

CHILDREN'S LEADER

A U T U M N

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A NEWSLETTER FOR THOSE WHO LEAD CHILDREN IN THE CONGREGATION.

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Are We Missing the Ocean?

"I didn't just miss the boat," says researcher George Barna, referring to his long-held views of ministry to children. "I missed the ocean!"

In his new book, *Transforming Children Into Spiritual Champions* (Regal Books, 2003), Barna admits, "The wisdom and necessity of seeing children as the primary focus of ministry never occurred to me." Wishing to earn God's approval for his ministry, Barna, like so many other pastors, focused his ministry almost entirely "upon the moral development and spiritual transformation of adults." Children were just along for the ride.

And why would a pastor doubt for a moment the wisdom of this focus? After all, adults call the shots in the world. Don't adults lead the family? It's the adults who understand and grasp theology and doctrine, isn't it? And didn't God gift adults to advance the kingdom? "No, no, no and no!" Barna exclaims in answer.

Over the past two years, George Barna has reexamined his assumptions—rethinking "the foundations of church-based activity and how to revolutionize faith in America." And out of much prayer and research he has "redrawn ministry priorities and perceptions." Ministry will continue a difficult journey, he believes, but "putting children in a more appropriate place in the landscape makes the journey more comprehensible and hopeful."

"The wisdom and necessity of seeing children as *the primary focus of ministry* never occurred to me."

Barna's hope for the future is that church leadership will recognize that, in order to have the greatest possible impact in ministry, churches' resources must be redirected into ministry to "young people." The book focuses on "understanding and affecting the lives of children *in the heart of the youth cohort*" [emphasis added]—children ages 5-12—because during these formative years, individuals solidify their lifestyle habits, values, beliefs, and attitudes.

In his review of *Spiritual Champions*, Pastor Bill Hybels says, "With surgical preci-

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Volunteer Screening Update

The North American Division, at its November 2003 Year-End Meetings, voted a recommendation that conferences establish policies on volunteer screening, in compliance with applicable state requirements.

The guidelines voted focus on mission and ministry, and identify three levels of volunteer screening: basic level (all volunteers), intermediate level (volunteers with high level of interaction and off-site trips), and comprehensive level (volunteers with direct one-on-one interaction that may involve keeping children overnight). Each successive level requires more careful scrutiny and background checks.

Screening is just one part of Volunteer Management, a cycle of ministry management that begins with recruiting volunteers. It also includes screening, equipping and supporting, training for leadership, and mentoring volunteers into ministry management.

A copy of the action and approved screening forms is available online at http://childmin.com/Resources/Volunteer_Screening.htm. Additional information on volunteer management is also provided,

including ministry application forms, ministry descriptions, interview questions, etc.

Web-Based Service Helps Recruit & Manage Volunteers

When church ministry leaders are asked their number one challenge, the response is overwhelmingly unanimous: "Finding and keeping volunteers."

Starting in January, a new website, "Church Volunteer Central," will offer ministry leaders a whole new set of tools. This membership-based association offers resources at reduced rates, access to helpful electronic files any time day or night, training online, and a live consultant available five days a week, 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. (MT)

A church may subscribe for an annual fee of \$99.95; any ministry leader from that church may access and benefit from the site. The site assists with two-state background checks of volunteers for a savings of \$7 per record, and provides volunteer application forms and interview questions.

To preview the site, visit <http://churchvolunteercentral.org>.

Children's Ministries Service Awards

North American Division Children's Ministries would like to recognize the following persons with Children's Ministries Service Awards, based on their community outreach.

These awards are based on information gleaned from the VBS reporting process, combined with additional communication via phone or letter. We acknowledge that others may be equally deserving; next year, please be sure to let us know what's going on in your church and community.

Each person named below will receive a certificate of appreciation, and a coupon for a 50 percent discount on their Lava Lava Starter Kit.

Beula Brown (Burns Adventist Church, Lake Region Conference)—for attracting 110 non-Adventist children to VBS, and for plans to build a lasting relationship with the community.

Teresa Rodgers (London Adventist

Church, Lake Region Conference)—for a VBS that attracted 107 children from inner-city Detroit, and for following up with a fall tutoring program involving 31 kids—as well as a Christmas program attended by 150 family and friends.

Chris Oberg (La Sierra University Church, Southeastern California Conference)—for attracting 110 non-Adventist children to VBS and for involving 30 teens to help staff the event.

Deborah Coates (Gethsemane Adventist Church, South Atlantic Conference)—for better than 50 percent non-Adventist attendance and for serving dinner to children and staff each night instead of snacks.

Louella Schultz (Choteau Adventist Church, Montana Conference)—for better than 50 percent non-Adventist attendance and for mastering the "crew" method for facilitating groups.

(Missing the Ocean, continued from page 1)

sion, George Barna has cut through the veil of denial that most church leaders have lived in for far too long—the belief that we are doing enough in our churches to transform the average kid in our congregations into a spiritual champion. Painfully few churches have paid the price to break out of decades of status-quo ministry to children. Those that do break out soon discover a kind of anointing from God that suggests He might just favor churches that focus on and build up little ones."

Transforming Children Into Spiritual Champions has the potential to change the life of your church. See page 3 for information on how to obtain your discounted copy today. Order an extra copy for your pastor.

News & Notes

Coming Events

Details for these events available online at <http://childmin.com/Events>.

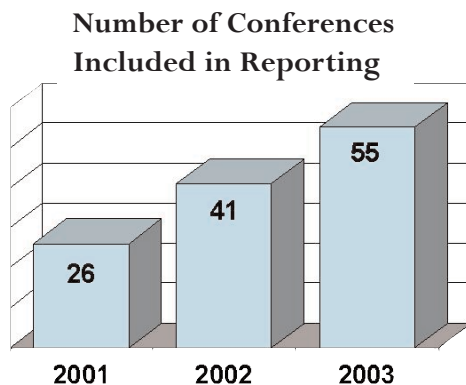
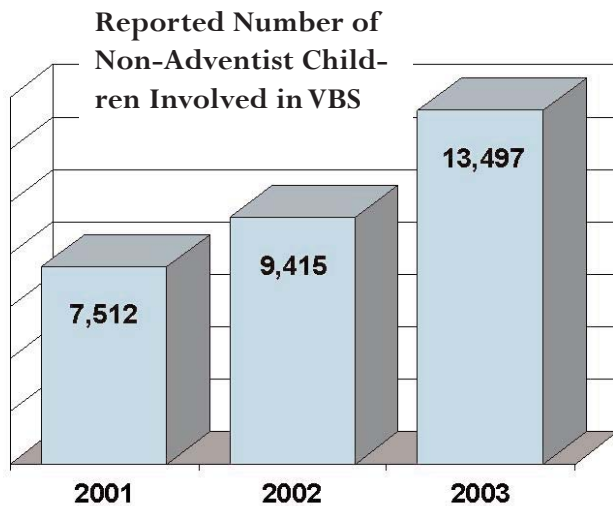
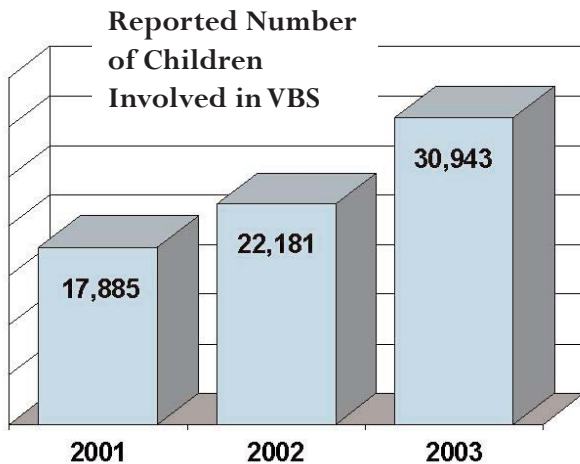
- ◆ **January 17, 2004**—Irving, TX; Vacation Bible School training (Southwestern Union)
- ◆ **February 27-29, 2004**—Cohutta Springs, GA; Children's Ministries convention, including VBS & Sabbath School workshops (Georgia-Cumberland Conference)
- ◆ **February 28-29, 2004**—Phoenix, AZ; Children's Ministries training convention (Arizona Conference)
- ◆ **September 23-26, 2004**—Reston, VA. This North American Division-sponsored convention will include tracks not just for Children's Ministries, but also for a number of other church ministries.
- ◆ **November 18-21, 2004**—Training convention in South Bend, IN (Lake Union)

Year-End Reporting

Like the VBS reports, local church year-end Children's Ministries reporting is now available online at <http://childmin.com/Resources/Year-end.htm>. We've tried to minimize the paperwork, and we're only asking seven questions (three are yes/no!). Year-end reports are due by January 31, 2004.

VBS Reporting: A Three-Year Comparison

The figures cited below reflect information that has been reported to the North American Division. The numbers reported are our chief tool in campaigning for increased resources and funding for you.



Plan Now for Summer at Lava Lava Island

It's colorful and easy to use, it's hot off the presses, it's designed with you in mind. It's the Lava Lava Island VBS 2004 catalog!

The catalog gives a quick overview of the day-by-day program and great decorating ideas—plus more helpful stuff than you can shake a palm frond at.

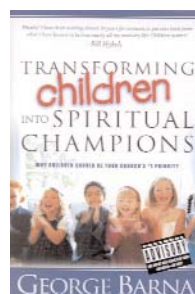
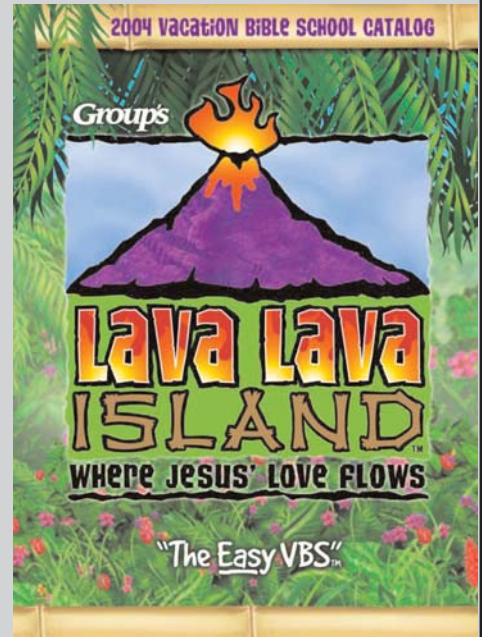
The overview: A double-page spread at the front of the catalog shows the title of each daily lesson and its Scripture reference, plus the "treasure verse." It also pictures two craft choices, the snack, Bible buddies, and a video highlight. By the way, this year's video is very well done, and the kids get into the story from the very first day.

The decorations: The catalog has a double-page display of up-front decorations that are a decorator's dream. It provides a link for purchasing glitter palms and colorful parrots, and gives directions for making a jungle hut, volcano, torch, tubular tree, jungle greenery, and tissue paper flowers—all from common, inexpensive materials.

Does it sound too overwhelming? You don't have to have everything. But you will be amazed at what you can have. Team up with another church and share the expenses; plan your VBS for different dates and share the decorations.

To raise money for this summer's materials, post a "VBS Shopping List" on your church's bulletin board. Cut pictures from the catalog and glue them to posterboard. List the price beside each item and indicate how many you need. Provide a place where people sign up to purchase the item. They can give their checks to you or put them in an offering envelope marked to your attention.

To browse the catalog online go to <http://childmin.com/VBS>. For a hard copy, contact Julie Lyles at Review & Herald Publishing (jlyles@rhpa.org or 800-688-0555).



Transforming Children Into Spiritual Champions

Call 800-328-0525 and ask for catalog #10450 to obtain our special New Year's discount price of US\$11.95

Good only until January 31, 2004.

Regular price US\$17.95

(\$14.95 for 2 or more copies).

Portland Event Draws Record Number

More than 400 participants attended the 2003 NAD Leadership Convention, *Growing A Family of Grace*, held October 16-19 in Portland, OR. The weekend featured more than 100 breakout seminars to choose from in ten different ministry areas.

Karl Haffner gave the Thursday night keynote address that opened the convention.



Edwina Neely demonstrates a kindergarten Sabbath School program.

Ramon Canals and V. Bailey Gillespie spoke during the Friday and Sabbath general sessions, and NAD Vice

President Debra Brill hosted an open forum with NAD ministries directors. Pastor Fredrick Russell of the Baltimore Miracle Temple Adventist Church presented the closing challenge.

Comments from attendees provided an indication of how much they valued the weekend experience:



Aileen Sox puts on her "ears" to remind the primary Sabbath School class to listen for God's voice, like Samuel.

"Each speaker brought God-given inspiration and aspiration into my life."

"Frederick Russell was by far the most thought-provoking for me. I want to be a servant leader!"

"I'm inspired about Vacation Bible School! We have been talking about this for years in our church. This seminar gave me some great information, resources, and enthusiasm to get started."



General Conference Children's Ministries Director Linda Koh presents a seminar in the Children's Ministries track.



Dan & Richa Stevens, of the Kettering, OH Adventist Church, presented seminars on puppet ministries, children's church, and mentoring.



Above: Ramon Canals, of the Oregon Conference Ministerial Department, speaks about showing grace in our families.



Left: Donna Clifford displays one of the gift bags provided by the Oregon Conference.

A similar partnered convention with multiple ministry tracks is planned for the weekend of September 23-26, 2004. The event will be held at the Reston Sheraton hotel near

Dulles airport, in Northern Virginia. More information available soon online at <http://adventistleadershipconvention.com>. Watch for a flyer mailed to your church.

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