

From Where I Sit . . .

"NEW PROGRAM FOR TRAINING YOUTH AT BROAD STREET"

Churches have struggled for years to find a cure for the "dropout" rate of the youth within local congregations. Questions often asked are: "How can we retain our young people?" "What can be done to interest them in spiritual involvement?" How can we prepare them for the challenges they will face as the leadership of congregations of the next generation?"

Many good programs emerged as the youth of the Lord's family became the target of massive efforts among leadership. One such program which had an inconspicuous beginning in Warner Robins, GA., some 34 years ago has grown to nationwide magnitude. It is the Lads to Leaders and corresponding Leaderettes leadership training program. From a very humble beginning with Dr. Jack Zorn and a small room of boys, the program has now found its way into use by roughly 350 congregations throughout our brotherhood, with over 13,000 students and adult sponsors attending the annual National Convention held each year on Easter weekend.

The design of any good leadership program must be broader than training for specific skills such as public speaking. So it is with Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes. Students are exposed to Biblical principles that motivate them to build character, integrity, dependability, cooperativeness, and to develop the attitudes of volunteer spirit and second-mile service. If a student never delivers a public speech, but finds other ways of manifesting these qualities. He or she will still be known as strong and influential leaders! Lads to Leaders/Leaderettes offers dozens of avenues in which to exercise positive leadership.

Much like the various scouting programs, our students will be given a carefully designed agenda for growth from one achievement area to another in an effort to widen their Biblical knowledge and perspectives of church leadership. A student manual containing Bible lessons, service projects, worthy goals, and achievement milestones will form the basis for this growth. Over the nine-year planned curriculum they will master a working knowledge of significant Bible teachings, plus they will be given the opportunity to grow through a series of achievement levels: Character Improvement, Christian Graces, Citizenship, Dependability, Friendship, Family Relationships, Industriousness, Peace Leadership, Pioneer Spirit, Second Mile Service, Social Graces, and Volunteer Spirit.

Our elders have unanimously given the nod to begin with this program immediately. I've had the pleasure of working in it for these past 19 years and have come to see it as one of the most productive programs available to youth in the church. It is a privilege and a serious responsibility to be asked to teach or help sponsor youth in their formative years. It would be a wasted opportunity not to take this program of work seriously. The lives one may help mold may well be able to lead thousands to the Lord in a lifetime.

God bless all the laborers who are using solid Biblical methods to shape young lives. God bless us as we step out on this great adventure!

..... Terry Broome

Printed in the *Broad Street Banner*, Volume XVIII, Number 35, August 27, 2003.