



# HALLOWEEN EVANGELISM

*K.R. Mele serves as children's pastor at State College Assembly of God (Paul Grabill, senior pastor) in State College, Pa. The church's growing children's ministry includes a unique witnessing project that shares the gospel with trick-or-treaters on Halloween. Mele recently talked with Scott Harrup, associate editor, about this outreach.*

**PE: What led you to start a ministry on Halloween?**

**MELE:** Many churches give kids alternative activities to counteract the negative influence of Halloween. A lot of Christian parents either take their kids to church or stay at home with the lights out or just stay away for the evening. A visiting speaker to our church in 2000 challenged our families to get beyond our four walls, and he talked about a "Light the Night" outreach on Halloween. I started praying about what we could do on this one night of the year that we actually have people knocking on our doors. We came up with a logo for Light the Night and we did it in our community in 2000 in seven homes.

**PE: What do families encounter at a Light the Night home?**

**MELE:** A participating home is lit up very brightly. At most of our sites we've used construction lighting to really brighten it. Out front we'll have hot dogs cooking, hot chocolate and hot apple cider, and usually a TV outside with *Veggie Tales* playing. We'll also have cotton candy and popcorn machines. Kids can participate at game stations. They make their way to a puppet stage where a skit presents a salvation message. After that they can visit a candy bag table where they receive a bag that says "Jesus Loves You" and contains candy and an invitation to children's church on Sunday. Workers have the opportunity to ask the kids how they enjoyed the puppet

skits and if they have any needs they would like to have someone pray with them about.

**PE: How do older family members respond?**

**MELE:** We've had families that have hung out all night at a site because they feel like it's the most fun place to be in their neighborhood. It's also given adults an opportunity to get to know their neighbors and actually stand and have some fellowship with them. Our first year we had one lady who was driving home and said she felt led to go into one of the participating neighborhoods. When she came in, she saw all these lights. She didn't have any children but got out of her car and talked with some of the adult volunteers. Some of our people prayed with her to accept Christ. Over the next several weeks a couple from our church continued to minister to her and had lunch with her.

**PE: How has the ministry grown?**

**MELE:** We had seven homes in our city in 2000. That number grew to multiple homes in 84 cities in 10 states across the country in 2001. We put a kit together with a promotional video to help churches develop their own program. I've also received e-mails from people overseas who have heard about it. It's reaching beyond the Assemblies of God. We're already up to about 97 cities for this year, and we're planning to include a follow-up program that will connect neighborhood kids with sponsoring churches.

**PE: Anything else?**

**MELE:** We like to use Matthew 5:14,16, "You are the light of the world. ... Let your light shine before men" (NIV). That's kind of become our theme, being a light in a dark world. Especially on this night that we can make a difference.



*K.R. Mele*