

No. 50

THE MINI MAG

FOR CHILDREN'S WORKERS

Devotional

"DOWN" IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR THEOLOGY

"The Son of Man has come to seek and to *save* that which was lost" (Luke 19:10)

Our meditation this month centres on the Lord Jesus and one word—DOWN. This word will remind us of all that He did for us and for our salvation and It will lead us to worship Him and thank Him.

>> **HE LOOKED DOWN.** God has continually "looked down from Heaven upon the children of men" (Psalm 53:2), and, in doing so, He saw our sin and our need for salvation. But, at the same time, He determined to meet that need. So...

>> **HE SENT DOWN HIS ONLY SON** to our earth, and He **CAME DOWN** to seek us and to save us. We are so grateful that "He became poor that we might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9) What did He do?

>> **HE LAID DOWN** His life for us and for our salvation. Having lived a life of purity and obedience, He took the punishment for all our sin on the cross and we can say "The Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20) Greater love has no man than this, and we thank Him for His love and His sacrifice. Because of His suffering and death, we have complete forgiveness for all our sin, and eternal life.

>> **HE WENT DOWN.** They took His body down from the cross. He was truly dead. Therefore, Paul emphasised in 1 Corinthians 15:4 that He was buried. His body was buried in a tomb completely without life and remained there for three days.

>> **HE DID NOT STAY DOWN.** But that was not the end. He "rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:4). His body did not stay down or stay dead. Three days later, it was raised again from the dead, a glorious and immortal body, never to die again.

>> **HE SAT DOWN.** Forty days later the Lord Jesus ascended into Heaven, the God-man, exalted by His Father and **seated** at His right hand, with all things placed under His feet and His control. (Ephesians 1:20-23) From that glorious position He represents us, intercedes for us and is always able and ready to help us when we have needs.

>> **HE WILL COME DOWN.** One day He will come down again to our earth both physically and gloriously (Acts 1:11), and He will raise believers from the dead and take us, and believers who are still alive, up to be with Him in Heaven.

Why did He do all of this?

So that He could take all who trust Him UP to be with Him forever in Heaven.

He came DOWN so that we might go UP.

Assisting
Children's
Evangelists
Worldwide



I would like to welcome you to Mini Mag this month with the words of the only poem I have ever written. I wrote it when I was regional director of European Child Evangelism Fellowship

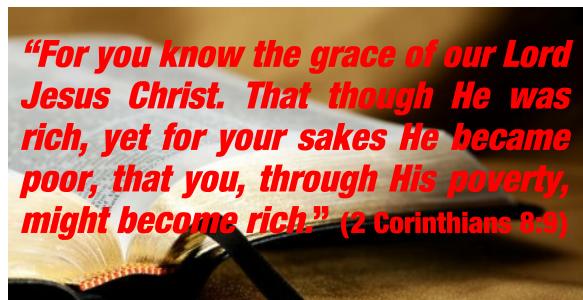
His Hand and Mine (Psalm 24:3,4)

*He holds my hand, I will not fear the shadows
We dwell in sweet communion day by day
He guides me, as I seek to walk beside Him
My cross to bear, some child to show the way.*

*He fills my hands that I may lack for nothing
He knows my need, He's gone this way before
He fails not nor forsakes the one who ventures
But longs and waits for hands to trust Him more.*

*He uses my hands, oh deep and awesome wonder
That my Creator wants to work through me
That He might reach lost boys and girls in Europe
And use my hands to bring them to His knee.*

*Lord, take my hands, and use them at Thy bidding
To pray, to give, to go, to win the lost
Through me, dear Lord, reach out to save the children
No matter what the sacrifice or cost.*



"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. That though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9)

We continue this month in our search for isolated verses and passages in the Bible (apart from the four main passages), which give us information about children and our ministry to them. We found twenty five such verses and passages in the Old Testament which were very helpful. We have also found eight helpful verses and passages in the New Testament. You can locate all of these by downloading recent issues of Mini Mag at www.cefbookministry.com We continue our search in the New Testament this month. You can read the verses in your Bible as we find them.

In two places (Luke 17:1,2, Matthew 18: 6) the Lord Jesus gave a clear command and warning that the “little ones”, the children, whom He loved so much, should not be offended or caused to stumble. In Luke 9:46-48 Luke quotes part of what the Lord Jesus said in that message in Matthew 18:1-14. Now in Luke 17:12, the Lord Jesus comes back to, and, on a separate occasion, repeats the warning recorded earlier by Matthew that the little ones should not be offended. Repeating that warning shows how much He loved the children and how important it was not to cause those who were saved to stumble.

In Matthew 23:37-38 the Lord Jesus expresses His love for the children (TEKNON) of Jerusalem, and how much He wanted to gather them “under His wings.” He also

expressed His sadness that the people of that city did not want the children to come to Him, and He told them that their city would suffer as a result. It is equally true, today, that churches or communities who prevent the children from coming to the Lord Jesus will suffer.

John 21:15-17 We see how much the Lord Jesus loves children and cares for them in a conversation He had with Peter. He, first of all, asked Peter if he loved Him. When Peter assured Him that he did, the Lord Jesus asked him and commissioned him to “feed His lambs” and the Greek word used is “little lambs.” They were HIS lambs and He loved them. The Lord Jesus knew how weak and helpless little children are, and how much they need food and help, and He wanted Peter to be sure that he gave them the spiritual food they needed. (especially those who were saved).

Acts 26:22-23 Paul gives the pattern of his ministry in these two verses. He evangelised the great (MEGAS) and he evangelised the small (MIKROS). Was he thinking of those who were physically big and small, or socially big and small? The important fact is that he evangelised EVERYONE and that included the children, even if they were usually there along with their parents. They still heard Paul’s gospel message.

-Q&A

KEY QUESTIONS ASKED BY CHILDREN'S WORKERS

Question: I find that I lose many of my children when they feel they are too old for Good News Club. What should I do to keep them?

Answer: This is a question which has bothered most of us at some time and we have all tried to find a solution. I believe there is a solution, and that it is the only solution.

First of all, we need to recognise that this is a very widespread problem among children's workers, and that the reasons for it can be easily identified. When children (and especially boys) get to a certain age like 11 or 12, they find it difficult to join in on children's choruses, or everyone repeating bible verses together or the use of childish visuals like the flannelgraph. At the same time, we don't want to accommodate them by dropping these activities and, as a result lose the younger children.

We need, secondly, to see that we are speaking about two quite different groups. On the one hand, we have the children who are so open and naïve, who enjoy noise and excitement, especially when singing some of their choruses, who like to see visuals and who enjoy exciting quizzes and competitions. On the other hand, we have the older ones who are quieter and critical, who don't really want to sing, who ask questions, who like to talk, and often express their doubts.

We need to see, thirdly that there can only be one solution. Segregation is a “bad word” politically, but it is the only solution to our problem. We need to have two completely separate groups of children, with the dividing line around 11 or 12 years old, (or even

earlier) meeting at different times, perhaps with different teachers, and with different programmes each adapted to their needs and joys. You can then lead the younger ones in a way suited to them, which they enjoy, and without needing to “hold” the attention of the older ones who could become quite restless. At a separate time, you can teach, help and talk to the older ones, and make them feel “more grown up” without younger children feeling left out and unsettled.

Child Evangelism Fellowship in Ireland have based their Good News Club programme on this three-fold solution.

► They organise weekly Good News Clubs for the younger children up to 11 or 12 years old, and these Clubs follow the usual GNC programme

► As the children become older they are guided into monthly or twice monthly Junior Youth Challenges which seek to meet the spiritual needs of 12-16 year olds .These meetings are a little longer and are “more grown up” with discussions, questions and answers, good bible teaching, and the introduction of the concept of service, witness and the helping and evangelising of others.

► They have also introduced the concept of Senior Youth Challenges for the 17-25 age group into which those from the Junior Youth Challenge can “graduate”. The emphasis in these groups is upon service and many of them get involved in the summer activities of CEF, or even in teaching Good News Clubs. And so the circle is complete.

Your Ministry to Children:

FEED MY LAMBS (John 21:15)

God has given every children's worker two ministries. He has called us to EVANGELISE the children who are UNSAVED, and He has called us to FEED the children who are SAVED. He has called us to FISH (for children) and then to FEED them. He calls and wants each of us to be like Peter, and to be both A FISHERMAN (Matthew 4:19) and a SHEPHERD. (John 21:15) Most of the early issues of Mini Mag concentrated on how to evangelise children. But we started a series, in Mini Mag 38, on how to help saved children to grow. I thought it would help us in our ministry to saved children if we had a refresher "course" on "shepherding" by looking back briefly over the themes of the last 11 issues from issue 38 onwards , and asking ourselves the key question "Am I doing this.?"

Issues 38 and 39 introduced us to our ministry as the spiritual shepherds of saved children. Issue 38 showed us we should minister to BOTH groups of children and not forget our responsibility to those who are already saved. It also gave us three important principles for our ministry to them. Issue 39 outlined for us the goals we have in our ministry to the saved children.. Because they are spiritual babies, we need to teach them how TO EAT, how TO WALK, how TO TALK and how TO OBEY. The more they learn to eat, walk, talk and obey, the more THEY WILL GROW.

Issues 40, 41 and 42 dealt with the most important truth to teach saved children. We need to teach them, firstly, that THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD AND COMPLETELY TRUE. If they do not understand and believe this truth, everything you will teach later will be ineffective. You need to teach them what the Bible is, what the Bible does, and what they should do with the Bible. These three issues will help you to do all of this. They especially should be taught that God speaks to them through the Bible, and that they should listen to Him every day. Also make sure that they have a Bible.

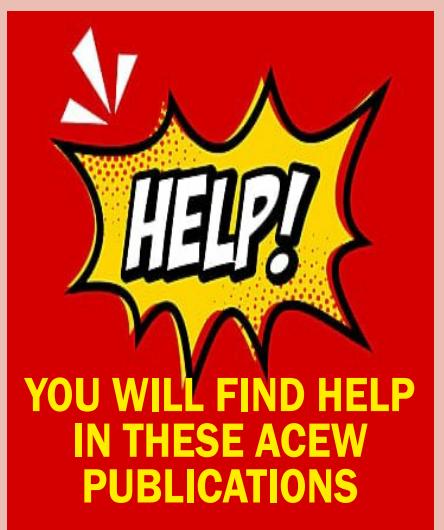


Issues 43 and 44 introduced the greatest problem faced by these children and showed how to solve it through clear teaching. Most saved children find it difficult to be sure that they are saved. Soon after they have trusted the Lord Jesus, the questions start to come from themselves (and from others) like "How do you know you are saved?" They need to have ASSURANCE OF SALVATION, they need to be shown that God has promised in His word to save them, and that He always keeps His promises. They also need to understand that the little changes in their lives will also show them that they are different.

Issues 45 and 46 taught them about the other great problem which soon manifests itself. They soon see and experience SIN in their lives. Some of them might even have thought they would never sin again! These two issues teach them firstly the reality of sin in their lives, and that they still have an old nature which fights against their new nature. They also encourage us to teach them what to do with sin in their lives and they especially need to see the importance and effectiveness of forgiveness. Issue 47 concentrated on how they can have VICTORY over sin in their lives, and how that victory will help them TO GROW and TO WALK before God and their friends as a Christian should.

Issues 48 and 49 taught our saved children how to TALK to God, and showed them how, when, and where to PRAY.

As you read through this list of your responsibilities, do you see any which need to be developed or even included in your teaching and your feeding of saved children? The issues numbered are all available to you. if you do not have them at www.cefbookministry.com. Issue 51 will deal with one more responsibility in great detail.



TEACH AND FEED SAVED CHILDREN

We suggest that you download issues 38 to 50 if you have not already done so, and, over a period of time, read the sections on "Your Ministry to Children" carefully and prayerfully, and see if you have put the teaching in these sections into practice in your ministry to saved children. You might find it helpful to put all these sections together into a little booklet.



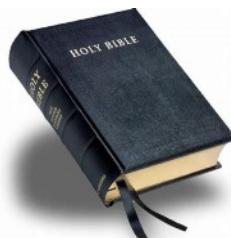


ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE BIBLE'S POWER FOR CHILDREN

1) Over the years the Bible has had many enemies who have tried to get rid of it. About 300 years after the Lord Jesus was here on earth, the powerful Roman emperor Diocletian decided to destroy every copy of the Bible. Many Christians died because they had Bibles and read them and would not say where they were hidden. But Diocletian failed in his project, and to-day there are many many millions of Bibles all over the world. There are more Bibles printed every year than any other book. It is also the world's best seller!

Voltaire was a famous French writer of books who lived 300 years ago. He said that the Bible would become "a museum piece" and would be forgotten within 100 years. Today the Bible is far better known and read by many more millions of people than Voltaire's books.

Bibles have been burned, Bibles have been banned, but the Bible will never be wiped out. (Psalm 119:89). It cannot be destroyed because it is the Word of God, and the Lord Jesus said "Heaven and earth will pass away but My Word will never



pass away." (Matthew 24:35) Do you appreciate your Bible? Do you read it?

2) A missionary was very discouraged one day and said to a poor Hindu woman "You forget all I teach you from the Bible. Your head is just like a sieve. As fast as I pour water in, it runs out again." The Hindu woman bowed her head humbly and said "Yes! You are right. My head is like a sieve. I forget so much...but yet when you pour water into a sieve, though it all runs out again, it makes the sieve clean. I am sorry I have forgotten so much of what you told me last week but what you told me has made me cleaner and so I keep coming back to hear more?"

3) Two white men were travelling through a country where the people had been cannibals some years before. The native people were now Christians, because missionaries had taught them the Word of God and they had believed what they had heard.

The two white men did not believe in God, and when they saw the natives giving thanks for their food, they laughed and mocked them for becoming Christians. The chief said solemnly to them "You may be glad that we believe in God and thank Him for our food. Before we heard God's word we did not do so. If you had come to visit us then, you would have been the food!"

74 Years and Still Learning:

The author's experience and the lesson he learned

A co-worker, Victor, and I decided, back in the sixties, to visit three of the students in communist Czechoslovakia who had attended one of our training courses, to encourage them in their ministry to children. We just had one day available; so, we planned for two visits in the afternoon and one in the evening. We had a very good time of fellowship with our first student, we were invited to a very special meal they had prepared for us, and we really enjoyed it. During our second visit, we were welcomed to another meal which had been especially prepared for us, with much love and care (and hard work). We did not want to offend our hosts by telling them we had already eaten. So we "enjoyed" another fine meal. Then, after we had spent some time with our third student that evening, she told us that she and her parents had prepared a special meal for us, and they led us to a well laden table. We thanked our hosts and

Food in abundance!

sat down at the table. Victor looked at me and mouthed the words "I can't. It's impossible!" I kicked him gently under the table and whispered, "You must" And so we had our third big meal (and it was a wonderful meal). We thanked them for it but did not tell them about our other two meals. I was so glad that we ate this third meal, especially when I heard afterwards that they had been the proud possessors of two geese, and that they had killed one of them just for us.

The lesson I learned again was that I, as a Christian worker, should always be careful never to cause offence or hurt to all those with whom I come into contact even if it causes some "discomfort."

The Mini-Mag is published by Assisting Children's Evangelists Worldwide and written by Sam Doherty with the assistance and advice of Terry Flannigan, Administrator of the ACEW Trust, and Kenneth Martin, Chairman of the ACEW Trust.

All of them have occupied leadership positions for many years in the worldwide ministry of Child Evangelism Fellowship®. The contents of each Mini-Mag are based upon the author's over 70 years of experience working with Child Evangelism Fellowship, successively as national director of Irish CEF, as European CEF regional director and as founder of the CEF Specialised Book Ministry. Contact can be made at www.CEFBookMinistry.com.