

“Jesus Loves Little Children”

THE GOSPEL OF MARK 9:17-29, Mark 10:13-16, Mark 10:42

9:36-37 He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me." -- 9:42. "And if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a large millstone tied around his neck.

Tommy the Terrible – cause and affect

Let's look at Tommy Terrible. He was **ADD, ADHD, dysfunctional, dyslexic, and epileptic, speechless, violent, even suicidal. He was tough, terrible, and tormented.**

How did Tommy get so tormented? He was demonized. How did that happen? Usually by someone else's hand, not a child's own sin. Tommy's problem was also a family problem. Like a physician we can deduce surmise how this might have come about by looking first at the symptoms and seeking to address the causes.

I suppose after 54 years of ministry, I have spoken to hundreds of tormented adults whose emotional, physical, moral, and spiritual problems did not just happen. They were precipitated and sometimes caused by other people. They were the resultant effect, or the sum total of problems encountered in childhood and early teen years. Usually they had to do with parents.

1. The Bruised Child – Mark 9:17-29

Exodus 20:5b, Deuteronomy 6:1-9 *The sins of the parents are visited kids.*

Children are like lumps of clay, easily molded but also easily marred by rough words, attitudes, handling and mishandling.

Kids in crisis today. Family upbringing, cultural indoctrination, drugs, alcohol, sexual orientation, child pornography, gender confusion, sexual abuse, etc.

Beware of bruising these little ones – Mark 9:42

Excuses: Not my child. I did not know. Not my problem. Not warning the lost.

Ezekiel 3:17-19 and Ezekiel 33:33:7-9

2. The Blessed Child – Mark 9:36-37, 42, 10:13-16

Stories of reaching lost children. The Sunday School movement, VBS movement, Paul Rader, Awana Clubs, Noah's Ark ministry.
(Illustrations)

Jukes Family

Richard Dugdale in 1915 studied 709 Jukes family members; 180 had been in the “poorhouse” or received public assistance. He found 140 criminals or offenders.

There were 60 “thieves,” 7 murder victims, 50 prostitutes and 40 women who had contracted sexually transmitted diseases.

Of 1026 descendants of Max Juke, 300 were convicts, 27 were murderers, 190 were prostitutes and 509 were either alcoholics or drug addicts.

Edwards Family

By contrast, the 929 descendants of Jonathan Edwards included 13 college presidents, 86 college professors, 430 ministers, 314 war veterans, 75 authors, 100 lawyers, 30 judges, 66 physicians, and 80 holders of public office,

...including three U.S. Senators, seven congressmen, mayors of three large cities, governors of three states, a Vice-President of the United States, and a controller of the United States Treasury.

Ezekiel 3:17-19

17 “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: 18 “When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand.

19 “Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

Ezekiel 33:7-9

7 “So you, son of man: I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore you shall hear a word from My mouth and warn them for Me. 8 “When I say to the wicked, ‘O wicked man, you shall surely die!’ and you do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. 9 “Nevertheless if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.

Sunday School Beginnings

Sunday school originated in late 18th-century England, primarily pioneered by publisher [Robert Raikes](#) in 1780 to educate underprivileged children working in factories. Visiting a friend outside his hometown of Gloucester, England, Raikes observed local children cursing, gambling, and fighting,

Horrified, he asked a local woman standing outside her door about it. She replied, “This is nothing [compared] to what goes on on Sundays. You’d be shocked indeed if you were here then.”

The woman told Raikes people couldn’t even read the Bible in peace at church due to the chaos caused by the children. They, along with their parents, worked at a factory every day of the week except Sunday. So on that day “they behaved in a most unrestrained way.”

“Many children of the poor worked horrible hours in factories during the week—often in excess of 12 hours a day,” says Yeats. “Those on the lower end of the economic spectrum often did not have access to educational opportunities due to their overburdened work schedules, which kept them trapped in a cycle of poverty.”

Walters writes that when Raikes opened his Sunday school in July 1780, he spent the next week inviting children from poor families to participate. Many objected that their children did not have proper clothes for school. Raikes responded that if the children’s clothing was fit for the streets, it was fit for them to come to his school.

Those first school days began at 10 a.m. with teaching. The students were dismissed for lunch and came back around 1 p.m. After a reading lesson, they would go to a church service. That was followed by another round of classroom instruction until around 5:30 p.m. when they were sent home.

Other evangelical reformers—including several better known now for abolition efforts—began to join the Sunday school movement. **Hannah More started Sunday schools around her home with the financial support of William Wilberforce** and the encouragement of **John Newton**, the former slave trader turned minister and author of the hymn “Amazing Grace.”

“When our Sunday schools become only training programs for devoted Christians to get more knowledge,” he says, “they miss out on the very thing that made the initial foray into the project so worth it.”

Vacation Bible School Beginnings

The origins of **Vacation Bible School** can be traced back to [Hopedale, Illinois](#) in 1894. [Sunday school](#) teacher **D. T. Miles**, who also was a [public school teacher](#), felt that she was limited by time constraints in teaching the [Bible](#) to children, so she started a daily Bible school to teach children during the summer.

The first Bible school enrolled 40 students and lasted four weeks. A local school was used for classes, while an adjoining park was used for recess.^[1]

Vacation Bible School (VBS) began in the late 19th century, with the first recognized, sustained effort launched in **1898** by **Mrs. Virginia (Eliza) Hawes in New York City**. Originally termed "Everyday Bible School," it was created to provide Bible study, singing, and crafts to children during summer vacation, **often in rented spaces like beer halls**.

Awana Beginnings

The trailhead of Awana is the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle, a church founded by evangelist Paul Rader.

It was there that co-founders Art Rorheim and Lance “Doc” Latham met. Art joined Doc’s traveling gospel music group, and they continued collaborating at the North Side Gospel Center in Chicago,

Doc as senior pastor and Art as full-time youth director. At Northside, the weekly program that became Awana took shape, complete with handbooks, uniforms, the beloved Game Square — but most of all, Gospel outreach to kids in the community.

Soon, Awana was engaging 500 children each week. When Art Rorheim and Doc Latham stepped out in faith to extend the weekly club concept beyond their church, a legacy began.

The Awana program was founded in 1950 by Art Rorheim and Lance “Doc” Latham. Developed at the North Side Gospel Center in Chicago, Illinois, the program grew from a weekly children's club into a global parachurch organization focused on Bible memory, scripture study, and evangelism, with its name derived from 2 Timothy 2:15.

- **Art Rorheim:** Served as the youth director at North Side Gospel Center and created the foundational curriculum, games, and training materials. He was named co-founder and president emeritus after passing away in 2018.
- **Lance “Doc” Latham:** Served as the senior pastor at the North Side Gospel Center, where he and Rorheim collaborated on the club concept.

The pair officially established the organization to extend their, at the time, highly successful church program to other churches in 1950



Paul Rader (born 1879, died 1938), was one of the prominent evangelists of the early 20th century. He pastored a Christian & Missionary Alliance (C&MA) church in Pittsburgh and Moody Church in Chicago before starting the Chicago Gospel Tabernacle in 1922. Leave the exhibit for a [brief biographical sketch on Rader](#).

The Chicago Gospel Tabernacle (founded 1922, disbanded 1979) grew out of one of Rader's evangelistic campaigns in 1922, drawing such enthusiastic response and loyal supporters that the temporary wooden structure the meetings were held in became a permanent church. Leave the exhibit for a [brief historical background sketch on the Tabernacle](#).

Paul Rader's Global Influence

Rader's willingness to use any tool to reach people for the sake of the Gospel left an indelible impression on those he mentored. Rader impacted many thousands of people during his time as an evangelist, pastor of Moody Church, president of The Christian and Missionary Alliance, founder of The Chicago Gospel Tabernacle, and The World-wide Christian Couriers missionary society.

Rader's pioneering spirit continued in Clarence Jones who sought to use the latest tools in missions including radio, movies, aviation, and eventually television, to reach the regions beyond.

Rader inspired and mentored many world changers including:

- *Clarence Jones – HCJB/Reach Beyond*
- *Peter Deyneka – Slavic Gospel Association*
- *Howard Ferrin – Providence Bible Institute*
- *Paul Fleming – New Tribes Missions*
- *Charles Fuller – Fuller Theological Seminary*
- *Torrey Johnson – Youth for Christ*
- *Lance Latham – AWANA*