



We Build Kids, part 1 of 2—

Developing a Strategy for a Purpose-Driven Children's Ministry

by LeRoy Bartel

National Director, Commission on Discipleship

So many things in our culture destroy children either by design or default. The pop heroes of the entertainment industry, whether seen on television or video or heard on the radio or CD, usually do not deliver an uplifting, constructive, spiritually redemptive message. More and more we hear of children who have been exploited, abused or neglected. Alarm fills our hearts. Who cares? Who will do something to stem this devastating and demoralizing cultural drift?

The church can and must accept this challenge! The local church must provide a counter culture committed to building children. Motivated by love, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and commissioned by God, it must reach out to children with the gospel, lead them to put their trust in Christ, and help them become His devoted followers. If the church will do this children can be rescued from the destructive power of sin, be transformed by God's power, and become all He created them to be. The local church, as God's redemptive agency in the world, must accept the responsibility of developing ministries that build the lives of children.

We Build People was developed as a *total-church approach* to disciple-making ministry within the Assemblies of God. It involves

everything the church does to reach people for Christ and help them become maturing, obedient followers of Jesus. *We Build People* is not just for adults—it's for everyone in the church—children too! Consequently, the local church needs to be vitally interested in developing people-building children's ministries—*We Build Kids!*



•How can this be accomplished by the local church?

•How can the church develop children's ministries that truly build young lives?



By embracing values that drive ministries that build children

First of all, by embracing non-negotiable values that drive ministries that build children. Early

on, *We Build People* developed and advocated some non-negotiable biblical values that were designed to serve as motivators and guides for effective disciple-making ministry in the local church. The overarching value that served as an umbrella for all the others was, "Every person is valued and is the focus of our ministry." Then four other non-negotiable values were recommended:

1. Every person has the right to a presentation of the gospel at his or her level of understanding.
2. Every person needs a biblical moral compass to guide and protect him or her throughout life.
3. Every believer has unique gifts to be discovered, developed and used to strengthen the church.
4. Every believer has a purpose in advancing the global mission of Christ and the Church.

These non-negotiable values not only *apply* to children's ministry—they should provide the inspiration and basis for building an effective children's ministry in the local church!



By depending on the Holy Spirit

How can we truly see transformation in the lives of children? How can we be assured

that the inner resources to resist temptation and overcome sin abide in their lives? Only through the power of the Holy Spirit! In the Old Testament, after the devastating forces of sin had led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the bondage of God's people in

Babylon, only one dynamic was considered adequate to sustain the rebuilding of their lives, their culture, and their worship—the power of the Holy Spirit! (Zech-ariah 4, especially verse 6). Nothing has changed—children's ministry that transforms lives is

spiritual in nature. Only the Holy Spirit provides the dynamic for people building!

(Points for developing the We Build Kids program in your church continue with part 2.)

Questions For Further Study—

1. Discuss the four “non-negotiable values” given in this article. In what ways can you implement these values in your children's ministries?
 - 1) Every person has the right to a presentation of the gospel at his or her level of understanding.
 - 2) Every person needs a biblical moral compass to guide and protect him or her throughout life.
 - 3) Every believer has unique gifts to be discovered, developed and used to strengthen the church.
 - 4) Every believer has a purpose in advancing the global mission of Christ and the Church.
2. What methods do you use in your children's ministries programs to lead children to depend on the help and power of the Holy Spirit? What improvements can be made?



We Build People: Making Disciples for the 21st Century, by Michael H. Clarensau, Sylvia Lee, and Steven R. Mills, is available through Gospel Publishing House. Designed for everyone who serves in church leadership, this staff training book provides a *We Build People* vision overview and shows how to reach people and build in them the commitments, habits, disciplines, values, and lifestyles of true disciples. Call 1-800-641-4310. Order # 02VA0698. Available also in Spanish.