



We Build Kids, part 1 of 2—

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

by LeRoy Bartel

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.



We Build Kids, part 2 of 2—

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

by LeRoy Bartel

(Continued from part 1.)

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



By working through the process of becoming purpose driven in children's ministry

We Build People is built upon five biblical purposes—evangelism, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and worship. Each of these purposes is important. None of them are negotiable. Effective children's ministry in the local church intentionally develops a strategy for each purpose. The key questions a church should ask are:

•How can we insure that each of these purposes have a healthy, vibrant expression in our children's ministry?

•How can we cooperate with the Holy Spirit to see each of these purposes find appropriate expression in the life of each child?

The *We Build People Pastor's Kit* includes a section designed specifically to assist the leaders involved in children's ministry in local churches as they seek to develop ministries that are purpose driven and help children become devoted followers of Jesus. Sections are provided for both elementary children and

early childhood. Complete resource lists are included. By following the process outlined in the *Pastor's Kit*, the leadership of the local church is led to:

1. Develop a mission and vision statement for their children's ministry and consider how each of the biblical purposes would be expressed in their children's ministry.

2. Become aware of and embrace the strategies and values identified in the *We Build People* philosophy of ministry.

3. Evaluate all of their present children's ministries in light of how effectively they fulfill the biblical purposes.

4. Develop their own process for building children's lives through the ministries of their church.



By including the key aspects of a people-building children's ministry

Each of the five purposes of *We Build People* will be expressed in a healthy, vibrant children's ministry. The following questions can serve as a guide for evaluation:



Include them

What are we doing to reach out to the children in our community with the gospel?

What processes and procedures do we have in place to help each child feel included, loved and accepted by our church?

Do children feel like they belong?



Instruct them

What is the quality of our teaching ministry for children?

How effective are our Sunday School and children's church programs?

Are children being exposed to the systematic teaching of God's Word?

Are they learning the foundational truths of the Bible in developmentally appropriate ways?

Are they developing the attitudes and habits of life that will help them live vibrant, victorious Christian lives?



Involve them

Is our children's ministry oriented to producing spectators or participation and involvement?

Are those who work with children in our church sensitized to be on the watch for giftedness in children and prepared to affirm and encourage its development?

Are opportunities provided at every level to begin involving children in ministry?



Invest them

What are we doing to engen-

der a sense of divine purpose in the lives of children?

Are we helping children who have become Christians know how to share their faith with others?

Are we encouraging them to be involved in missions early on?

What are we doing to help children begin to hear and respond to the call of God upon their lives?



Inspire them

Are we helping children desire to authentically worship God in

spirit and truth (John 4:23-24)?

Are we encouraging them to discover how to express their worship through their words, music, giving, and lifestyle?

Are we using music they enjoy and relate to?

Are they learning to pray effectively?

Are they provided opportunities to worship together with other children as well as with their parents and the rest of the church in corporate worship?

We *Build People* has proven to be a marvelous blessing to local churches as they have sought to revitalize and re-vision their ministries! Souls have been saved and congregations have grown. God has poured out his Spirit. Lives have been changed! New dimensions of purpose and effectiveness have come to many congregations. God wants these very things to happen in children's ministry across the country! *We Build People* is not just for adults—it's for children too!

Questions For Further Study—

Refer to the questions found under the subheadings: Include them, Instruct them, Involve them, Invest them, and Inspire them. Write your answers and observations below or on a separate sheet of paper and discuss them with your children's ministries staff.

The *We Build People Pastor's Kit* is available through Gospel Publishing House. Gain an overview of *We Build People*—the total church, disciple-making process. Packed in a 3-ring binder, this helpful kit includes an implementation guide, the *We Build People* staff training book, a *We Build People* video, and four *Investigating Commitment Series Leader Guides*. Call 1-800-641-4310. Order # 26VA0692.

