

Ain't Goin' Nowhere

Richard Konderla

Glory Gang, are you wit' me?"

Oh, yeh! We got the Church that ain't goin' nowhere!

At first, we didn't think their rap song about the ministry sounded very positive...until the kids explained to us, "Ya'll ain't leavin'!"

When First Assembly of God launched the Glory Gang ministry to children in impoverished neighborhoods of Nacogdoches, Texas eight years ago, we understood we were making a long term commitment. Clay Wallace, founder and director of Dallas Metro Ministries, now the Dallas Dream Center, told me, "You must not quit! Because it can take five years to really impact a community." His wisdom and encouragement have been monumental in any success, and we have found it to be true.

Principals of several schools encourage their students to attend our program because they have seen such a change in their attitudes and behaviors. And, the power of what we do is not in having the best program, as important as that is, but in continuing to go, continuing to give, and continuing to love.

The Glory Gang ministry was born in the heart of Pastor Dennis Land during a missions trip. Traveling in several countries, he asked God to speak to his heart as he pondered what he would do to reach the people in those nations. The answer became obvious. Reach the hurting, the unwanted, and, especially, the children. Then God began to impress upon him, "Everything you see here, you have in your own city!"

This was a revelation because he never went to the "bad areas" of town. They weren't on his beaten track. Now, on purpose, he began to visit where he once had avoided and God began to burden him for the multitudes of unreached children.

His burden began to pour out from the pulpit and ignite many of us with a clear call to step forward and do something. I was a traveling children's evangelist and had just made First Assembly our home church. God began to speak to my heart about directing this outreach, and soon the call I was expecting from Pastor Land came asking if I could take the job.

That is where Glory Gang, a ministry now serving more than 300 children each week, started. The only word I got from God was, "Don't Quit!"

I didn't know we were going to be what we are today, but I knew God said, "Stay."

We visit every child, in every home, every week, and then we run the buses and do a service on Sunday evenings. Much of our church is involved in the outreach, from washing dishes, to driving a bus, to giving finances. It has given us a name in the city as a church that LOVES KIDS.

The change we have witnessed in the children over eight years of the Word of God lovingly shared and lived out before them has been amazing. To watch 300 children who wanted nothing to do with God or church now lifting their hands in worship is exciting!

Glory Gang, are you wit' me?"

Oh, yeh!

Richard Konderla
Glory Gang Director,
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