



part 1 of 2—

Impacting Inner-City Kids for Christ

Interview with Rod Baker, David Boyd, and Gilbert Ceballos

Many churches are impacting their cities by reaching the children in the inner-city with the gospel. *Enrichment* magazine interviewed three children's pastors who shared their burden for inner-city ministry to children. Rod Baker is children's pastor at Victory Christian Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Under his ministry, the church has created 16 departments focusing on reaching the children of their city.

Gilbert Ceballos and his wife, Maritza, are children's pastors at New Life Assembly of God, Pembroke Pines, Florida. People from 40 different nationalities attend New Life Assembly.

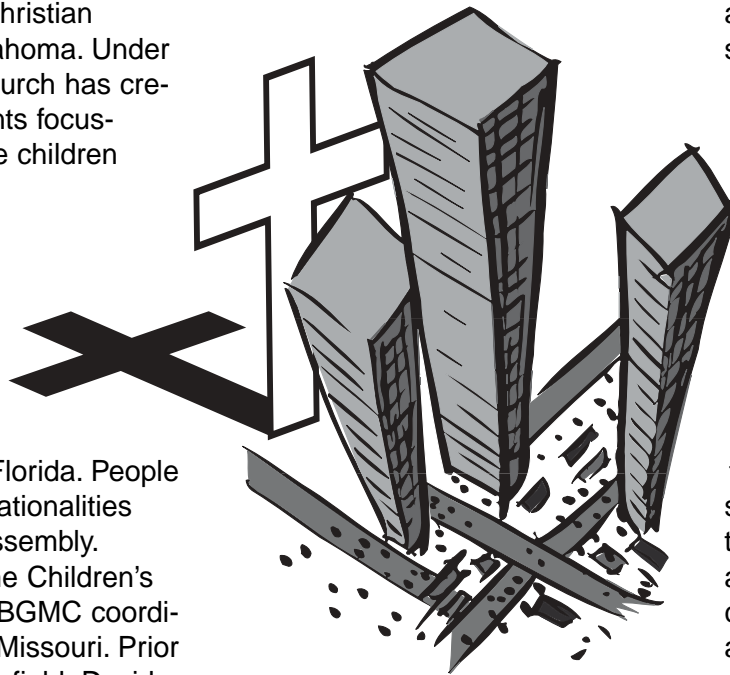
David Boyd is the Children's Ministries Agency/BGMC coordinator, Springfield, Missouri. Prior to coming to Springfield, David was children's pastor at First Assembly of God, Fort Myers, Florida.

These men provide practical suggestions that all churches, both large and small, can use to reach their inner cities for Christ.

In what ways have Sidewalk Sunday Schools been effective in reaching your community with the gospel?

BAKER: Sidewalk Sunday Schools are a great concept because any church can conduct them. A Sidewalk Sunday School will bring new life to a church because it brings in new families. Initially, a church does not

need to



make a large investment in capital or personnel.

Our sidewalk teams share the gospel using music and puppets along with Bible stories. We have sidewalk teams that visit families the day before the meeting. We tell mothers, "Come and hear the gospel with the boys and girls. After our program we will give you a box of groceries."

Through our Sidewalk Sunday Schools we saw the need to start parenting cell groups. Most of the adults we are trying to reach don't know how to be good parents.

CEBALLOS: Jesus spent much of His time in the streets and in people's homes, not in synagogues. Sidewalk Sunday Schools take us out of the four walls of the church and into places where people need to hear the gospel.

Through our Sidewalk Sunday Schools, we are also able to minister to physical needs. Many single mothers who are on fixed incomes come to our outreaches. Many of them feel life has passed them by. When their government subsidies run out at the end of the month, we bring them food and clothing. By feeding and clothing low-income families, we are following Jesus' command.

Through our Sidewalk Sunday Schools, we have been able to reach and soften the hearts of parents as well as reach their children for Jesus.

How can churches develop Sidewalk Sunday Schools?

BAKER: Pastors must share their vision with the leadership and the congregation. We took pictures of the government complexes. We then placed an

announcement in our bulletin: “There is a man who wants to pay for a mission trip for you. Will you go? More information will be available next week.” People were excited and ready to go overseas for a short-term mission trip. The next Sunday we showed slides of the housing complexes. We said, “Our mission field is right here, and Jesus is the One who paid the price for us to go.”

The materials to accomplish a Sidewalk Sunday School are available. If pastors will start with a Bible club, back-to-school bash, a 3-day VBS, or backyard VBS, it births what God has for the future.

Many pastors are looking for revival. Revival is here, and it is with the children in their communities. Jesus said if you receive a little child in My name, you receive Me. God will supply the resources for your outreaches. Some businesses that use panel trucks will donate them when they buy new trucks. People who see what you are doing to reach the community with the gospel will donate money and materials.

If pastors want their churches to explode, they need to go after the greatest resource in their community—the children.

BOYD: Pastors who want to start an outreach may not know where to start. Tell your board that you would like to plan a day

to give food and clothing to the community. Have one board member contact businesses and ask them to donate food. Assign another board member to contact clothing stores to see if they will donate clothing.

On the day of the event, have a children’s evangelist minister to the children; a youth pastor to do a youth revival; and the senior pastor can preach to the adults. Pastors may want the children’s evangelist to stay several extra days.

Pastors can also train the people in their churches to minister. So many people will be saved, they will be busy with follow-up for months. The pastor and congregation will catch the burden.

To start a Sidewalk Sunday School, pastors do not need a children’s pastor or somebody who is exceptional in children’s ministry—children appreciate whatever you have. Set up a cardboard box as a puppet stage, tell stories using Sunday School material, and give away freezer pops. This shows the community you care about their kids. You might pull in only kindergartners and first, second, and third graders. But they’ll get saved, and their mothers will come.

The next step might be to get a flatbed trailer to use as a stage. The stage and a sound

system help you become more mobile. Eventually you can get a box trailer and cut the side out.

CEBALLOS: An outreach starts with a vision and passion to reach the kids in your community. Jesus said in Mark 10:14, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” We should try to bless every child we meet.

You don’t need a lot of equipment to start a Sidewalk Sunday School. Jesus sat on a hill or in a boat and told stories, and everyone sat down to listen. If you tell stories and have illustrations, color posters, and puppets, you will draw a crowd. We started with nothing—just a cardboard box with some curtains taped on it and a bunch of blow-up puppets. If you’re faithful with the little you have, the Lord will give you more. As our ministry grew, the Lord blessed us with a truck. When people outside the church heard what we were doing, they donated money and equipment.

Simply tell children about Jesus and love them. Each child is important in God’s eyes. That’s what the kids need; they need love, and they need to hear the truth.