

Momentum – April 2009

Ministering to Children Edition

Keeping an Eye on the Children

Karen was only 7 years old and already had such a love for God. She had asked Jesus to come into her heart and now, more than anything, she wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit. It was a Wednesday night and the guest evangelist was praying for individuals. Karen had gone forward. With her hands raised and eyes closed, she began to worship and ask Jesus for this precious gift.

I sat in my seat that night, only days away from leaving for Bible College. I watched Karen with great interest. But why was she opening one eye and looking around? The looks were quick and then she would go back to praying and worshiping Jesus. This went on for almost 15 minutes.

During this time, I soon realized she was looking for the evangelist. She wanted him to come and pray with her. "Why was he walking past her? Did he not see her?" The longer I watched the more indignant I became. Finally I had enough. I approached her mother and confirmed my conclusion. With that information I proceeded to the evangelist where with persistence I commanded his attention. I said, "Sir, there is a young girl over here who has been waiting for you to come and pray with her. Would you please come?" He, along with my pastor, followed me to where Karen was steadfastly seeking the Baptism in the Holy Spirit.

Little did I know that the next few moments would so profoundly change my life! The evangelist reached out his hand and touched Karen on her forehead. Instantly she was slain in the Spirit. She didn't flinch; she didn't move; she didn't open an eye; she was being embraced by the power of the Holy Spirit. At that moment, at that very instant, the Holy Spirit hit me, too. He spoke very clearly to my heart, "Becky, don't ever overlook my children!" My life has never been the same.

In Matthew 19:14 Jesus says, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." As the church, we, too, need to stretch out open arms to children of all ages. They are valuable to Him and they need to be valuable to us.

So how should the church respond? Here are just a few important items that I believe every church needs to do to effectively impact children.

- Create a safe environment for children. Make sure that workers have been properly screened and the classrooms and facility are kid-friendly and safe for children.
- Recruit teachers and leaders who want to invest in the lives of children and believe that kids are part of the body of Christ - teachers who teach the Word and believe it is for every child.
- Select curriculum that best meets the needs of the children and families in your church and community.
- Provide ongoing training, help, and appreciation for your current workers.
- Believe in kids! Love on kids! Invest in kids! And Use kids! Realize that everything in the Book – the Bible – belongs to them, too.

I have heard it said that our children are our future, and although this is true, we need to realize they are also ours now. If we fail to lead them to Jesus today, how can we expect them to follow Jesus tomorrow? As the church, let's join together to bring up children who will love and serve the Lord the rest of their lives.

By Becky Garrett