better for you to concentrate on **one** truth and ensure that the children understand **it**. Other truths can be mentioned if they help teach the central truth—especially those truths which have been previously taught.
- It needs to be taught **practically**.
  While each doctrine needs to be taught to **all** the children present, it also needs to be applied. Because there are two kinds of children (saved and unsaved) **two** applications will be needed (if it is possible to find two applications). You need to apply the doctrine to help and encourage unsaved children to trust Jesus Christ as their Saviour. You also need to apply the doctrine to saved children to feed them and to help them to grow.
- It needs to be taught **helpfully**.
  As you teach doctrine to children, and especially to teenagers, they will often have questions, some of which might be quite critical. It is most important to react to their questions and attitudes helpfully and in the right way. You should never say to them "Don't ask questions. Just listen" or "You are not supposed to ask questions on a subject like this." Instead, try to help them by answering their questions and by doing so in the right way.
- It needs to be taught **prayerfully**.
  You are always dependent, in your doctrinal teaching, upon the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit (John 16 v13). Unsaved children are spiritually blind (2 Corinthians 4 v4), and the understanding of saved children is, on its own, extremely limited and dull (Ephesians 1 v17, 18). No matter how good a teacher you are, only the Holy Spirit can impart true and spiritual understanding to both groups of children.

  There is one other very basic principle which you always need to remember if you are going to be an effective teacher of doctrine. You can only teach what you yourself understand. "If the teacher is in a fog, the children will be in darkness." Therefore it is essential for every teacher of doctrine to be, first of all, a conscientious student of God's Word and the doctrines contained in it.

Question 82

Do you think it is helpful to use visual aids, such as flannelgraph, when teaching a Bible lesson?

Answer

There are teachers who do not need visual aids to keep the children's attention and to help them to learn. However, there are very few such teachers. Most of us need help in our teaching; and I believe that the use of visual aids can provide us with much help and make us better and more effective teachers.

- **Visual aids help a teacher in a number of ways:**
  - ✓ They secure attention.
    Without visuals the attention of today's child (who is visually orientated) will often wander.
  - ✓ They ensure comprehension.
    A picture is often worth a thousand words. What children see helps them to understand what you say.
  - ✓ They encourage retention.
    When a visual clarifies the truth which is being taught it keeps it fresher and clearer in the children's memory. They remember what they see better than what they hear.
  - ✓ They lessen contention.
    When the lesson is interesting and attractive the children listen well and there are fewer discipline problems. One of the best ways to make the lesson interesting and attractive is to use visual aids.
  - ✓ They cause the prevention of wrong ideas.
    Children can easily misunderstand and have a wrong image of what has been said, especially if it is unfamiliar to them. Visuals can explain those unfamiliar words and concepts such as the pitchers held by Gideon's men, the ark in which the baby Moses was hidden, or the roof through which the paralyzed man was lowered.
- **There are many types of visual aids available.**
  Flannelgraph is probably the best visual aid available to us. It is attractive to the children, and also allows continual changes and

flexibility in what the children see. The only disadvantage is the need to have, carry and use a flannelboard and easel, and this is not always easy.

Flashcards can be very helpful especially in the open air. The pictures are more static than flannelgraph, but are easy to handle and do not require any equipment.

Also an increasing use is being made of the overhead projector and this can be very effective, especially for a large group of children.

Other visual aids include object lessons and chalk talks.

- **The weaknesses of visual aids.**

There can be problems with the use of visual aids.

- ✓ You should not become too dependent upon them. They are only aids.
- ✓ You should not visualize everything; but give the children some scope to use their imagination.
- ✓ You should keep your visuals in a place of subordination, both in your thinking and in your presentation. The Word of God must have pre-eminence.
- ✓ You should not allow your visuals to become distractions. Sometimes they can be so elaborate and beautiful they take attention away from what is being taught.

- **The best visual aid of all is yourself.**
  - ✓ In your teaching—be active and involved. Avoid monotony of voice and rigidity of expression. Be vibrant and alive.
  - ✓ In your life—be sure that you are a good witness to the children at all times, and that your life backs home the truths which you are teaching.

- **A warning**

It is helpful and even necessary to make your teaching attractive and one of the ways to do this is to use visual aids. But you must always be careful not to go too far. It is so easy nowadays to become entertainers instead of evangelists, and to find ourselves trying to make everything so attractive that we no longer concentrate on the teaching of God's Word.

Always remember these two verses:

"So shall *My word* be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55 v11).

"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10 v17).

Question 83

Is it correct to use pictures of the Lord Jesus when visualizing a Bible lesson?

Answer

I can fully understand the hesitation of those who feel that it is, somehow, wrong to visualize the Lord Jesus. This hesitation is usually more prevalent in countries with a Roman Catholic or Orthodox background where there is so much emphasis on statues, pictures and icons which are often supposed to represent the Lord Jesus. Some would even quote the second commandment forbidding the "making of graven images." Those who have such convictions should, of course, teach in accordance with those convictions, and not use pictures of the Lord Jesus.

Personally, I have no problem with the use of pictures of the Lord Jesus in a flannelgraph lesson, in a flashcard story, or in a Bible story book for children, provided the picture used is reverent and well drawn. I would not use, and would object to, pictures of the Lord Jesus which are carelessly drawn, or which are caricatures in any way or which resemble cartoon figures. I feel that figures such as these show, and encourage, a lack of reverence.

The Lord Jesus was, and is, perfectly human (as well as being completely divine). He had a human appearance just like any other person. So it seems to me perfectly alright to use a visual to represent Him, even though we do not know what He looked like. If we don't use such pictures, but instead substitute something else to represent Him (like a symbol, or just a printed name) in our flannelgraph story, flashcard lesson, or Bible story book, I believe we will create more problems for the children. They might then ask questions such as "Did He not have a body? Was He not like us?"

My answer to this question is "Yes," provided it is done in the right way and with the right kind of visual.

Question 84

What are your thoughts on the use of puppets in child evangelism?

Answer

When I see puppets being used two thoughts spring to my mind, and I feel that children would have the same reactions:

- Puppets are good fun. Everybody likes and enjoys puppets, especially the children.
- Puppets are not real. Even the child with the most lively imagination does not see puppets as people. They are fictional. They are toys.

Speaking personally, I have never used puppets in my ministry to children. Firstly, because I have never felt the need for them; and secondly, because I have definite hesitations concerning their use—at least concerning some of the ways they are often used.

Puppets are fun; and I can see no serious problem when they are used just for that purpose and if they are used in a limited way. This might be in the early part of a meeting, or in the leading of the singing of a few choruses, and then they are put away.

But I have a real problem when puppets are used in either of the following teaching situations:

- By pretending to be real people who, for example, pray and ask Jesus Christ to come into their hearts.
- By pretending to be people in Bible stories, and who speak and act like those people.

The problem in both cases is that the children are given the impression (perhaps unconsciously) that this is not **real**. Do you remember the second reaction to puppets I included earlier in my answer? They are fictional and they are not real. The great danger in both these situations (and especially when used in a Bible story) is that children, through the association of ideas, come to the conclusion that what they are seeing and listening to is also not real and is just fictional. That is why I would have very serious reservations about using a puppet theatre (an elaborate set up with plays and presentations using puppets) to present Bible stories. I am afraid that all of this might give to the children an impression of fantasy and that is the last thing we should do especially with regard to Bible stories.

The use of other visual aids like flannelgraph does not incur the same risk or danger. Flannelgraph figures if properly drawn and used **are** realistic and do not give the impression of fantasy. They are more like photographs and real life. Nor do they have the associations with fun and fantasy which puppets have.

I would like, in conclusion, to suggest three principles which should always govern our ministry to children:

- With regard to this question, and indeed many other questions, we must always remember that the method we use in teaching the Word of God must always be in full agreement with the message contained in it. There can be certain types of presentations which are so irreverent and jocular that they contradict the reverence and seriousness which the Bible demands (especially as we speak about spiritual truths); and we should always avoid them.
- There is a danger in children's work (especially in our modern world) that we move more and more towards the concept of entertainment. We feel that if we are going to get the children to attend our meeting, and if we are going to get them to listen, we must "put on a show." I feel that this is a dangerous philosophy to follow, and one which can become more and more extreme. I do believe we should make our teaching as attractive as possible, but we should not become entertainers.
- God has promised to bless and use the teaching of His Word (Isaiah 55 v11). One of the reasons some people get involved more and more in different methods and techniques is because they may not be willing or able to take time to prepare and present a really attractive and interesting Bible lesson, and a Bible-centred teaching programme. God has promised to bless His Word, and only that Word. Nothing else!

Question 85

What is your view on the use of mime and drama in the evangelism of children?

Answer

I personally have never used either mime or drama as a form of evangelism. I feel that the biblical way to evangelize, and also the most effective way to evangelize is to TEACH the Gospel by word of mouth in as interesting and as attractive a way as possible.

I feel that there are two possible and legitimate uses for both mime and drama in children's evangelism:

- They could be used by children when there is enough time to allow these children the opportunity to be involved in what has been taught, and the chance to "act out" what they have heard. This could therefore be a way to revise the Bible lesson for the children. However, this should not be a substitute for the Bible lesson.
- They could be used by adults as a means of attracting children to a meeting in the open air. But this would be a short and very limited use, and would require a lot of skill (and reverence).

I do not see either mime or drama as a primary means of evangelism:

- Mime consists of actions without words. But it is clearly taught in the Bible that we should communicate the Gospel by preaching, teaching and by word of mouth. God speaks through His Word (Isaiah 55 v11). "Faith cometh *by hearing* and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10 v17). The emphasis in this verse is placed on HEARING. When mime is used there is no hearing.
  I personally have watched mime being used in evangelism and I must confess that I sometimes found it quite difficult to follow or understand. How much more difficult would a child with little or no knowledge of the Bible find it?
- Drama does use the spoken word and it is possible that a use could be found for it in evangelism. But it would, I feel, need to be subsidiary and supplementary to the direct teaching of God's Word, and not as a primary means of evangelism. There are two dangers in the use of drama:

- ✓ The children can be so interested in the action that they miss the message.
- ✓ The children may feel that as the drama is being acted and is not "real," therefore what it portrays is also not "real."

It should be added also that the use of drama would involve much preparation and great ability. I can't help but feel that the preparation and ability could be used in some other and better way.

I believe that a good Bible lesson which has been well prepared, and is attractively presented is a much more effective way to evangelize—in every situation. It is also more biblical. According to the Acts of the Apostles, which is our main primer and guide book on evangelism, the preachers of the early church never used mime or drama, although both of these were well known and popular in the society and culture of those days. They PREACHED THE WORD; many people listened and many souls were saved. **That** is biblical evangelism.

Question 86

I have seen Bible stories presented in cartoon form on video, on films, on television, and in books (and tracts). What is your view on this?

Answer

I have no problem with any of these provided firstly that they stick to the Bible narrative and do not introduce imaginary characters or situations; and provided secondly that the artwork is reverent and reasonably realistic. In many ways this would be similar to the use of flannelgraph or flashcards.

However, I do have a problem when incidents and characters are introduced into a Bible lesson which are not in Scripture. I have seen this done, and it takes away from the veracity of the story, and brings the children into the realm of fantasy.

I also have a problem when cartoon-type figures are used for Bible characters. This has two results.

- ↗ Firstly it gives the children the impression that what they are seeing did not really happen. We live in a "cartoon generation" and the child sees cartoons and cartoon figures as in the realm of fantasy

and imagination. We don't want them to have that view of Bible stories.

- The second result is that such cartoon figures will often give rise to merriment and laughter. Our presentation of the Word of God should lead to reverence and not laughter.

Question 87

What kind of songs/hymns/choruses should I teach children? How should I teach them?

Answer

Let me, first of all, emphasize the importance of singing as an essential part of your ministry to children. Children like to sing! Singing should therefore occupy an important part of every Good News Club hour, or Sunday School session.

You need to ask yourself at least two questions?

- Why do I encourage my children to sing?
- What is my goal?

I hope that the purpose of singing is not just to fill up time; or (as one children's worker suggested) an opportunity to let the children "work off steam" and get the children so tired that they will settle down to listen to the Bible lesson!

Singing has, I believe, two main functions:

- It is a means of instruction. If the contents of the hymn or choruses are properly explained, the children can both learn and remember the truths taught.
- It is a means of worship. Christian children should be taught how to worship God; and one way to worship is through the intelligent and reverent singing of worship choruses.

But in both cases you must be very careful about the hymns/songs/choruses you teach. Each chorus you teach should fulfill five conditions:

- It should teach truth.
- It should use words which children understand, or which can easily be explained.

- It should have a good tune and be easy to sing.
- It should, if possible, reinforce and help teach the main theme of the teaching hour and Bible lesson.
- It should be reverent and in keeping with the truths being taught.

I have heard choruses taught to children which break most of the five principles outlined above—especially principles 1, 2 and 5; and you need to be careful what you encourage the children to sing. You want your choruses to be of spiritual help to the children, to help create a reverent atmosphere in your Good News Club or Sunday School, and also to be a means of blessing to others. Bright action choruses should, of course, have their place in your programme, if they fit in with what you are teaching and if they teach truth. Children will sing whatever they learn when they go home, when they play and even when they go to school. Will the words contain truth which could be a help and blessing to those who hear?

We started a Good News Club in our home many years ago. A neighbour came to me some time later and told me that she had trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as her Saviour. She went on to tell me that God has spoken to her through her little four year old daughter, and her singing of the choruses she had learned in our Good News Club. How happy I was that I had taught choruses which contained truth.

There are several important rules to remember when teaching choruses, or hymns to children:

- Make sure you know the chorus yourself. You should know both the words and the music thoroughly.
- It is a help to have some kind of musical accompaniment.
- Choruses or hymns which are visualized are very attractive and helpful. Flashcards are the easiest to handle. Children can hold the visuals from time to time.
- It is necessary to explain what the chorus/hymn means before you sing it or, from time to time, as you sing it.
- Lead the singing with enthusiasm, use your hand to conduct, and, when there are actions, make your actions bold and clear.

Question 88

Should we encourage children to learn Bible verses by memory? How?

Answer

We should definitely encourage our children to commit Bible verses to memory. Indeed Scripture memorisation is one of the most fruitful activities in our work among children.

Three verses in Psalm 119 remind us of the value of God's Word as it is learned and stored in the heart:

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word" (verse 9).

"Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee" (verse 11).

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (verse 105).

Paul also makes it clear that God wants His Word to be in our hearts, and in the hearts of the children.

"Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom" (Colossians 3 v16a).

The Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to give life (1 Peter 1 v23) to give growth (1 Peter 2 v2), to give direction (Psalm 119 v105) and to give victory over Satan (Matthew 4 v1-10).

There are a number of rules to follow when encouraging our children to memorize Scripture:

- Learn the verse and the reference yourself (perfectly). You should repeat the reference at the beginning and the end of the verse.
- Do not aim too high. It is better for the children to memorize a little (and remember it) than to try to memorize a lot (and forget it). Consequently it is better to choose a short verse, or, if the verse is longer, to just memorize part of it.
- Memorize a verse which fits in with the theme of your teaching hour and the central truth of the Bible lesson.
- Visualize the verse—either for the flannelgraph board, or with flashcards.
- Explain the verse thoroughly and its application.

- Repeat the verse together a number of times, with explanation interspersed. You can vary this repetition in different ways:
  - ✓ Take away a word of the visualized verse each time it is repeated.
  - ✓ Jumble the words of the visualized verse and ask someone to make it right before it is repeated.
  - ✓ Ask two groups to each say the verse in turn.
  - ✓ Have one group say the first part of the verse and the other complete it.
  - ✓ Have the teacher and the children say alternative words.
  - ✓ Ask each child to say one word in turn.
  - ✓ Vary the volume or the speed.
  - ✓ Stress an important word each time by saying that word louder.
  - ✓ Use actions to illustrate the verse.
- Prepare memory verse tokens for the children to take home.
- Review the verse whenever possible:
  - ✓ at the end of the Good News Club
  - ✓ the following week as the children arrive before and/or during the club
  - ✓ at the end of a series of lessons.

Question 89

Do you approve of Bible quizzes? If so, what kind and how? Would you encourage me to include one in each teaching hour?

Answer

I certainly approve of Bible quizzes and would encourage you to include one in each teaching hour.

- **The purpose of a Bible Quiz**
  Bible quizzes have several important purposes:
  - ✓ They review and reinforce the truths already taught.
  - ✓ They help the teacher to discover what the children have learned and what they have not understood.
  - ✓ They give the children an opportunity to take part in the Good News Club.

- ✓ They make the Good News Club more interesting and attractive for the children.

↗ **The preparation of a Bible Quiz**

A Bible quiz needs to be well prepared.

- ✓ Prepare the questions (approximately 10) thoroughly and well in advance:
  - They should be based upon the Bible lesson and the memory verse of the previous week.
  - They should include questions which encourage thoughtful answers, and not always questions which look for information and facts.
- ✓ You should prepare a visual aid for the quiz. This can be a flannelgraph presentation or game, or even a chalk presentation on the blackboard.

↗ **The presentation of a Bible Quiz**

There are a number of rules which will help your Bible quiz to be effective:

- ✓ Establish the rules of the Bible quiz clearly with the children—two teams, first hand up, no calling out, highest score wins the quiz.
- ✓ Do not immediately ask the first child who responds. Wait to see how many of the children respond.
- ✓ Do not allow one or two clever or older children to monopolize the answers.
- ✓ Be ready to speak, and add information here and there to the answers.
- ✓ Make sure everybody hears the questions.
- ✓ Be careful how you react to a well intended answer that is completely wrong. Correct it tactfully.
- ✓ Keep good control of the group.
- ✓ Don't let the quiz go on for too long.
- ✓ End quickly with a word of praise for both teams and move quickly into the next part of the programme.

Question 90

Should I read a Bible portion during the class hour? Should I myself pray during the class hour? For how long? For what?

Answer

It is not necessary to read a Bible portion during the class hour—especially if there is a large group of children, and if they are restless. It is sufficient when teaching your Bible lesson to refer continually to the Bible passage or verse on which the lesson is based, and from time to time to quote or read Bible verses or parts of verses. You should have your Bible in your hand as much as is possible.

I believe it is good for the teacher to pray during the class hour, but it should be very brief. You can ask God to bless the hour, the class and the teaching of His Word. You should use simple language, and pray in a normal natural voice. It is good for the children to hear you pray.

But the main time for you to pray is before the class and after the class and not so much during the class.

Question 91

How can I help my children to pray?

Answer

We as teachers need to see the importance of prayer. Prayer is a responsibility given to us by God, and also a privilege for us, as Christians, to enjoy.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4 v16).

"Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4 v6).

You want therefore to encourage and help your children to pray. You want them:

– to learn the principles of prayer

– to be able to develop their own personal prayer life
– to be able to take part in corporate prayer

It is therefore necessary to teach your children the principles of prayer and then to show them how to pray privately and publicly and encourage them to do so.

↗ What are the principles of prayer?
The aspects or principles of prayer which you need to teach will answer the following six questions:
✓ What is prayer?
Prayer is communication and contact with God Who loves us and is all powerful.
✓ When can we pray?
• at any time (Ephesians 6 v18)
• at specific times (Psalm 55 v17)
Encourage the children to have a Quiet Time each day and to thank God before meals.
✓ Who can pray?
Prayer is primarily for those who have trusted Jesus Christ as their Saviour and who have, therefore, God as their Heavenly Father (John 15 v7; Matthew 6 v9).
The prayer which God wants the unsaved child to pray is the sinner's prayer asking for salvation and forgiveness (Romans 10 v14).
✓ How do we pray?
To God the Father, in the Name of God the Son, as guided by God the Holy Spirit.
✓ How does God answer?
God answers in three ways—"Yes . . . No . . . Wait . . . ."
Sin will hinder our prayers (Psalm 66 v18; 1 John 1 v9).
✓ What are the main elements of prayer?
Adoration—I love You
Confession—Sorry
Thanksgiving—Thank You
Supplication—Please

↗ **How to teach these principles of prayer**

Here are some suggestions to help you teach the above principles:

- ✓ Teach Bible lessons on prayer (e.g. Peter in prison in Acts 12).
- ✓ Teach Bible verses on prayer (e.g. Matthew 7 v7; John 14 v13).
- ✓ Use a prayer hand illustrating the four elements of prayer outlined above on 4 fingers with the thumb pointing at yourself and showing that you should pray.
- ✓ Use a prayer hand illustrating five items for supplication—family, teacher, country, sick friends and myself.
- ✓ Use prayer cards with illustrations for whom and for what to pray.
- ✓ Write out prayer requests and pass them around.
  Give a Quiet Time book to each child for his/her personal use.
- ✓ Give a prayer calendar to use in club and at home.

↗ **Corporate prayer**

We should definitely encourage the saved children to pray during the class hour. I would suggest the following steps:

- ✓ Lead into the prayer time with teaching about prayer and a song about prayer.
- ✓ Suggest that those who wish can pray briefly, and in their own words.
- ✓ Give the children who wish to pray a picture or a prayer card to remind them of what to pray for.
- ✓ Do not force children to pray.
- ✓ Avoid long silences. If the children don't want to pray do not prolong the prayer time.

I do not feel we should, in any way, encourage unsaved children to take part in such a prayer time, although I do not feel we should stop any who do take part. That is a risk we must take. However, I feel we should explain to the children over and over again that prayer is a privilege and responsibility for those who are saved, and that the only prayer which God wants to hear from the unsaved is a prayer for salvation.

But I feel we should still teach the principles of prayer to **all** the children. This will help the saved children and will not harm the unsaved.

Question 92

Should I teach missions to my children? How? Should I encourage them to give to missions? How?

Answer

You as the teacher need to have a world wide vision. If you don't, it will be difficult to teach and communicate missions to the children. By teaching missions to children you are obeying Christ's command as expressed in Mark 16 v15; and helping them to obey that command; and you are preparing future missionaries.

- **Why teach missions to children?**
  - ✓ So that they will understand the Bible teaching on this subject.
  - ✓ So that their minds may be broadened to have a burden for missionaries and mission fields.
  - ✓ So that they can pray for, and give to, the work of missionaries.
  - ✓ So that they may be missionaries NOW—by praying, witnessing and giving.
  - ✓ So that some of them might go to other countries as missionaries when they are older.
- **How to teach missions to children?**
  - ✓ Through Bible teaching
    Use lessons such as Jonah; Naaman's maid; Philip and the Ethiopian; Paul's journeys; Timothy's life. It is a special help to use visuals e.g. on the flannelgraph board.
    Teach verses such as Matthew 28 v19, 20; Mark 16 v15; John 4 v35; Acts 4 v12.
  - ✓ Through missionary stories
    These can be serialized missionary biographies e.g. Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael, C.T. Studd. Or they can be individual missionary lessons e.g. Jim Elliott and the Auca Indians. It is a help to use visualized presentations of these stories.
  - ✓ Through missionary presentations
    - Give general information on mission fields around the world. Use a map or a globe, and pictures from missionary magazines.

- Give specific information about a missionary whom the club could adopt. Show the missionary's prayer card. Give one to each child if possible. Make a scrapbook of the country where she/he works, with pictures, stamps, coins, etc.
- Prepare a missionary display on which you can put the photograph of the missionaries, a map of the country where they work, and any other relevant information.

✓ Through newsletters and visits
Read excerpts from the adopted missionary's prayer letter. Invite the missionary to come and visit the club when at home on furlough.

✓ Through their personal involvement
- Encourage them to be missionaries themselves—to their friends and to their family. Show them how to use the wordless book, and how to give out tracts.
- Challenge them to be missionaries in other countries later in life.
- Encourage them to pray for other countries and children and especially for their adopted missionary.
- Encourage them to give some of **their own** money for missions, and especially to help support their adopted missionaries.

↗ **How to encourage children to give**
It is good to encourage children to give. Giving will be a help to their own spiritual growth, it will get them more involved in missions, and it will be an encouragement to the missionary they support.

✓ Teach them scriptural principles in giving—especially the practice of tithing.
✓ Encourage them to give their own money, and not the money from their parents.
✓ Send a letter of explanation to all the parents so that they will know where the money will go (in its entirety), so that they will understand how it will benefit their children, and so that they will not give the children money to bring.
✓ Let the children know what their money will be used for.
✓ Make an offering chart so that the children will see how the missions project is developing.

- ✓ Emphasize to the children that they don't have to bring money to support the missionary. Never use pressure of any kind on them to do so.

Question 93

How can I ensure good discipline during class hour?

Answer

Good discipline is very important in any teaching situation.

Good discipline depends mainly on the teacher, upon how well he teaches and how well he exercises his authority.

↗ **The main solution to discipline problems**

Many discipline problems can be prevented if the following conditions are met:

- ✓ You need to spend much time in **prayer**.
- ✓ You need to spend much time in **preparation**.
- ✓ Your **presentation** in the club needs to follow these guidelines:
  - develop a lively and enthusiastic approach
  - have an interesting and varied programme
  - ensure careful planning to avoid dull patches
  - show personal interest in each individual child

Most children will listen and be reasonably well behaved if the presentation is interesting and relevant. Prevention is better than cure! It is better to make your meeting and lesson so interesting that discipline problems will not arise, rather than solving them when they do.

↗ **First steps towards good discipline**

- ✓ Start the meeting in the way you want it to continue:
  - Establish rules so that the children know what is expected of them.
  - Be consistent and fair in your discipline. Always give adequate warning of any punishment.
  - Use a firm voice and be definite in your teaching and instructions.
- ✓ Expect the children to behave. They will sense your attitude towards them. They will test you to see how far you will "let

them go." Don't let them go very far.

- ✓ Don't be too familiar or soft with the children. Be firm but loving.
- ✓ Control them with your eyes, especially watching those who cause disturbances.
- ✓ Don't try to get silence by making noise. Create interest!
- ✓ Never strike out at anyone with your hand, or tongue.
- ✓ Get to know each child and their individual needs. A knowledge of their family background will be helpful too.

↗ **Practical suggestions**

- ✓ Greet each child warmly as he comes in.
- ✓ Make sure the children are seated comfortably and that the room is suitably heated.
- ✓ Give precise instructions to the children at the start and finish of the club as to what you expect them to do.
- ✓ Include "good behaviour" in your point system. Use the idea of a "Quiet Seat." This is a seat unknown to the children until after the meeting, whose occupant receives a prize, (that is, if he/she has been quiet).
- ✓ The larger the group, the more definite must be the discipline and the bigger the gestures made by yourself.
- ✓ Those adults who help in the meeting are responsible for discipline as well as the teacher. They can often sit beside one badly behaved child or separate two or three children who are misbehaving.
- ✓ If there is a large group of very young children, have a short varied meeting with plenty of opportunity to join in, and many shorter items which allow for their limited attention span. It is better to have a separate meeting for them rather than including them with the older children.

↗ **Some warnings**

- ✓ Avoid long pauses between the different parts of your programme.
- ✓ Do not give commands phrased as a question "Shall we pray?" They might answer "Yes" or, worse still, "No!"
- ✓ Ensure that individual children do not participate too much and you lose the interest of the others.

- ✓ Do not have a prayer time which is lengthy. Don't close your eyes for too long!
- ✓ Be careful with your quiz time. There is usually great excitement at the end if one team wins. Move quickly on to the next item.

↗ **Regaining control when there is a problem**

- ✓ Pray and seek the Lord's wisdom.
- ✓ Be calm yourself. Don't get annoyed.
- ✓ Use a tone of your voice to convey seriousness.
- ✓ Give warnings or instructions as necessary.
- ✓ Use the next part of your programme to divert attention or introduce a quiet chorus to settle the children.
- ✓ Take out any trouble-makers, if necessary, for personal conversation.

↗ **Reasons for bad behaviour**

Try to understand the children's needs and realise that these might be the reason for their poor behaviour. You need to consider, at all times, their backgrounds, family tensions, learning difficulties, physical problems, etc.

There are several problems which may cause bad discipline.

- ✓ Physical problems—over-activity, poor eyesight, tiredness
- ✓ Mental problems—academically below age, non-readers, emotionally disturbed.
- ✓ Spiritual problems—conviction of sin, satanic influences.

Question 94

Should I ever ask an unruly child to leave my meeting—and tell him not to return until he is better behaved?

Answer

Most children will listen reasonably well and behave reasonably well when the teacher is interesting and attractive in his/her presentation. But there are some children who seem to find it impossible to listen well, or to sit still and who, as a consequence, continually create problems and really disturb and upset your meeting. These children are, I believe, relatively few in number. Their bad behaviour might be caused by problems in the

family and in their background, or by psychological problems, or even by the desire to get attention.

What should you do with a problem child?

There are several steps which you could take:

- Pray for him, personally, and frequently, and ask others to pray for him (or her!).
- Talk with him personally and on his own and explain how wrong it is for him to do what he does.
  The child may be more open to guidance and correction when he is on his own and when he is not the centre of attention.
- Give him some responsibility, as your helper! He could mark the names in your roll-book, hang up coats, or watch out for those who don't behave themselves!
- Speak with his parents and let them know what has been happening. They might be able to help.
- As a very last resort (and only after every other possible solution has been tried) tell him lovingly and firmly that you do want him to come to the club, but that he cannot return if he is not prepared to behave himself. This is only fair for the other children whose time at the club is being affected and spoiled by his bad behaviour.
  But make it clear to him (and to his parents if, and when, you speak with them) that he is always welcome if he is willing to behave himself reasonably well.

Question 95

Should I teach the children in my class/club about baptism—its meaning and mode?

Answer

There is no doubt that baptism occupied a prominent place in the preaching and teaching of the apostles, and that the Bible makes it clear that it is one of the two ordinances to be practised by the early church.

However, we need to recognize that there are, among evangelicals, two main views concerning baptism:

- Infant baptism.
  The infant children **of believers** are baptized as a sign of their acceptance into the visible church, and as an act of faith that one day they will trust Christ as their Saviour.
- **Believers'** baptism.
  Those who have trusted Christ as their Saviour are baptized as an act of witness and confession, and as a sign of the faith which they now possess in Christ.

In both cases baptism is a **sign** of faith (future or past), is related only to born again believers (or their children), and has no saving value or effect. Evangelicals do not believe in baptismal regeneration. None of us believe that a baby or anybody is born again through baptism.

It is obvious, therefore, that in an interdenominational work such as Child Evangelism Fellowship, to avoid controversy, we should **not** teach the children about baptism. However, we should explain to them that baptism does not save anybody, and that if they were baptized as infants this does not mean that they are saved.

However, I believe that the principle involved in baptism **should** be taught. Baptism is a sign or outward confession of faith. One of the reasons the apostles taught about baptism when they were evangelizing was to help their pagan hearers to understand that if they trusted Christ they would need to be baptized publicly soon after that. In other words, they should know what was involved and expected in becoming a Christian and be willing for that. That principle should still be included in our evangelism, even though we may not refer specifically to baptism. Children need to know that if they trust Christ, there will be certain consequences afterwards such as a change of life, a need to witness (or confess), and also the possibility of persecution.

If, on the other hand, you are teaching children inside, and as part of the ministry of, the local church (e.g. in Sunday School) you should, of course, feel free to teach baptism and to teach its meaning and mode as practised by that local church.

The second question really answers itself. If a church teaches that baptism and the Lord's supper are only for believers, then children who are believers should logically be able to participate in both.

In other words, if a child has professed to trust Christ, if he shows by his life and through his answers to questions that he is a believer, it should

be possible for him to be baptized as a believer and also to participate in the Lord's supper.

Many Baptist pastors hesitate, or refuse, to baptize believing children or to permit them to participate in the Lord's supper because they equate baptism and the Lord's supper with church membership. My view is that these are separate issues. A person should not become a member of a local church until he/she is old enough to be able to participate in church decisions such as calling a pastor, planning a new roof for the church or exercising church discipline. A believing child is not able to become involved in matters such as these, and his membership of the local church must therefore wait until he has reached a certain age and becomes capable of intelligent participation in the affairs of the church.

If the pastor can see church membership and responsibility as a completely separate matter from baptism and the Lord's supper he will have fewer hesitations or objections with regard to a saved child's participation in the latter two ordinances.

Question 96

Should I encourage the children who attend my interdenominational Good News Club to attend my church and Sunday School instead of their own?

Answer

There are certain principles you should always remember and abide by with regard to this subject:

- You should want all your children to attend and become part of a good Bible believing local church.
- If a child does not attend any church or Sunday School, you should ask his parents for permission to take him to your Sunday School and, if possible, to your church services.
- If a child already attends a church or Sunday School, you should not try to take him away from it (to attend yours) even if the one he attends is not evangelical.
- If you do try to do this you run the serious risk of losing the child from your Good News Club, and of not having any more opportunity to teach him the Word of God.

- In this latter situation the Good News Club becomes a substitute for the church, and a place where the child can get the spiritual help and teaching he needs.
- You can then pray that when the child becomes older, and comes to the position where he can make decisions for himself he will decide to find and join a good evangelical church.

Question 97

What steps should I follow in counselling an unsaved child, and when leading him to Christ?

Answer

A full answer to this question can be found in my book "How to Lead a Child to Christ." If you do not have this book write to the address given at the beginning of this book, and it will be sent to you.

But let me give a brief summary of the ten steps you should follow when leading a child to Christ.

- Set the child at ease.
- Find out his problem, by asking questions.
  - ✓ Why do you want to talk with me? This helps you to see if he is sincere.
  - ✓ Have you ever sinned? This helps you to see if he understands.
  - ✓ Have you trusted Jesus Christ before? This helps you to see if he is already saved.

  If the child is sincere, seems to understand, and was not saved before, proceed.
- See if he understands the Gospel.
  You could use the wordless book and ask questions about each of the four subjects.
  - ✓ Gold page. What do you think God is like?
  - ✓ Dark page. Why do you need to be saved? Do you want to be different?
  - ✓ Red page. Who is the only one who can save you? Why can He do so?
  - ✓ White page. What will happen if you trust the Lord Jesus to save you?

- Choose one Bible verse which you can use to show the child the way of salvation (for example Romans 10 v13).
  This verse should do two things:
  - ✓ Show the child what he needs to do (Call to the Lord)
  - ✓ Show the child what the Lord will do if he does that (He will save you)
- Ask the child does he really want to call to the Lord to be saved or would he rather go home and think more about it.
  Explain that the Lord Jesus will want to be his boss if he calls to Him, that He will expect his life to be different after he does so, and that others might laugh at him if he trusts Christ.
- The child prays and asks Jesus Christ to save him.
- Show the child how he can be sure he is saved:
  - ✓ Because God's Word says so (go back to the verse used in step 4)
  - ✓ Because he will see a change, even if small, in his life (2 Corinthians 5 v17).
- Encourage the child to say "thank you" to the Lord Jesus.
- If you have time, do a little follow-up work.
  You can use the fingers of one hand for each of five points.
  - ✓ Read your Bible every day—and obey it.
  - ✓ Talk to God at any time.
  - ✓ Tell others what you have done.
  - ✓ If you sin, confess it. You do not need to be saved again.
  - ✓ Meet with other Christians in Sunday School and Good News Club.
- Give the child a promise from the Lord using the fingers of the other hand (Hebrews 13 v5).
  I – will – never – leave – you.

Question 98

How would you counsel several children who came together to speak with you about how to receive Christ?

Answer

When a group of children wait for counselling, it is better to use several counsellors if at all possible; but they must be trained to know how to deal

with the children. It is best to have one counsellor for each child, if at all possible. Even if you have no one to assist with counselling, it is a great help to have one or two workers who are available and ready to keep an eye on the children, and to assist in any emergency which might arise.

However, if you have no one who can help you, the following are some guidelines to give you some help in what is not an ideal situation.

First of all, group all the children together, and make sure everyone is quiet and attentive.

- Ask each child the question, "Why have you come to speak with me?" Listen carefully to the children's answers—
  - ✓ This will help you to know if there is any child there who is insincere, curious or who has come to you because someone else has. If you are sure they are not ready to receive Christ, counsel (or have a co-worker counsel) them accordingly and let them leave. Alternatively, they can listen in as you counsel the others. However, this is not ideal as it may cause distraction to the child or children being counselled; and the latter may feel restricted in what he or they want to say because of lack of privacy.
  - ✓ This will help you to find if there is a Christian child with a problem. If so, deal with him accordingly. You could suggest that he wait until later and that you will then take time to deal with his problem. (You may also find through the third question, which follows, that there are others who are already Christians but who lack assurance). Another alternative is to counsel him briefly, and pray with him before proceeding any further, or to ask one of your co-workers (if you have any) to take this child aside for counselling.
- Ask the second question, "Have you ever sinned?" to each child. Or if there are many children, ask the group as a whole, letting them indicate their answer by nodding their heads. Bring together those who say they have never sinned and counsel them unitedly, as children who do not understand. Then pray with them and either have them leave or, if they have come with other children, have them sit at one side and wait quietly.
- Ask the others the third question, "Have you already received the Lord Jesus?" Have them indicate their answer to you. Bring

together those who say 'yes' and ask them to tell you about it. Then if you are satisfied that they have received the Lord Jesus either suggest they listen carefully while you talk to those who wish to receive Christ today, or tell them they do not need to be saved again, explaining briefly how they can be sure they are saved. Pray with them and let them go.

Counsel those who remain as unsaved children. This is not difficult when all are in the same group, and have the same need. Then allow each one to pray individually to trust Christ. If there are a substantial number of children, you may lead in prayer and have the children repeat it after you. At this stage, bring back into the conversation those who were lacking assurance (if they are still there), and talk to the whole group together about assurance and forgiveness of sin, etc., then dismiss both groups together.

More details on how to counsel can be obtained in my book "How to Lead a Child to Christ."

Question 99

Could you give me some steps which would help me to counsel a believing child who has waited behind for counselling after the meeting?

Answer

When counselling a Christian child, there are several basic principles you need to understand and follow.

- **Draw From The Resources God Has Given You To Help This Child**
  Basically counselling is sharing with the child what God has taught you. God has provided tremendous resources for you to draw from, in your task of counselling saved children.
  These resources include the following:
  - ✓ The wisdom and guidance which God has given you
    Every born-again Christian has available to him the wisdom and power of God for his counselling task. As you counsel, you can depend on the Lord and ask Him for the words you need, recognising that the wisdom you need is available.

- ✓ The Word of God
  God has given the answers to the child's problems in His Word. Help him to see God's answers by using the Bible and turning to appropriate verses.
- ✓ Your own past experience
  As you counsel, you can testify, from your own experience, to the way God has helped you in situations similar to that of the child with whom you are speaking.
- ✓ The indwelling Holy Spirit
  The Spirit of God is **the Counsellor**, and He lives within both you and the Christian child to whom you are speaking. He will therefore empower you for this important part of your ministry as a teacher. He will also help the child to understand and to obey God's precepts. Quietly and confidently depend upon Him as you counsel.

↗ **Identify His Need Before Giving Counsel And Help**
You cannot help the Christian child with his problem, if you do not know what that problem is. Ask him why he wants to speak with you, and then listen carefully as he shares with you.
Find out what the problem is before giving the solution.

↗ **Be Sure That The Child Is Truly Born Again**
One of the greatest problems we face when dealing with children who profess salvation is that they may have made a profession of faith under the influence and pressure of an unwise evangelist.
So before launching into your counselling session, it is a wise precaution to find out definitely if the child is born again. Ask him to tell you about the time he trusted Christ. Ask him how he knows for sure that he is saved.
The underlying cause of the child's problem may be that he is unsaved. So this question needs to be dealt with first.

↗ **Treat Every Question As Being Important**
Listen carefully to what the child is saying, giving him your full attention. Do not dismiss his problem as being unimportant, but take time to deal with it.

↗ **Help The Child To Think Through The Answer To His Problem For Himself**
Very often **your** questions to him will help him discover the correct answers for himself. Rather than telling him directly what to do,

establish biblical principles, so that he will see for himself what is the right thing to do.

- **The Child Needs To Respond To What God Is Saying To Him In His Word**
  Help him to see that some response on his part is necessary, if he is to overcome his difficulties or solve his problems. Show him what God wants him to do. The final decision to do something about this problem lies with the individual child.
  So discuss with the child what possible action might be needed. Then encourage the child to pray about it himself to God. Pray with him and for him, asking God to help and bless in the situation.
- **Help The Child Afterwards Through Careful Follow-up Work**
  - ✓ Underline the verse, or verses, you used in his Bible when counselling him.
  - ✓ Give him, now or later, some literature which could help him.
  - ✓ Give extra teaching on this subject in the Good News Club or Sunday School he attends.
  - ✓ Talk with him from time to time to see how he is progressing.
  - ✓ If he lives some distance away write to him.
  - ✓ Above all, pray for him personally, regularly and specifically.

Question 100

Should I refer to evolution when speaking to children? What should I say?

Answer

I believe the theory of evolution to be wrong and extremely harmful for the following reasons:

- Evolution teaches that we are not responsible to anyone. Man is the master of his fate! On the other hand creation teaches that we are responsible to our Creator and under His authority (Ecclesiastes 12 v1; Acts 17 v24-31).
- Evolution denies the clear teaching of the Word of God—that the world was created in six days. And it denies, especially, that man was created instantaneously from the dust of the earth in the image of God (Genesis chapters 1 and 2).

- Evolution teaches that all things happen by chance. This contradicts the fact that God specifically planned creation (Genesis 1 v3; Revelation 4 v11) for His own reasons and according to His own purposes.
- Evolution spoils the harmony and agreement which exists between true science and faith in God. Neither contradicts or should contradict the other.
- Evolution is only a theory, and is in fact a very weak theory which has not been proved, and indeed it cannot be proved.

The result of the teaching of evolution to our children is that they do not see their responsibility to God, their Creator. On the basis of this, they have been exposed to a philosophy and way of life which focuses upon man, and denies Divine authority.

Consequently, in your teaching and evangelism of children, it is necessary for you to teach both negatively (to show that evolution is not true) and positively (to show that biblical creation is true).

How can you do this?

- By teaching clearly the Creation story as contained in the first two chapters of Genesis. When doing this there are several facts to emphasize:
  - ✓ that God created the world from nothing in six days. I believe these to have been six literal 24 hour days.
  - ✓ that God made the first man out of the dust of the earth. The body was made first, and then God gave him life. Evolution reverses this order!
  - ✓ that God made the first woman from the first man.
  - ✓ that the first man and woman were perfect and without sin. At a later date, man moved downwards because of sin and not upwards as the evolutionists claim.

As you teach these facts it is good to refer specifically to the theory of evolution , and the fact that it is opposed to the Word of God. Do so wisely, carefully and without rancour or anger. You need to be constructive at all times, and not just destructive.

- You should frequently lay emphasis on the fact that the Bible is absolutely true. You need to give your reasons for saying so, from time to time.

- You should point out that there are many scientists and intellectuals who do not accept the theory of evolution but who, instead, believe the biblical account of Creation.
- You should emphasize that evolution is only a theory, and that it has never been proved as fact.
- You should recommend to the older children and teenagers books on the subject such as "From Nothing to Nature" by Professor E.H. Andrews (published by Euro books), and "The Great Brain Robbery" by David Watson (published by Henry E. Walter). You could also buy several of these books and lend them to the children.

It is probably better for you not to go into **a lot** of detail concerning evolution in your attempt to disprove it unless you are well prepared and have a very good knowledge of your subject.

It is possible that when you deal with this subject and also when you teach the verbal inspiration of the Bible you might find that older children and teenagers will see you as very old-fashioned, and not too intellectual. You and your teaching will be very much against the stream of modern thought, teaching and influence.

But do not worry about this. You are taking a stand upon God's Word and upon truth, even when you cannot understand everything and you are not able to explain all the details.

Older children and teenagers might criticise you and laugh at you. But in their hearts they will respect the fact that you know what you believe and that you are willing to stand up for it. This will be in sharp contrast to many of the generalities, much of the vagueness and the abundance of criticism to which they are accustomed. There is often within themselves a respect for (and perhaps even a desire for) TRUTH.

Ten Questions For You to Answer

I have appreciated the opportunity to give you my answers to these one hundred questions.

Could I now ask **you** to do something? Could I ask **you** to answer just ten questions? I believe that giving your answers will help provide the encouragement and challenge with which to conclude this book:

Question 1

Is it your desire to obey the last command of Jesus Christ as recorded in Mark 16 v15 to evangelize those who are not saved?

Answer

Question 2

Do you believe that children need Jesus Christ as their Saviour, that they can trust Him, that they are open to the Gospel, and that, if saved, they have their whole lives to live for Jesus Christ?

Answer

Question 3

If you are not already engaged in some form of child evangelism, would you be open, as God leads you, to give some time to evangelize boys and girls? Or if you are already engaged in this ministry would you be willing to devote more time to it—if God so leads?

Answer

Question 4

Are there many children in your neighbourhood who are unreached with the Gospel and who need Jesus Christ as their Saviour?

Answer

Question 5

Can you see yourself becoming involved (or more involved) in any of the following outreach ministries to children?

- Teaching a class in Sunday school?
- Opening your home for a Good News Club?
- Teaching a Good News Club in someone else's home?
- Conducting daily or weekly open-air meetings for the local children in the summer time?
- Helping in a camp, a Holiday Bible Club or a children's campaign?
- Giving out Gospel tracts?

Answer

Question 6

Do you see the need to follow up children after they trust Christ and teach them on a regular basis so that they will grow spiritually?

Answer

Question 7

Would you be willing to give some time (or more time) each week to teach, nurture and invest yourself in a saved child or a group of saved children in your church, your home or elsewhere?

Answer

Question 8

Do you believe that your ministry to both unsaved and saved children should always be based upon your clear, logical, systematic and prayerful teaching of the Word of God?

Answer

Question 9

Do you feel your need of more training for your work with children (especially with regard to the teaching of the Word of God), and would you therefore be willing to attend a training class organized by Child Evangelism Fellowship in the area where you live?

Answer

Question 10

Has this book been a help to you, and do you know of someone else who, you feel, would like to have it and who would benefit from it?

Answer

Key Addresses

To enquire about training:

Child Evangelism Fellowship of India

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