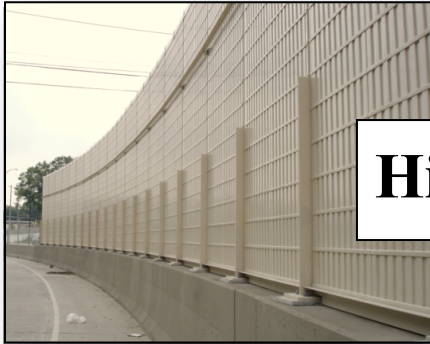


Barriers To Children's Ministry Team Development

Identifying the walls that we face

By Steve Alley

The "Walls" That Can Block Team Development



Hidden Vision

People are attracted to and inspired by a clear, visible ministry vision. If your ministry vision doesn't exist, or is "hidden," those who may be ready to join the ministry may not be inspired to do so. **Break the wall** by evaluating your children's ministry vision, and how you are displaying it.



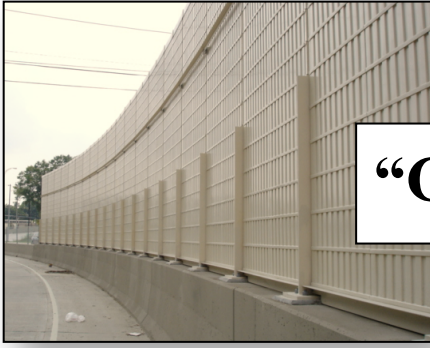
Hidden Fruit

People are attracted to and inspired by a successful ministry or effort. Consider what "Cinnabon" does in the mall by blowing the sweet smell of cinnamon buns into the shopping areas. Shoppers want a cinnamon bun because of the smell. If you aren't displaying the success (fruit) of your ministry, you won't attract people to "take a bite" for themselves. **Break the wall** by doing all you can to display the "fruit" of what God is doing in your ministry through testimonies, posters, PowerPoints, electronic messages, etc.



"Vacant" Terminology

People base their opinions of something based on the terminology that is used in relation to it. If the terminology related to the children's ministry includes words like: "childcare," "babysitting," or "we need help," then you are "painting" a bleak, vacant picture of the ministry. **Break the wall** by changing the terminology to "children's ministry," "ministry opportunities," or "team openings."



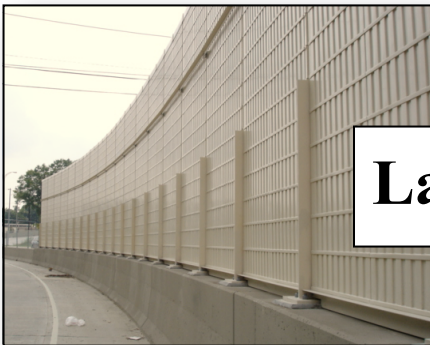
“Grumblers” Among You

Every person has influence on others. Every member of your current ministry team has family and friends who are exposed to that person’s views of the children’s ministry (with or without Facebook). A negative team member is like a virus among the church. **Break the wall** by doing all you can to create and nourish a positive team “culture.” If a team member consistently holds a negative perspective of the ministry or church, deal directly with that attitude (challenge, support the positive, warn, etc.), and if needed, remove the person.



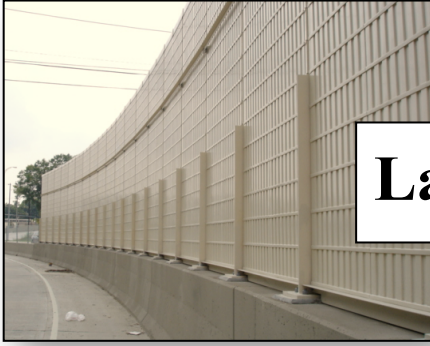
“Old Wineskins”

Even “positive” team members can become “old wineskins,” if they continue to hold onto the “old” ways of doing things. If your ministry vision requires changes and forward motion that some team members resist, you may be faced with the challenge of “pouring new wine into old wineskins.” **Break the wall** by doing all you can to invite and inspire the “old wineskins” to move forward with your vision. If they resist after all your attempts to include them, challenge them to make a decision to move forward with the team, or resign.



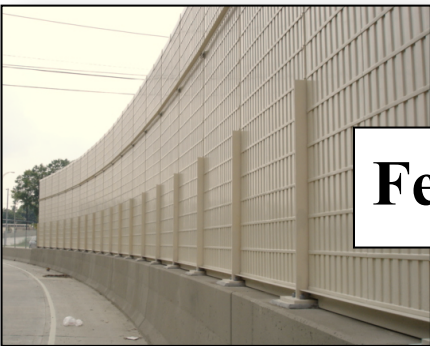
Lack of Pastoral Support

If your senior pastor is either hostile toward the children’s ministry, or simply doesn’t want to be “bothered,” your efforts to build the team are severely hampered. The senior pastor’s support from the pulpit is extremely vital to your ministry’s growth. **Break the wall** by doing all you can to include your senior pastor in your ministry. Make sure he has a “plate full of fruit” weekly on his desk. Invite him to events, and let him know he is valuable!



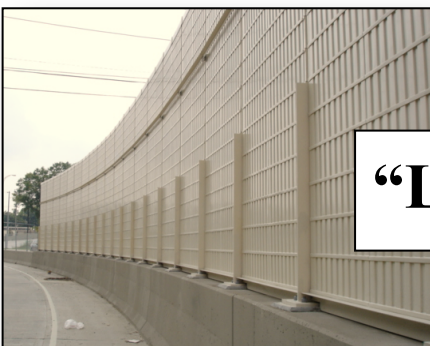
Lack of Finances

A lack of finances can easily discourage you. Efforts to encourage your current team members, or to attract new ones are definitely effected by a lack of money. **Break the wall** by thinking beyond and outside of your budget. Brainstorm ways to support your team members without money! Ask for donations from local businesses. Ask for donations from church members. Look for God's provision outside of the budget.



Fear of "Teaching"

When the "average" person hears that there are "openings" in the children's ministry, they automatically picture themselves standing in front of a class of unruly children with a lesson plan. To some people, this would be an acceptable challenge, but to most people it prevents them from signing up. **Break the wall** by recruiting to specific, non-teaching positions within the team. Recruit for "hallway assistants," or "check-in specialists." Recruit to small, specific positions, and you will see an increase in volunteers.



"Lack of Management"

As the CM grows in the number of children served and the number of adults on the CM team, it becomes more and more challenging for one person to lead the ministry. Frustration and discouragement may begin to take hold of the leader, and that frustration can spread to the CM team. **Break the wall** by asking God to help you "bubble up" leaders from within the current CM team. These leaders will serve as coordinators over areas or age groups. The new paid (part-time) coordinators will supervise the CM team and CM needs in their specific areas, while still reporting to and supporting the CM Director or Pastor.