



Trends, part 3 of 3—

Altar Calls in the Classroom and Church

by Dick Gruber

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

More and more teachers and leaders across our nation are experiencing the move of God in their classes and children's churches. Why is this trend becoming the norm? Because more and more leaders are redeeming the time; they are setting aside time for altar calls.

The Assemblies of God is a movement that has a great tradition around the altars. I am thrilled to see that tradition being resurrected by our teachers and leaders. The altar call is alive and power-filled in the Sunday School rooms and children's sanctuaries of America.

Leaders are taking seriously the possibility of spiritual response in their classrooms. Classes that at one time ended with a quick prayer and a take-home paper are now extending into the church time as children receive a new touch from God.

This is a trend that pastors should embrace and promote. Imagine what would happen in your church when children begin praying in the back rooms of your facility. This attitude of true ministry is quickly replacing the last remnants of the game-and-snack fad of the last decade. Teachers are replacing the need to fill time with spiritual happenings that go into over-

time. This is a divine move of God.

Conclusion

How do these trends play out in light of the history being made by today's church? The



emphasis on prayer, the move of the Spirit, children in ministry, and altar time is continuing evidence of the revival winds of our day. These revival winds know no prejudice—age, race, or culture. And the children who are a part of today's church are being caught up in this end-time wind of God's Spirit.

Are there negatives? There always will be. Do children understand the implications of all God is doing in their lives? I don't think so. To tell the truth, I don't understand them all, either. But this I know, God is doing a mighty work in the hearts and lives of children and those who serve them.

When I see the tear-stained faces of boys and girls who have spent time in the presence of God, I know we are on the right track. As the church moves into the 21st century, we will witness a revival of incredible proportions—a revival that will, in many cases, begin in the Sunday School room and children's church. We must not discourage this, but rather embrace the evident outpouring of God's power on the children of our Movement.

I am excited about the generation of believers who are growing up today. They personally know the Lord and the works He can do in and through their lives. Trends of the world will try to destroy them at every turn. But our God is bigger than the world. The trends instituted by Him are far-reaching and eternal. Boys and girls are growing in wisdom and stature, in favor with God and with man. Blessed be the Lord!

Questions For Further Study—

1. What worldly trends threaten to destroy today's children? What spiritual trends are occurring that help strengthen children against these attacks?
2. How much time for altar calls and prayer do you allow at the end of your children's church program? What improvements can be made in this area?
3. In what ways do you see God at work among the children in your church? How can you better encourage the children to allow a move of God in their lives?