

A letter to aspiring Children's Evangelist

First of all let me congratulate you for desiring to reach out to the most unreached group of people on earth today. There is a huge need for children's Evangelist. There are way too many churches in America, way too many people dying and going to hell, and way too few people reaching children with the Gospel for there to be any competition among Children's Evangelist. The Bible says in Romans 10:13-15, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

Below are a few statistics that I have collected over the years.

- • Of the 5 billion people on the earth today, 50% are under the age of 14.
- • By the year 2000, 50% of the world's 9 billion people were under 8.
- • 40 million children in the United States have never been to church.
- • 2 out of 3 children in the United States do not know JESUS.
- • In the United States, 21 percent of the population is under age 15
- • 86% of all people who receive Jesus make that decision before age 15.
- • The years prior to age 12 are when a majority of children make their decision as to whether or not they will follow Christ.
- • Only 10% of all the money put into the gospel is directed to the ministry of children.

Billy Graham said that, "The age of 7 is the age a person is most receptive to the Gospel." After a person turns 18 they are less likely to make a decision for Christ. The older people get the less likely it is that they will receive Christ.

After seeing this why do 99 percent of evangelists go after adults?

That's why God has called you to reach children! Probably 95 percent of people traveling in children's ministry today are entertainment for kids & families. We do not need any more Christian entertainers. We need people that are reaching children & families with the good news of the gospel and changing lives for the kingdom!

In the great commission Jesus told us to, "Go into all the world and make disciples." He did not say go into all the world and entertain the masses. Make sure that your ministry is leading people to the Lord and helping them to become his disciple.

I would assume your motives are right in wanting to get into the field of Children's Evangelism or you would not want to pursue such a calling. It is probably one of the most underrated, overlooked callings in the church world in America today. When churches go to set their budgets for the year with guest speakers a children's evangelist or guest speaker for the children is probably the last thing on most churches list. I had one pastor I worked for tell me that I was one of the best children's ministers in the country, so why would we need to have a Children's Evangelist or guest speaker come to our church. My reply was the following; "Pastor, you are one of the best pastors in the country, why do we need to have guest speakers come to minister to the adults?" The same reasons we need adult guest speakers is the same reasons we need guest speakers for the children.

Saying all this, I am going to spend the bulk of this letter on the more practical side of being a Children's Evangelist. I often have people contact me about becoming a children's evangelist. I have at least 2 or 3 people contact me each year wanting advice on how to get started, sometimes more. Maybe this is because I have been a Children's Evangelist for over 20 years. Over the course of the last 20 plus years, I have seen many Children's Evangelists come and go. Many of the Children's Evangelists who were traveling when I started and plowed the way for what I am doing have moved on to becoming either a pastor, or are now struggling to get meetings because one of two reasons: One, they have gone on and off the road and when they returned they find it hard to reestablish their old contacts, and two, because their style has become outdated and for one reason or the other they are not able to become relevant again. I have also seen that very few people that start traveling as a children's evangelist stay on the road for over a few years at a time.

I will endeavor to be candid as possible during this letter by often times sharing some of the more negative sides of being on the road. This is not for me to share my pity party or to try and discourage you from being a children's evangelist. I wish someone would have been this candid with me and shared with me the things I needed to do to be successful on the road. I learned from the school of hard knocks, a little from Bible College, and a few things from Willie George's conferences that I attended long ago. Very little information was available in the late 80s early 90s on being a children's evangelist. I just had a desire to reach children and went for it.

Finances:

The number one reason people do not continue to be a children's evangelist is because of finances. Therefore, I will endeavor to share with you some of the things I have learned over the past 20 plus years

1. **Don't quit your day job:** Too many people jump out on the road cold turkey with no preparation. They quit their children's pastor job or other job and jump out on the road with no financial preparation. I tell people all the time to transition out of a normal more stable job to life on the road. I made this mistake and went through years of extreme poverty. We were so rag tag in the beginning that I had a pastor that felt so sorry for me that he gave me shirts out of his own closets to

- wear because mine were so bad. One winter when all of our utilities got shut off, God had to deliver me from the mess I had gotten myself into by a pastor hiring me to be his children's pastor for \$1000.00 per month.
2. **Prepare, Prepare, Prepare:** If you are thinking of transitioning out of a children's pastor position or secular employment into life on the road save up enough money or raise support for at least one to two years. Get all the equipment you will need to do your ministry while you still have a paycheck. After you go full time most of what comes in will need to be used to keep you and your family alive.
 3. **Get out of debt:** Before you take the leap of faith to go full time it is highly advisable to get yourself out of debt. Get use to living a simpler lifestyle if that is what it takes. This does not mean that you have to stay there. God will promote those that are faithful. If you have debt hanging over you or cannot control your spending, it will become a burden while trying to get started.
 4. **Develop a business plan:** Most people in ministry have no business sense at all. They blindly take the leap of faith into full time traveling ministry with no idea in the natural what they are doing. An instructor at my bible college once said "The Natural and the supernatural coming together make an explosive force for God." You can have all the faith in the world, but if you don't know how to handle money you are doomed for failure. To be honest we have to put money aside during our busy season to make it through our slow season every year. This takes a lot of planning, self control, and living a simpler life sometimes. The notion that you will get rich from being a Children's Evangelist is simply not true. You can be successful and live a decent lifestyle, eventually God will bless and promote you as you make wise decisions and put him first.
1. **Love offering VS Honorarium?** An adult evangelist blesses adults and when they take up an offering people will give. A children's evangelist blesses children and children might have a few nickels and dimes to give. I would encourage you to figure out what you need to live each month. What it takes to pay all your bills and continue to travel. Then let churches know up front what you need. To be honest pastors have no idea what it takes to keep a ministry such as ours on the road. I haul around 7000 Lbs. of equipment in a 20 ft. trailer with a one ton Silverado that gets about 9 miles per gallon. Travel costs have gone through the roof as of late. If all your income goes to pay your travel expenses, then what will you live off of? Do not under charge for coming to minister at a church, however starting out do not over charge for your qualifications or you will not get any bookings. Our ministry survives off of honorariums, sales of merchandise, and very few monthly supporters. I have not figured out a way to get people to become a monthly supporter of our ministry. I refuse to use any manipulative methods to raise funds. Always be flexible with smaller churches that cannot afford your cost but remember you have to live also.
 2. **Merchandise:** Willie George said one time, "If you are going to make it as a children's evangelist you must have good, quality product to sale to supplement your income. He had good curriculum and a video club that was very popular in the late 80s and early 90s. I have taken this approach of offering quality concert

type gear such as; T-shirts, hats, beanies, jewelry, and a few other things that you might find at a concert setting. I have also offered a few resources for children's workers over the years. This takes an initial investment, however it has paid off for our ministry. Be careful not to offer trinkets and things that parents are really hesitant to buy for their kids because they end up in the bottom of the toy box or on the closet floor. Our merchandise is a quality product that children can wear. That reminds them of our ministry, or has a good Christian message on them. Do not be cheesy in this area!

3. **Winter cometh:** Be advised that it is much harder to book events in the winter months from November 1st to March 1st than it is in the spring through fall. It is like a roller coaster for us each year it starts building around March peaks in the summer and starts declining in the fall until November. It usually stops dead with an occasional booking in December, January, and February. If you are not prepared for this you will starve in the winter months and it might actually drive you off the road all together. I know of only one Children's Evangelist that stays booked all year except December. All others that I know of go through this same cycle. Some have developed holiday themed events for November and December however, there is a limited market for this and a limited time slot that it can take place. Usually the more ministry minded evangelist this is harder for because churches are not looking for powerful ministry during these times as much as warm fuzzes for the holidays. You must either put away money during the busy season for the slower season and live a disciplined lifestyle, or go get a job each winter which cuts back on your preparation, and advertising time for the following season.

Advertise, Advertise, And Advertise!

Take advantage of every opportunity you can afford to let people know that you are available. Use every social network as possible to let people know what you are doing without becoming annoying. Your web site is your front page of your ministry. Make sure it is where you put a lot of your advertising budget into. Everything else should be the bait that draws people to your website which is the hook. A lot of people feel that advertising is self promotion, however if people do not know you are available they will not contact you to come to their church. Make sure to put money aside each year to advertise for the upcoming year. The best time for me to promote for the following year is around the 1st of October before the holiday's and right after the 1st of the year is also a good time to promote.

Break outside your Realm!

Don't stay in your comfort zone of your denomination or group. Most denominations do not have enough churches in a certain area to keep you busy enough to support yourself. Market yourself to as many denominations and groups as possible without compromising your core beliefs. I have been blessed to be accepted in several denominations and groups across Christendom. I respect each groups for their specific doctrinal believes and stay on the basics without watering down my message. This is why I know some denominations

and groups will not contact me. Many traveling ministries make the mistake of watering down their ministry to be accepted across the board which results in nothing more than Christian entertainment. Keep true to the word, anointing, and real ministry while being respectful to wherever God opens the doors for you to go. I have had to draw lines of what I will and will not compromise on. I would encourage you to do this before you make the leap or you will be tempted to compromise to get an event.

Local verses national:

There are many regional Children's Evangelist, but very few national. Part of the secret to my success is I am willing to drive long distances between events in a short period of time. I have found that most regions do not have enough opportunities to keep me busy enough to support myself and our ministry.

Do something no one else is doing:

In other words find your niche and perfect it. Then learn how to market it. Willie George said that to be successful now as a Children's Evangelist that you must have a Gimmick. This is a sad but true statement. The fact that you have a heart for God, love kids, and want to reach as many of them as possible is not enough to book you in most churches. When pastors and children's pastors are looking for a Children's Evangelist they look for someone that can do something that they cannot do. Most Children's Evangelist that come in with a guitar, a puppet, and a few object lessons do not stay booked enough to support them selves. My gimmick would be all the Multi media, Lighting, and staging I haul around with me. Kidz Blitz would be their game show atmosphere. Some people sing or perform well and that is their niche. It's their Gimmick. Most churches are not looking for another clown or magician. The field is swamped and mostly with very amateur ones at that. The ones that are successful are the ones that have risen above the norm. Before Terry Fator and Jeff Dunham came along the art of being a ventriloquists was looked down upon by most people because it was the same old jokes and routines over and over. I remember the statement by the "America's got talent" judge when Terry Fator walked out on stage with a dummy. "Oh no not another ventriloquists act".

Family:

The second highest reason people do not stay on the road very long is the toll it takes on their family. Make sure your entire family is on board with the decision to be an evangelist and are willing to count the cost to do it. Make sure everyone is being realistic with what it involves. It can either make you closer or pull you apart! It can take a huge toll on your children if you don't do it right. I have seen some Children's Evangelist that the children loved it and are now Children's Evangelist as adults, and I have seen others that want nothing to do with God or ministry after being dragged around the country while their parents minister.

Don't be afraid to ask the tough questions:

If something is not working do not be afraid to ask why it is not working. Evaluation is good, even if it hurts. The only person the likes change is a wet baby! Don't continually beat a bush that is not producing the results you want. Someone said, "If you always do what you have always done, you will always get what you have always had." To continually do the same thing and expect a different result is delusional. Don't be afraid to evaluate yourself and ask others their honest opinion. Do not be afraid of the answers you might get. I have always asked 2 questions when I receive criticism. I ask myself, is it true and can I do anything about it? Some things are true and some things are not. If you find it to be true, bite the bullet and make a change. However, some things cannot be changed. If it is a deep conviction or something that is a trait that it is impossible to change, well it cannot be changed. However, do not be unwilling to change something because of sentimental value or because it's the way you have always done it. Do not be afraid to change yourself for the better even if it hurts!

Endurance;

A friend of mine once told me "there is something to be said for endurance in ministry". By this he was saying that people that constantly move from one church to another as Children's Pastor or are constantly on and off the road will never achieve their full potential. If every time things get tough you move on to something else you will never get anywhere. You must know what you are called to do and find a way with God's help to make it happen. Things will get tough! In the Oct. of 2010 thru June of 2011 we only had one booking. Things got extremely tight financially. We joked about being on a forced fast that winter. Both my wife and I lost weight that year. Not because we were dieting but because we were not able to buy as much food and we would have liked. We did not starve but we were forced to live low that year. Many people would have taken this as a sign they were supposed to pull off the road. Knowing what we are called to do we stuck it out and in the summer of 2012 our summer was so full that we were gone for 3 months without returning home. In the over 20 years as a Children's Evangelist I have never been gone that long without returning home. Our 2013 schedule is exploding also. As of Feb. 1st 2013 our summer is almost full and our spring and fall is looking good also. It looks like another year of being gone for 3 or more months. If I would have given up in the hard times we would have never gone to this new level. Over the years I have had many opportunities to quite because of hard times and personal failures however, since we have kept our hand to the plow we are experiencing great success and a full schedule.

Saying all this I will leave you with one of my favorite quotes. I am not sure who originally said it but it goes like this...

DREAM A DREAM SO BIG THAT UNLESS GOD DOES IT, IT WILL NOT HAPPEN!

Jerry Moyer

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