



Trends, part 2 of 3—

Positive Trends

by Dick Gruber

Children's Pastor at Bloomington Assembly of God, Bloomington, Minnesota

Listed below are some positive trends I have observed in our churches. These seem to be universal in nature. If you do not see these in your church yet, don't worry. Trends sweep from place to place as pastors are made aware of specific felt needs.

Prayer

Prayer has become a priority. What an awesome trend this is. Children are becoming prayer warriors. Adult congregation members are beginning to pray for individual children. Children's workers are praying that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers.

Sunday School classes, children's churches, and club meetings are ending with altar calls. Pastors and children's leaders across our land are discovering this simple truth: Children love to pray.

One Royal Rangers commander recently had every boy in his Pioneer group write down a sin or two on file cards. They took the cards out to the churchyard and buried them. As they knelt in prayer around the grave for sin, two boys gave their lives to Jesus for the first time.

A group of 10- and 11-year-old girls ran up to me on Sunday morning to tell me about last week's Missionettes retreat. They stayed up in their cabin praying

until 2:30 in the morning. Two in the group received the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

These are not isolated incidents. Children love to pray. Adults need to pray for children's ministries. A local children's ministry undergirded with prayer is the wave of the future. This trend is directly linked to the next.

The Move of the Spirit

God's Spirit is moving in the lives of boys and girls around the world. Take the story of four girls by the swimming pool at the Illinois District campground. One girl slipped, twisting her ankle. The other three gathered around and prayed for her. As she was healed, all four girls were baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Last month we had an altar service in our children's church during which nine boys and girls, ages 6 through 11, were baptized in the Holy Spirit. This happened as we directed children to pray for children. God's Spirit is moving in the hearts and lives of children and children's workers.

Consider the children's church leader who told me, "I couldn't believe it. I gave an altar call and over 20 kids responded. I've never seen a response like this."

In Denver a children's pastor has trained boys and girls as altar workers. Children pray and anoint those in need with oil. Boys and girls have been saved, healed,

and baptized in the Holy Spirit as these prayer team members committed their requests to the Lord.

Across our country the Spirit of God is moving in Sunday and midweek services and other meetings. We are truly experiencing a divine outpouring of the Spirit in these last days.

Children in Ministry

Another exciting trend is the growing number of children directly involved in ministry. I have witnessed children serving as ushers, greeters, sound technicians, and worship team members. Children who have been empowered by the Holy Spirit are no longer content to sit and watch; they want to experience Christianity. Children are being allowed to minister in the mainstream in our churches. This is exciting because adult believers around the world are beginning to recognize the ministry gifts in young believers and are helping them develop their gifts in ministry.

On a recent trip to the Assemblies of God churches in Australia, I met a 12-year-old girl named Alicia. Alicia plays the piano and sings as part of a worship team in her church. She leads in worship in the main sanctuary with great effectiveness.

God directed two sisters from our church to evangelize their

neighbors. The girls took a *Who Cares?* outreach video across the street and showed it to an unchurched family. The family—mom, dad, and four children—prayed with the 11-year-old and 8-year-old sisters that morning.

When God begins to move by His Spirit in your children's min-

istries, there will be an increase in children actively participating in ministry. This trend of children ministering to other children and adults is growing rapidly. At first I thought it to be a fad, but I am hearing more and more stories of children serving in their churches.

In Latin America, Missionary

Don Triplet has trained children to lead others to the Lord and to pray for them to be baptized in the Spirit. Many children and teens are coming to Jesus and being filled with the Spirit as young people trained by Don and his workers pray.

Questions For Further Study—

1. What priority do you place on prayer in your children's ministry? What improvements can you make in this area?
2. List two or three adult groups in your church whom you can elicit to pray for your children and your children's ministry program. Develop a plan to approach these groups and to keep an open line of communication with them.
3. In what ways do you utilize children in ministry? How can you better use children in ministry roles?



Who Cares? was produced by Boys and Girls Missionary Crusade in cooperation with Gospel Publishing House. It is a 7-minute reproducible video tract for children. To order, see the Gospel Publishing House catalog or call 1-800-641-4310.