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WHITE WING *Messenger*

Connecting Christian Believers

Spiritual Awakenings

While It Was Yet Dark

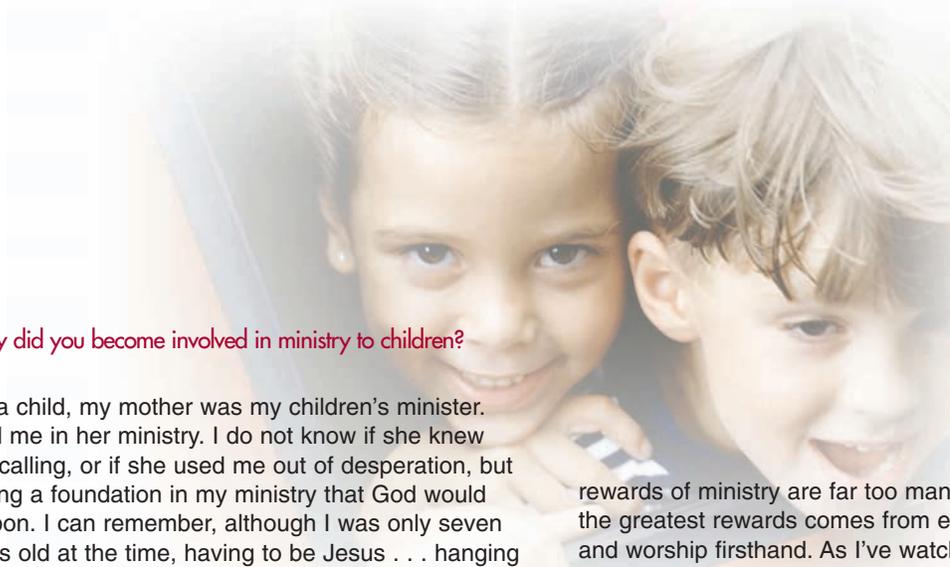
The Pen of Protest

Lessons From Lougher

Where Is God Leading Us?

Children's Ministries

Interview With Shaun McKinley, Children's Ministries Department, Cleveland, Tennessee



Shaun McKinley

Q: Why did you become involved in ministry to children?

A: As a child, my mother was my children's minister. She involved me in her ministry. I do not know if she knew this was my calling, or if she used me out of desperation, but she was laying a foundation in my ministry that God would later build upon. I can remember, although I was only seven or eight years old at the time, having to be Jesus . . . hanging on a cross with ketchup running down my forehead and palms. I was her puppeteer, her actor, and her assistant; and there was always something to be cut out—which meant I got to use the BIG scissors!

But it wasn't until the age of 13, that I felt the Lord call me to this ministry during an altar time at youth camp. I was a little taken back and had to ask Him if He was sure. I mean, I was just a kid—how could He use me to reach other kids? While His was not an audible voice that day, His word to my heart was clear and distinctive. I am so thankful that when I returned to my local church, I had a children's minister who brought me under her leadership and began to invest in me. Since that time, God has been faithful to open doors for ministry to children, as He continues to guide me and reveal His heart for children to me.

Q: What have been the challenges of being a man in this ministry?

A: My greatest challenge in ministry to children has been the perception that it is "women's work." At the church I started my ministry in, the children's ministry had been predominately staffed by women. Some (very few) were concerned about my ability to connect with children, and their comfort in having a male teacher. Thankfully, we are beginning to see a shift in this perception as the church realizes the importance of strong, Christian, male influences in the lives of children.

Q: What have been the rewards of being involved in ministry to children?

A: Wow, the rewards of ministry to children are far too many to tell here. Is it the child that you helped lead to the Lord? Is it the child who grew up in the non-Christian home, but after starting to attend church became the link to his entire family coming to Christ? How about the one who is now grown and is working in children's ministry himself? The

rewards of ministry are far too many to ever tell, but one of the greatest rewards comes from experiencing childlike faith and worship firsthand. As I've watched the children worship God and pray to Him, my faith and walk with God have deepened and grown.

Q: What was your most memorable moment as a children's minister?

A: My most memorable moment occurred just a short year ago, while conducting a five-night children's crusade in Wyoming. Each night, we drove for hours to get to the church, through every imaginable element the weather could throw at us. But God was faithful to minister each evening. The children welcomed the Holy Spirit and took me to depths of worship I have rarely experienced. Sure, we had fun with all the hand motions and activity, but the Holy Spirit always moved as the boys and girls lifted their hands and worshiped with all their heart. It was during this week that the Lord confirmed His call on my life and assured me He wasn't through with me yet.

Q: What is your heart's desire for the children to whom you minister?

A: First, my desire for the children I serve is to see them come to know Christ—to accept Him as Lord and Savior. Second, I want to see them worship God—wholeheartedly. Third, I want to see them develop their talents and gifts to serve the Lord, as well as discovering the ministry that God has prepared for them. God has a heart for children and desires to see them actively involved in the life and growth of every local church.

Q: What is your dream concerning your ministry? What do you hope God to accomplish through you?

A: My dream is to see thousands (who knows . . . maybe even millions) of children come to Christ, and to play some part in that.

—Kathy Creasy, Director, Children's Ministries