

The Greening

by

R. Franklin Cook and Steve Weber

2021

Nazarene Missions International

GOSPEL OVER THE ANDES

A HUNDRED YEARS OF THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE IN PERU

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THE GREENING

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NOTE: In many of the stories shared in this book, names have been changed for security reasons. Next to those names appears an asterisk* to indicate a change of name.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	7
Preface	13
Chapter 1: The Cry of Babies	21
Chapter 2: Anti-Human Trafficking	29
Chapter 3: Why a Circle?	51
Chapter 4: Emergency!	65
Chapter 5: A Piece of Bread	91
Chapter 6: Empowerment: The Unleashing of Potential	103
Chapter 7: The Healing Touch	121
Chapter 8: No Place to Call Home	141
Chapter 9: The Crucible	161
Chapter 10: It Was Always There	167
Afterword	167
Appendix: A Social History Timeline	173
Act On It!	200
Personal Reflections	202
Credits	204

FOREWORD

In 1949 George Orwell, an English novelist, published a novel that became the seminal publication of the 20th century. The book which blazed into public consciousness was simply called 1984. It was filled with gloom and doom, what one reviewer called “futuristic purgatory”—predicting a world filled with conflict, revolution, and the Big Brother looking over every aspect of life.

In 1984, two young writers sat down to tell the story of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries. It was entitled *The Greening*. It was published in 1986 and introduced the newly created office of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries. Orwell was read by millions. *The Greening* was read by a few. Recently, those two “young writers,” now not so young, were asked to update the book. And so, we have. In so doing, we have had time to think about life and church in the mid-1980s.

We have reflected on how much the world has changed. The year 1984 was a world before cell phones and passwords, before personal computers and iPads. It was a world when public morals and standards were vastly different, when life was more conscripted and less controlled. Ronald Reagan was president of the United

States, Margaret Thatcher was prime minister in the United Kingdom, and Helmut Kohl was still running the nation of Germany. Gasoline was between .89 cents and \$1.13 per gallon in the United States, and automobiles were undergoing huge technological changes.

Yet, midst all the swirl of those years, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, as an office, was established and simply reflected compassionate ministries as a testimony that Nazarenes have always been a compassionate people. So, that original book was mostly a report of local and district church initiatives. In compiling these, four priorities were listed:

1. Response to acute need.
2. Response to “poorest of the poor” (defined as living on \$250 or less a year).
3. Refugees.
4. The “relatively poor.” (Defined as the jobless, the homeless, new immigrant arrivals, those living in crushing poverty; mostly, this category exists in what are often referred to as “developed” areas.)

What has been surprising to these writers is (1) how much the world has changed in these last 36 years, and (2) how little human need has changed.

And so, we attempt to update a very old story: Nazarenes are a compassionate people. It grows out of our theology, our heritage and history, and the Gospel (“Good News”) itself. The office of Compassionate

Ministries has evolved and matured in the process. Currently there are five basic approaches to the way that NCM addresses these issues:

✿ Church-Led. Nazarene Compassionate Ministries exists in and through the church. NCM partners with local congregations, supporting them in their efforts to serve others, create change in their communities, and point people toward the love of God through Christ. Because local churches are engaged in their communities, they understand the needs of their neighbors, and because local churches are not leaving after a specific program or project is started, the work they do through the support of NCM becomes sustainable.

✿ Holistic. Poverty is complex. It includes the lack of material or financial resources, but it's far more than that. To get at the root causes of poverty, we have to address the spiritual, relational, and systemic aspects that keep people trapped in poverty. A holistic approach to community development works toward physical, relational, and spiritual wholeness for individuals and communities.

✿ Child-Focused. Nazarene Compassionate Ministries recognizes the importance of children as individuals who have value and dignity because they are each created in God's image. NCM works to enable children to become the people God created them to be. In order to accomplish this, we address children's specific needs, such as stability, education, food, and clean water. Because we recognize that the children are part of a larger

context, we also address their overall situations, including the condition of their families and communities.

✿ Community-Based. As people who are made in God's image, community members have dignity, value, and capacity to create change themselves. Nazarene Compassionate Ministries equips churches to work alongside community members to develop their own communities and address their own situations and challenges.

✿ Transformational. The goal of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries' work goes beyond community development projects and humanitarian assistance. Our goal is to see individual and communal transformation in and through Christ. Our faith is the heart of who we are, what we do, and how we work. We affirm the work of God as the cornerstone of transformation.

How are these categories implemented? After all, this is where the rubber meets the road. There are many stories of hope on the NCM website that show what compassion looks like in action as it affirms the God-given dignity to all people. The ministries are broken down into nine areas of focus:

Holistic Child Development

Emergency Relief

Anti-Human Trafficking

Economic Development

Food Security

Clean Water

Health Care

Refugee and Immigrant Support

Women and Girls Support

Drill down into any one of these topics, and you will discover the depth of compassion that permeates and radiates from the hearts of the people called Nazarenes. In those early days of the office, we who worked there were searching for a phrase—something that would express the burning heart of what we were seeing. All around the globe were amazing people joining those who were in great need. Whether it was those struggling to find food during drought or those who had been exploited and abused, whether it was people with destroyed houses or no house at all, whether it was groups displaced by war or dangerous conflict—whatever it was, local Nazarene churches and volunteers were acting in compassion in the name of Jesus.

We began to walk beside this army of people, endeavoring to see through the eyes of God. To love them without condition or limit, to care for them in spite of obstacle or objection, to break through barriers created by some with unseeing eyes. The phrase that kept cropping up, and the one we eventually adopted was COMPASSION AS A LIFESTYLE.

This will never be limited to a program, or to the nature of the response. It is deeper than that. It is an effort to live out what novelist, poet, and preacher

Frederick Buechner has described as “Compassion... the sometimes-fatal capacity for feeling what it is like to live inside somebody else’s skin. It’s the knowledge that there can never really be any peace and joy for me until there is peace and joy finally for you too.”¹

Or, to put it in the words of theologian Henri Nouwen, “Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human.”²

In other words, COMPASSION AS A LIFESTYLE.

Be blessed and be challenged by these short chapters about a large subject. We offer you *THE GREENING*.

Let’s begin.

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- 1 Buechner, Fredrick (2004). *Beyond Words: Daily Readings in the ABC’s of Faith*, San Francisco: HarperCollins.
 - 2 McNeill, Donald P, Morrison, Douglas A., and Nouwen, Henri J.M., (2006). *Compassion: A Reflection on the Christian Life*, New York: Image Books, Doubleday.

PREFACE

As I sit behind my computer, staring at the current global crisis known as COVID-19, I am brought to reflect upon how NCM is positioned to facilitate the mission of the Church of the Nazarene. Whether it be an earthquake, a hurricane, unsafe or unavailable water, exploitation of children, or inadequate shelter, the Body of Christ is called to respond. The reality is that the world is in perpetual crisis, and followers of Christ are called to serve and love right in the midst of those crises. Like many natural and human-made disasters and sickness or plagues that have gone before us, COVID-19 will be remembered for years to come.

And yet, there is hope. Like many generations of the Christian Church, I am witness to the Body of Christ purposefully acting to combat fear, extending love and help for persons most affected, and actively discerning at every turn how to be the hands and feet of Christ in the midst of suffering people. This is our Christian responsibility and call as followers of Jesus, and this is our mission as the Church of the Nazarene. The Nazarene Compassionate Ministries system of support and assistance facilitated through the local church was created for such a time as this.

“**Compassion as a lifestyle**” becomes a true test of faith in times of suffering. Thus, following Jesus’ teachings and our early church’s faithfulness, compassion as a way of life in this time means: We will not leave our brother or sister in Christ, nor our neighbor, and even our enemy, to suffer alone. For we are followers of Jesus and endeavor to model our actions after Him.

Our church’s all-embracing response to the crisis, therefore, must model a church that together rises up to be salt and light, a witness to the patience and suffering of Jesus and His call to us to do the same.

Call to be Salt and Light

“You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:13-16, NIV).

From a Christian perspective, during a time of crisis, we have encouraged Nazarenes worldwide to model the approach to be **SALT**. Let’s look at this approach as it relates to the COVID-19 crisis:

Suffer with those who are most vulnerable.

Assess & assist: continually review who is affected most deeply by the crisis, think critically, organize assistance by the following key priorities.

Learn & lead: model new behaviors learned through awareness and education that will mitigate the virus and promote health and well-being (physically, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually) in the Body of Christ.

Tell, teach, train: wherever possible find ways to connect and share with others, this is the core of the Good News we are to share. We also share what we have learned about prevention, mitigation, and new ways of life together learned in this time. For those on the front lines, our response will be in-person, but for others, we will think creatively about how to connect the Body of Christ through the myriad of ways we have been given access in our 21st-century world.

Our church is well-placed to be an agent of love and compassion during this crisis. Much of the critical response to COVID-19 centers around how our churches are positioned to mobilize people in care, awareness, and prevention, as well as building trust and community in the name of Jesus. I offer this as a snapshot of how our church lives out compassion in the midst of crisis. Though this crisis will be remembered for years to come, we belong

to a well-seasoned family of believers who know how to respond. We are to be a people of hope, and a people called to love one another, and more so in the midst of crisis. We are called not to fear, but rather to follow the example of Jesus to provide tangible help, love, and hope to all people in Jesus' name.

NCM's experience in walking alongside churches, coupled with our network of relationships, has equipped the Church of the Nazarene to effectively respond in the midst of crisis. While in all times, the compassionate nature of the church is alive and well, the spirit of the NCM response continues to be rooted in Matthew 25, where we are instructed to give food to the hungry, to give water to the thirsty, to give clothing to the naked, to welcome the stranger, and to visit those who are sick or in prison. As churches extend compassion and as we seek to assist and equip, NCM leans on five core values, mentioned in the Foreword of this book. We are ***church-led, community-based, child-focused, holistic, and transformational***. More will be shared about these core values in the pages ahead.

NCM's approach directly fits within the mission of the Church of the Nazarene "to make Christlike disciples in the nations" and its vision of "transforming people, communities, and nations." NCM relies on the global church structure that has established the NCM delivery mechanism for helping the church live out compassion in its community, particularly in times of crisis. NCM

has decades of established relationships and means of communication with churches and communities worldwide that implement ministries as well as serving as expert voices “on the ground.” They have helped the church navigate compassionate responses in the midst of civil wars, genocide, major earthquakes in Haiti and Nepal, the 2014 Ebola outbreak, the Syrian Refugee response, and countless other natural disasters. As you will find in the next chapters, NCM relies on the existing network and leaders worldwide with experience and expertise in such responses.

The network spans all six of our Nazarene regions, and connection and communication are maintained and led by our regional NCM coordinators, their field coordinators, and NCM global program advisors to form a truly global NCM Team. This network of leaders spread across our Nazarene fields and regions are the agents through which delivery and support will be provided. At times when clear communication and trusted relationships are needed, these networks will allow us to confidently assess, respond, and monitor interventions, specifically serving the most vulnerable in multiple countries across all regions.

To provide a snapshot of the scope of NCM, according to figures from 2019 alone, the network includes:

✦ **257 Nazarene child development centers across 38 countries.** This reach allows us the capacity to aid 11,708 children along with their families (3,682 are children in pastors’ homes).

✦ **80,000 people in 15 countries** have directly and indirectly benefited from our ongoing and new water supply, sanitation, and hygiene projects.

As a result, we will have the ability to directly reach more than:

✦ **310 churches** (257 churches through child development centers, and 61 churches from the WASH—an acronym for water, sanitation, and hygiene—projects) by working with WASH Committees (established through WASH projects) and child development leaders.

Equally important are the relationships and channels of communication NCM has established through Emergency Relief training and response.

✦ Over the last year, over **44 churches were mobilized, and 1,440 trained volunteers responded to disasters.**

NCM has consistently served alongside local congregations worldwide to support them as “agents of love and transformation” with knowledge of how to serve the most vulnerable in their communities. When called upon, we outline technical guidelines for our regional and field NCM coordinators, as well as NCM-equipped leaders, who coordinate with and train local congregations. Yet, most importantly, NCM walks alongside the local church in living out compassion as a tangible expression of the Good News found in Jesus Christ. The heart and soul of

NCM continue to be the pastors, leaders, and laity who live out compassion in their communities with passion, courage, and ingenuity. These are the leaders ensuring our responses are church-led and community-based. They are closest to the need, and they are the hands and feet bringing the Good News of Jesus.

In the following chapters, Franklin Cook and Steve Weber outline how faithful followers have grown up to form and shape what we call Nazarene Compassionate Ministries within the Church of the Nazarene. It is an honor to be a part of such a strong community with a rich history of extending and living out Good News across our world.

Nell Becker Sweeden
NCM Director, 2020

CHAPTER ONE: THE CRY OF BABIES

A steady wind was ruthless. It cut across the plains of northeast Africa, hot and searing, unabated and unchecked. The wind dried the skin and burned the eye. Without mercy and with relentless force, it whipped through mountains, down valleys, and across dusty plains that once were fertile fields. It picked up bits of straw and clumps of dirt, carrying them all the way out to the Arabian Sea.

Mbuze was born to raise crops. It was all he knew, and he was good at it. His father, and his father's father, and all the known generations before him, had worked the land. There had been times of dryness before. Leonard and his fellow farmers could cope with that. But not with this. This was the worst, the most devastating drought in Leonard's memory.

Mbuze peered across dying sprouts of what was to have been a life-giving crop. His gaze drifted toward the horizon. Two or three hopeful puffs of clouds appeared, but as he kept looking they drifted aimlessly away and soon were absorbed by the dry heat. It was monsoon

season. Skies should be leaden with moisture; instead they were a gray-blue cast, burning with heat, and wind that stirred up clouds of choking dirt. This was the third year. Famine would continue and added thousands would starve from hunger and die of thirst, lips swollen, the bodies of babies misshapen by malnutrition. The cry of babies would slowly fade away. Crying requires energy, an energy sapped by heat and dust.

Ponds where cattle and birds came to drink had long ago dried. The earth had crusted into large, gaping cracks. What had been lakes had diminished to tiny spots of moisture. Rivers were little more than rock-strewn scars on landscapes. Without the benefit of dams or reservoirs or springs or wells, thirst had joined hunger in a marriage of death.

Geraldine Scott, a nurse attached to Church World Service, was investing her time in a relief camp, partly funded by Nazarene Compassionate Ministries. The camp was near the Mbuze farm. Over 70% of the children were below standard height or weight. Some relief had arrived, brought in by truck or plane from outside the area. Tiny meals of high protein biscuits, porridge, dried skim milk, soy, pea flour, oil and sugar mixture, and wheat germ, comprised the modest rations to combat hunger.

But these children in this camp were the fortunate few. They had reached the camp, some just barely. Most children of the area had not. Of those reaching the camp, 40% had protein energy malnutrition (PEM). Many

required rehydration with Hartmann's solution³ or oral hydration salts.

The camp was a haven, not only from the devastation of nature, but from gangs of "bad actors" who in desperation were preying on those who had little. Yet, even in the "haven" all the medical problems aggravated by famine were there: malaria; pneumonia; tuberculosis; parasitical, malnutritional, and bacterial diarrhea; and an assortment of diseases associated with vitamin deficiency, such as beriberi, pellagra, and Vita A (Vitamin A deficiency).

The children were under 24-hour watch, divided into treatment, cleanup and shower, and feeding sections. These, unable to eat simply because they had no strength to eat, were put on IVs, a feeding nasogastric tube, or forced with cups or 20cc syringes. Usually 24 to 72 hours of such treatment resulted in an upswing in strength. For those who die, grieving families stoically accept the bodies for burial and death rites. Death is so common that the rituals of death blend into the ebb and flow of life in the camp. And, those in the camp are the fortunate few.

The origins of the word *monsoon* are rooted in an Arabic word meaning "seasons." Some define the monsoon as the time of change in the seasons, therefore most places have monsoon. For example, the southwestern United States has a monsoon season. However, infrastructure in a developed economy ameliorates against the severe effects

3 A Hartmann's solution was a mixture of ingredients like sodium chloride, sodium lactate, potassium chloride, and calcium chloride in water, used to replace fluids and electrolytes to restore blood volume.

of monsoon. Not so in many parts of the world. Monsoon can be a severe and devastating time. Rain leads to crops, celebrations, and plenty. No rain can lead to famine, camps, and death.

Monsoon has a flip side. It can result in severe flooding, leading to tens or thousands of deaths. For example:

☞ **When Waters Rise: Providing Care After South Asia Floods** (Originally appeared in NCM Magazine-Winter 2017)

It would be hard to think of the late summer months of 2017 without remembering the natural disasters. For those who experienced them, though, forgetting would be impossible.

Most natural disasters seem to be over quickly: earthquakes that last just minutes, storms that last the night. To live through them, though, can seem like an eternity, a fact made even truer by the months and years of rebuilding. In impoverished areas without safety nets, recovery can be a distant dream. That's why it's so important that the church is there for those living through the lingering aftermath of disasters.

During the numerous disasters this year, local churches were—and continue to be—vital. That's because they're already there, and they're ready to show deep compassion. Even before the shaking stops or the water recedes, they're able to assess the situation and care for those who are vulnerable.

In addition to geography, the church also has systems in place to mobilize members for response. First come the immediate needs: making sure people are fed, housed, and healthy. After that, long-term restoration and rebuilding start. Long after the news stories end and emergency relief teams have gone home, families and individuals affected by disasters are left to put their lives back together. And this is where the church fills the gaps and continues to walk alongside community members on the long road to recovery. What sets church-based disaster response efforts apart is that the church is there before, during, and after disasters.

The word *mobilized* means to bring together and prepare for action. The unique part of church-led disaster response is that it isn't only coming together, but it is coming together to express the deep, intentional compassion that grows out of God's love. These are just a few of the countless stories of love that came out of great tragedies.

And they are only the beginning.

☞ When Hunger Hits: Churches Are Responding:

(NCM Magazine-Summer 2017)

Parched, cracking ground and withering crops—these have been consistent scenes across parts of Africa over the past few years. Because of the worst drought in decades, many millions have been living without the security of knowing what-or if-they will eat.

A year ago, churches in Zimbabwe and Lesotho knew that they needed to step in to serve their neighbors.

The El Niño weather pattern that swept through was intense, keeping rain from falling where it was needed most. Without water, crops didn't grow, and most people were unable to cope with the sudden shortage of food. In Zimbabwe, all 60 Nazarene churches at the time were affected.

Volunteers gathered to contact local churches, who were able to put together lists of the most vulnerable individuals and families who would receive food aid. The undertaking was huge—and so was the need. For three months, volunteers distributed food aid at 56 distribution points across the country. Each basket of food would help supplement up to four people for a month. The churches' efforts helped to ensure that more than 12,300 people had enough to eat.

The severe shortage of rain also led to a shortage of drinking water, and people had resorted to using unsafe sources that can cause waterborne diseases like cholera. In Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, the Nkulumane Church of the Nazarene was able to drill a borehole well in partnership with Nazarene Compassionate Ministries in Africa. While the well has gone a long way toward making clean water available, others like it are few and far between. Long lines of people waiting their turn stretch out from the well. Still, every drop of water counts.

About a thousand miles south, Lesotho has also been

struck by drought and famine. There, too, churches were able to help their communities by providing food. Church volunteers came together to provide more than 700 families with food aid to get them through a hungry season. Teams were able to get the food to remote areas, including isolated churches deep in the mountains, to make sure that everyone had enough.

In both countries, churches came together to offer a tangible reminder of God's love and hope for the future.

When people across Zimbabwe and Lesotho were hungry, local churches responded by providing food. This was possible because other churches around the world had given to the Africa Disaster Fund.

Countries in East Africa often face famine. At times, more than 20 million people can be in urgent need of food assistance. In desperation, people abandon their homes and farms to flee to refugee camps. The last time the region experienced such a famine was in 2011, and nearly 260,000 people died from starvation and malnutrition. Half of them were children under the age of five. The region is often in danger of food insecurity; in 2020, locust decimated crops and caused an extreme threat to food security.

☞ Death in the Dark

In the case of an African famine, such as in the account of the Mbuze farm, most babies die at night. In extreme malnutrition, babies are too weak to eat, or drink, or even

to cry. They remain silent—the cries fade away in the dark. At night, they are too weak to shiver. Or, they die of the cold even if wrapped in a blanket.

In the case of monsoon floods, night is a time of terror as trees, houses, shacks, cattle, and dead bodies float downstream, destroying everything in their path. Many of the deaths caused by flooding happen during the dark hours of night. There is little more eerie than the sound of a crying baby in a flooded landscape.

In the midst, stands a church ready, willing, and able to help. Sometimes help is through relief supplies. Sometimes it is the investment by volunteers who choose to give of time and treasure. Sometimes it is through a long-term commitment to a new church plant. Whatever it may mean, it is in the name of the Christ of compassion and grace.

CHAPTER TWO: ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Some time ago, I (Steve) was asked to chair the Faith Community Sector Committee of the Johnson County (Kansas, USA) Human Trafficking Coalition. When I accepted that assignment, I honestly believed that I understood what was involved. I had always understood human sex trafficking as the process of forcibly taking people (usually young and female) from their homes and selling them into the indescribable bondage of modern-day slavery. In reality, the insidious evil of human trafficking extends beyond just the trafficking of young women for sex. It includes human bondage that exists all around us, no matter what country, gender, or age. The most recent statistics tell us that more than 40 million victims are being trafficked worldwide right now.⁴ They are being bought and sold, coerced into both sexual interactions and forced labor.

In this chapter, we will largely focus on sex-trafficking and sexual exploitation rather than human labor trafficking, although it is important to note that the two

⁴ U.S. State Department. Trafficking in Persons Report. June 2019.

are often intermingled. An often-hidden dimension of sex-trafficking begins with a rarely used word: “Sextortion.” It is not a new word

Part of the root of “sextortion” is the better-known word: extortion. It is the practice of obtaining something through force or threat. In a similar way, contemporary issues of human trafficking are also called “modern-day slavery,” noting the brutal enforcement over human bodies. Through physical force, emotional and mental manipulation, financial coercion, and other inhumane means, freedom is sold for profit. The increasing use of social media and online exploitation has fueled human trafficking, making it easy to both sell and buy other humans or their images. It is easy for almost anyone with a cell phone to transmit an inappropriate image of themselves—or those they are exploiting—anywhere in the world. In our modern world, where pornography is wide-spread and increasingly a socially accepted addiction, online social exploitation is a major on-ramp to human trafficking. While some of this is driven by corporations and international businesses, the reality is that those driving the exploitation are largely wealthy, Western countries. The problem of online sexual exploitation through the internet has become a global crisis that ruins more young lives than can be imagined.

Technically, online sexual exploitation is the use of non-physical forms of coercion to extort sexual favors from the victim. One way the exploiters work is through social media platforms which are so prevalent in our world today.

sextortion is the use of non-physical forms of coercion to extort sexual favors from the victim. Sextortion usually begins with one of the social media platforms, which are so very prevalent in our world today. Many of these platforms are specifically targeted to children. They offer a wide range of video games, interactive adventures, chat features, etc. The number of such sites is growing daily. The problem is, almost all of them have been infiltrated by the sex trade industry, where predators might use an online relationship to coerce a young person to look at inappropriate materials online. Many parents are not aware these “harmless apps” have become such a deadly battlefield for their children’s lives.

The problem usually begins with a “harmless” invitation to get to know a new friend online. This so-called new friend, in reality, is a highly skilled manipulator of young minds. They pass themselves off as a child or young person of the same age and demographic as the young person they are attempting to seduce. There is no rush to the process of building bridges of friendship. If the child is between the ages of four and eight, the usual approach is to ask for a picture and keeping it a “secret” between friends. (The idea is to keep all the conversations out of the reach of adults). This “friends” process has been known to take months, or even years, before the child is locked into a lifestyle they could never have imagined.

In one U.S. city alone, over the past five years, the organization Stop Trafficking Project has surveyed more than 53,000 students between the ages of 10 and 17.

These anonymous surveys have revealed that over 56% of the young people have viewed pornography, and 32% are engaged in online activities that made them vulnerable to being exploited through sextortion.⁵ This becomes one way to exploit someone who is vulnerable, sometimes in addition to in-person friendships and grooming.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many countries completely shut down their school systems. In that vacuum, worldwide pornographic web searches skyrocketed by 4,700% when these children (and many of their parents) were home with nothing to do. In many countries, pornography companies switched their marketing strategies to offer free viewing, allowing young people to enter their websites without providing credit card payments.⁶ The conclusion should be obvious. Online exploitation is not an isolated event that only impacts a few children, or even a few adults. This reaches the mainstream of all societies with access to the internet via some type of device.

One of the most distressing paths is that of parents or family members selling their children online. These parents provide materials in exchange for significant cash payments to meet the growing worldwide demand utilizing live streaming or recorded videos. This is a rather recent crime. Because of the unbelievably high demand for young children doing unprintable sex acts, this online

5 Stop Trafficking Project website.

6 Shared Hope International Website. "Traffickers Are Taking Advantage of Covid-19."

exploitation of children has become one of the fastest-growing aspects of OSEC. Parents, who often live in poverty, find that selling their young children's images online can be incredibly lucrative. They generally also believe the widespread lie that they are not hurting their children as long as there isn't any actual physical contact. The problem is complex. Poverty and culturally accepted lies are some of the global drivers of sexual exploitation. But it is adults in wealthy countries who are often purchasing videos and images, using encryptions that make the crime increasingly difficult to trace and prosecute. Without a buyer, there would be no crime.

A more complete story about online sexual exploitation and the Church of the Nazarene's response can be found in *The Road Back*.⁷ In that book, the story is told of the Shechem Children's Home, located in the Philippines, operated by the Church of the Nazarene. At Shechem, child survivors of online exploitation can heal and grow from the trauma they have experienced.

So far, we have focused mainly on online exploitation. While this is an increasingly pervasive crisis, people are still bought and sold physically as well. Those who are already vulnerable—refugees, immigrants, those living in poverty, those without safety nets—are also the most vulnerable to human trafficking. Below, read the story of ministries seeking to provide another option for those

7 David and Lisa Frisbie (2020). *The Road Back: Hope, Help, and Healing for Survivors of Human Trafficking*. Kansas City, MO: The Foundry Publishing.

stuck in exploitation.

☞ **Red Light Redemption in India** (Originally appeared in NCM Magazine-Summer 2018, Luthye)

Outside a small, two-story building on the edge of a large city in India, a set of rust-red metal steps leads to a small opening. It's just large enough to allow one adult to climb through. On the other side lies a small room, about 10-feet square. A large, decorative window lets light into the clean, bright space, which holds a table, three chairs, and a small sewing machine. On a weekday afternoon, about 15 women have squeezed through that opening and are sitting on the floor. They've gathered together to pray.

Down below is a row of small dwellings about the same size. These rooms are darker, with no windows and small doorways. Inside each, a bed takes up most of the space. These rooms line both sides of a lane within a small red-light district. The women gathered in prayer live here.

A nearby Nazarene congregation has turned the upstairs room into a drop-in center. They call it the "Hope for Life" center, and that is what they want the women and children who come here to experience.

A Too Common Story

An estimated 2 million-plus women and girls are forced into prostitution in the red-light areas of India. Most are victims of human trafficking. They were sold to a pimp

or madam who then forced them to sell themselves to anyone willing to pay. Others are not technically victims of human trafficking but came out of a desperate desire for survival. Poverty is the driver that keeps the engine of exploitation running.

Many girls wind up in this red-light area because their parents couldn't, or wouldn't, bear the cost of feeding another mouth. Unlike boys, girls in communities throughout India are seen as a financial burden: they require the cost of a wedding and dowry only to go and live with a husband's family. Many families decide it's easier to sell a daughter to a trafficker at a young age. Parents might sell a daughter for a few hundred dollars (USD), but often they pocket as little as \$15 (USD) in the transaction. Oftentimes, girls are forced to marry as child brides, only to then be sold by their husbands to traffickers.

A number of young women here were dedicated as small children to be "married" to a deity. Once a *devadasi*⁸ reaches puberty, her virginity is auctioned off to the highest bidder. When she becomes a teenaged mother, she is then discarded and sent to live out her days as a brothel worker.

Another group are the girls and young women who were lured to the city with the false promise of a legitimate job. Most are from small villages in India, with a smaller

8 A *devadasi* is a hereditary female dancer and courtesan in a Hindu temple.

number coming from neighboring countries, including Nepal and Bangladesh.

Others came here in their 20s after their husbands died or abandoned them and their children. These single mothers were left to play a cruel, real-life game of “Would You Rather?” The impossible question posed was this: “Would you rather sell yourself or watch your children starve?” These mothers chose not to watch their children die.

Regardless of how or why they arrived, every one of the girls and women here have this in common: they are victims of inhumane exploitation. Day by day, each one sits outside one of the rooms on this lane until someone wants to purchase her, and she is forced to service men 10 or so times a day. For the cost of 100 to 300 rupees (\$1.60 to \$4.80 USD), a buyer can do as he pleases to his rented property.

Reshma* is the woman who owns the room that houses the Hope for Life center. She came to the city as a victim of human trafficking. Her parents died when she was a teenager, and afterward she was forced into prostitution by a trusted family member. She tried to leave but eventually stopped fighting after she was brutally “broken in.” Then this life became her identity, and she became a gharwalli, a madam, herself. At 45, she has never married or had children.

When the congregation wanted to start a drop-in center, Reshma offered this upstairs room. Over time,

she opened up to a counselor at Hope for Life about her feelings of hopelessness.

“I don’t have hope for life—no relationships, no love, no respect, no one who can stay with me,” she said. “I am all alone in this life. Now I am getting old. I have gained all things but lost all things. For a prostitute, it is very difficult to leave in old age.”

When I ask Reshma why she opened her space for the congregation’s drop-in center, she says she wants to keep young girls from having to experience what she did. She shares how she has been able to help five children escape this area by putting them in a home for children whose parents cannot provide for them, known locally as a hostel.

“One girl is in grade 11,” she says. “Another has gotten married.” As she talks, her face lights up and her voice fills with pride.

“None are in this work,” she says, pointing toward the lane below.

During the afternoons and evenings, Hope for Life becomes a safe space for 25 children, ages 4 to 12. Without it, children would either be in the room while their mother is being exploited or left unattended on the neighborhood’s streets. The center provides a way to escape the horrors below for a period of time. Children get to experience the innocence of childhood through crafts, games, singing, and education. Many are learning to read and write for the first time. Here, they are also able

to talk to trusted adults about their thoughts and feelings.

While no one wants the young girls here to have to experience the same fate as their mothers, the reality is that many will unless something breaks the cycle of intergenerational exploitation.

Hope for Leaving

None of the women here want this life. Every one of them would rather earn money any other way.

A 30-year-old named Kyra was brought here by a friend at 16 years old. Now she's a mother of young children and says she wants to provide for them by doing what she calls "outside work."

Another woman, Prisha, says, "I want to leave, but what can I do?"

In fact, Prisha did leave once. She got out, married, and had children. Then her husband had an accident and could no longer work. The family still needed to eat, so she returned to the only thing she knew.

A core component of Hope for Life is vocational classes that offer women a chance at outside work. They currently offer tailoring and beautician training. Women also come to the center for counseling and to attend workshops on topics including HIV/AIDS awareness, child care and parenting, self-protection, and nutrition.

"I came for the sewing," says Anaya, a 35-year-old mother of two. She says she entered the red-light area

when she was 10 or 11 but desperately wants a different life for her daughters, who are 15 and 12.

“If I can learn stitching properly, then I can—we can—leave,” she says. “I want my girls to get an education.”

Diya, 45, came here many years ago from a small village when her then-husband sold her to a trafficker. Going back home has never been an option because of the stigma that is misplaced on victims of sexual abuse and exploitation.

“I live here because the people of my village won’t allow me to come back,” she explains. “But Hope for Life gives me hope for leaving to go somewhere else.”

Diya was able to send two daughters, grades 4 and 9, to her home village to live with extended family, but she has to send money back to cover their expenses. Lately, Diya says, she has been going out of the red-light area to do work as a “rag picker.” She digs through garbage dumps, where she collects anything that can be sold as recyclables. That work doesn’t bring more than \$1 (USD) a day, but picking up garbage is better than being treated like it.

“What are your hopes for your daughters?” I ask.

Without hesitating, she answers, “I hope for them to learn to stand on their own feet and to live in society with respect.”

The reality, though, is that Diya doesn’t know if she’ll ever get to see this hope fulfilled. She is HIV-positive and

won't likely live to see her daughters grow into adulthood. This is the story of many women in India's red-light areas.

Still, Diya sings a song about the way God makes her "kushi, kushi," or "happy, happy."

Finding Faith

Besides hope for the future, Hope for Life is also helping women find hope in the present. Every Thursday, 15 to 20 women cram into this space to pray.

"Coming here and praying—it feels good," Anaya says. "I've also started going to [a congregation]."

After praying and listening to someone read from Scripture, a few women stay behind. Knowing pieces of their stories, I ask, "Do you believe that God loves you?"

"I know God loves me and is asking me to pray for others," Diya says.

Kyra smiles as she answers, "Yes, I do. And I trust in God."

That God is present here, working to lift the veil of darkness, comes as no surprise to me. But to hear women who have been abused and exploited in the most vicious ways so easily express trust in God? That was a surprise.

The women I speak with have been told over and over, both in words and actions, that they are worthless. They have been made to believe their value is found only in the number of men willing to pay to abuse them each night. That these women can say with certainty, "I know that

God loves me”—surely that is a miracle.

Hope for Life was birthed out of the sincere belief that God does love the women here and wants new life for them. The center was the dream of Naveen and Chandni. Naveen has been serving as pastor of a congregation near this area for more than a decade. His visits to families brought him to the neighborhood that circles this red-light area. He and Chandni prayed for a way to minister to the women and children here. Eventually, they found support to start a drop-in center. Chandni, a licensed social worker who had worked for various organizations, took on the task of managing the program.

They chose the name Hope for Life because “we need to give them life in that darkness and to give life, we need to give hope,” she says. “We are giving a small plant and hopefully it will grow into something bigger.”

It’s important to understand that talking about what happens in red-light districts is generally taboo within congregations in India. Those who have been exploited are often seen not as victims but as damaged goods.

So why did this pastor choose to ignore those cultural taboos?

“I read Scripture,” he says with humble sincerity.

Naveen says that throughout Scripture, he reads teachings about God’s desire for justice. He mentions Micah 6:8—“He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God”—and

says he has taught on this passage many times.

“It [Hope for Life] is from God,” he says. “We were praying for these women and children.”

In fact, they continue to pray. Every Friday a group gathers to pray for women and children in the red-light area. “I arrange my schedule around that,” Naveen says. “I never skip that prayer meeting.”

The ministry “has changed the hearts of [our] members,” Chandni adds. “Before, people thought of the ladies as separate, as dirty. But now they are accepted.”

The congregation runs a second Hope for Life drop-in center in their building, which is located in an impoverished neighborhood. Each morning, 25 children come for tutoring, singing, crafts, and stories from Scripture, plus a small meal. The focus of this center is prevention.

The children in this neighborhood live in poverty, and many live in unstable or abusive family situations. This combination makes them highly vulnerable to being trafficked.

Many of the children are sent out to “pick rags” in the garbage piles. Instead of going to school, they spend their days digging through trash to collect anything that can be sold. The Hope for Life staff have worked hard to help parents and guardians understand the importance of education. They’ve helped to re-enroll several children who had dropped out of school. The center also hosts classes for parents on how to care for children.

In the afternoons, women who are under-employed or under-educated come for classes in tailoring or beautician training. They also meet with their self-help groups. These groups of about 15 women work together to save and support one another. They each add a set amount of money each week, and once their collective coins add up, they give small loans to members of the group to start small businesses.

“I feel good that I can do all these things,” one self-help group member shares. “I believe I can do anything.”

A few women get up to share a song. They sing a refrain that says, “Woman is soft, but she is very strong.”

Take My Hand

Back at the Hope for Life site in the red-light district, no one who meets the women here could doubt that they are very strong. That strength is what has kept them alive through years as victims of dehumanizing abuse. This strength is also what enables them to hope for and move toward a different future.

A woman named Amna has been working as a counselor at Hope for Life for more than eight months. During that time, she has seen three women leave this life, and she is working with five more who are in process of leaving.

“I’ve seen women go from hopeless to hopeful,” she says.

Reshma is among the hopeful. When she invited the congregation to turn a small room into a drop-in center, she was still keeping other women in prostitution and was engaged in prostitution herself. As she got to know the staff of Hope for Life, she started to open up and began attending the weekly prayer meetings. As she began to experience and understand God's love for her, she came to faith and stopped doing "the work," as she calls it.

Over the course of another six months, she began to understand that if she was able to end her work in a brothel, then she must allow others that freedom, too. Now she works for Hope for Life as a peer leader, encouraging other women to work toward a new way of life.

When asked to describe the center, Reshma says, "Hope for Life is somebody who will hold your hand and walk with you toward something else—out of this life."

Reshma says she will do what she can to help offer women ways out of this life.

"God has chosen me," she says. "I have a role to play to care for children and women."

A year ago, Reshma volunteered to share her place so a congregation could open a drop-in center. Today, this upper room in a red-light area has become sacred space.

On the way out, Reshma has one request. "Pray for me," she says. "I need God's grace and mercy to help others into the light."

What Is Human Trafficking?

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery that affects every country in the world. Traffickers use force, fraud, or coercion to exploit people through forced labor or forced commercial sex. Simply, it is the buying and selling of human beings for profit. In fact, it's a multi-billion-dollar transnational criminal enterprise. More than 45 million individuals in our world are living in slavery, according to the Global Slavery Index. While this story has focused on the sexual exploitation of women and girls, it's important to understand that boys are also victims of sex trafficking.

To learn more, visit these sites:

ncm.org/trafficking

endinghumantrafficking.org

endslaverynow.org

polarisproject.org

You Can Help

Over the past number of years, hundreds of local congregations around the world participated in Freedom Sunday, a day to unite in prayer against the evil of human trafficking. Many collected a freedom offering as part of the event, and those funds are being used to support Hope for Life as well as other anti-human trafficking ministries led by local congregations around the world.

Helping women and children transition from a life

of exploitation into something new is a long process that requires ongoing commitment and support.

To learn more about how you can support anti-human trafficking efforts through NCM, go to ncm.org/antitrafficking or email info@ncm.org.

☪ **Redeeming Grace in Moldova** (Gschwandtner, NCM Magazine-Summer 2016)

“Truly I tell you,” Jesus said, “the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you” (Matthew 21:31, NIV).

And so, He angered the religious people of His time by associating with sinners, liars, thieves, and prostituted women, accepting them, loving them, and sharing with them the purifying grace of God.

When Maria* was asked to start a church in a small mountain village in central Europe, she decided to do as Jesus did.

A few years ago, a woman who had heard of Maria's ministry invited her to come and start a church in her village. “I did not know what type of people would come,” Maria remembers. As it turns out, most of them were pimps and prostituted women.

But Maria was not shocked. In fact, she had come in contact with a pimp in this village before. For a while, Maria had led a Bible study at his house, and he had asked her to pray for his business—but when she discovered

what it was, she instead prayed for God to change his business. After a lot of arguments and prayers, he agreed to change jobs as long as he could earn enough money to provide for his family. Maria helped him secure a loan to start a livestock project, and he is now happily employed in honest labor.

Since Maria had witnessed the change in this man's life, she wasn't shocked when she found out who made up her new congregation.

“I just looked at them as normal people, people with messed-up lives—as almost all people have,” she says.

Having worked in this geographical area for several years, Maria knew that most of her parishioners were men and women with no work and no education, individuals who got involved in this life because it was a way to feed their children.

“Those are broken people, but we are all broken in some ways,” Maria says. “I think the whole idea is to look at those people as human beings and to treat them as human beings.”

So, Maria started a church plant with pimps and women who were prostituted. Between six and ten adults and several children began to meet as a congregation once a week. And while the services overall are “fairly normal,” Maria has had some contextualizing to do.

“I have to contextualize my sermons every time I preach so they can be in light of their understanding of life,” she explains. “About half of my sermons are about

holiness and what it means to live as holy people, to live life differently, how to treat people humanly, with love, [and] what the word love means. And everything is in light of the Bible and the way God is showing His love to us.”

Her patience is paying off. While the men originally came to the church “just to see,” and none have yet made a conscious decision to accept Christ, they are clearly interested.

“They ask us to pray, they confess what they’re doing and ask for repentance; they’re interested in the sermons, they listen carefully, and they ask questions after the sermons,” Maria says.

Maria’s simple, honest ministry is having other effects as well. At least one man and woman have spoken to Maria about “leaving the business,” and she is helping them find a new means of income.

Compassion is “just a way of living,” Maria says, “accepting everyone, no matter what the differences in background or social status. It’s walking through the difficult times with them.”

Doing as Jesus did? Maria knows what that means. “We need to show them grace, the same grace that God showed to us,” she says.

“We did not deserve His grace, but we received it. We should be the channels of this grace!

This is why I keep going there.”

In the cases cited of human trafficking, the darkness that enshrouds lives caught up in the profiteering of others is being changed to light—the light of life—that dawns when Jesus enters the scene, introduced by His disciples, who dare to call themselves “brothers and sisters” of the outcasts of society.

CHAPTER THREE: WHY A CIRCLE?

Why? Indeed, why do we put out all this effort, invest all this time, in “compassion as a life style”?

This chapter purports to give some rationale, some answers, to the why question and how the church has engaged, and re-engaged time and time again. The contents are not exhaustive, and hopefully not exhausting. But they are important. And they are thought provoking—a place for creative discussion.

We start with The Word. God’s Word. In His Word, we read of Jesus reminding us over and over that there are all around us poor people, hurting people, disenfranchised people. And in all probability, there always will be. Some people conclude that our response is to feed people and accept the social status quo. The question is, “What is God’s plan?”

Those of Christian faith who have been blessed with financial success and many material possessions bear the burden of stewardship of these assets. Benefits of our life style may include a secure home, literacy, curative health facilities which may literally be around the corner, sufficient and safe water to drink, warmth in winter and

cool in summer (or vice versa), natural resources to sustain life in a comfortable manner.

This raises questions, such as, responsible consumption patterns for Christians. In other words, and to put it simply, how much do we spend on ourselves and how do we deal in a world of unjust distribution of wealth and resource where billions are denied access? On the one hand, we have more than enough to sustain our life style. On the other hand, we are inundated with television images of billions who lack the basic necessities of life.

Approaching God's Word with this inequitable distribution system in mind, we are confronted with troubling choices, often uncomfortable to think about. Such Scriptures as Matthew 25 talk about God's judgement upon those with material possession who did not share them with those in need. What, then, is "share"? What, then, is "need"?

God's economy, that is structure for His creation, is not one that will allow us to live as if material questions have nothing to do with spiritual values. It seems clear that God never expected us to live as if we could ignore the poverty and social ills around us. And these are all around, in our communities, neighborhoods, cities, and across the world. So these are universal questions. We are not to rest comfortably in our padded world while ignoring those without shelter, or food, or access.

God had a very special place in His heart for the poor of our world (Psalm 146; 1 Samuel 2:1-10). The Christian

needs to understand that starvation, poverty, and many evils of our day are a direct result of uneven distribution of resources. Sin has caused the world to be a selfish place, occupied by self-centered people often consumed by greed and avarice. God's Word reminds us that it is the Church's responsibility to care and minister to those who are hurt by this uneven balance (or, as Scripture puts it, orphans, widows, and refugees). The Old Testament gives 210 references that speak of the responsibility of God's people to those suffering from material poverty. Do we really need an extra prod? Do we need a brighter light? Do we need a more compelling motive? Do we need to have a deeper understanding of Why?

The New Testament is even more clear. In fact, we find Jesus identifying with the poor and telling us of His anointing to preach to them. Our problem is this: the New Testament clearly teaches that excess consumption is sin. Jesus has reminded us to pay close attention to the needs of the poor and to not be overly anxious about material possessions. We are told to denounce any system of exploitation of the poor and to minister to the victims of these unjust human systems.

The Early Church soon realized that a relief program for the poor must be instituted (Acts 6:1). While there are no universal directives that would tell us all to sell the farm and give the money to the poor, we are constantly reminded of our responsibility to be actively involved in ministering to the needs of those who are in economic need. We have no final law in the church as to the precise

form our relief work should take. We do have sufficient mandates to tell us that we must develop a strategy to avoid the extremes of wealth and poverty within the church (2 Cor. 8:13-14; 9:13; Rom. 15:25-26). The system our church has developed through Compassionate Ministries is one concrete way in which all can participate in this scriptural admonition. It is hard to justify any type of overindulgence when there are countless millions in our world with literally nothing to eat.

From the New Testament through the middle ages, from John Wesley to Bresee, we in the Nazarene heritage have much tradition that should help us to establish our response to the poor and needy of our world.

John Wesley, in his journal dated May 7, 1741, wrote clearly about feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, creating job programs for the unemployed, caring for the sick and homeless. Most of these programs Christians in the United States have largely delegated to the government. Wesley was clear in his feelings that the Church is the only viable approach to changing society. Without also taking care of the sin problem, all the welfare programs in the world aren't going to make much difference in our troubled world. But with the message of heart purity, we can minister to the poor of our world and offer them a message of complete hope and wholeness. No other agency can duplicate this.

Dr. Phineas F. Bresee, often credited with being the founder of the Church of the Nazarene, and other early church leaders, had great concern for the total person.

Their approach was wholistic while maintaining a burning passion for direct evangelism. The key, in their view, was first, last, and always, the local church—the Body of Christ.

Our conclusion is really quite simple. Compassion is at the heart of the Gospel. Thus, compassion is not a program or a slogan. It is a lifestyle. We don't do this as substitute for evangelism, but in response to the driving thrust of the Gospel. The love of Christ inside of us compels us outside ourselves to be involved (1 John 3:17-18; James 1:27).

So then, why? Why indeed? Because we can see beyond the unfortunate equating of a purely “social gospel” with a theology of liberalism. Because we can see beyond a narrow interpretation of evangelism as only “saving souls.” Because we see that holiness (wholeness) suggests an all-encompassing ministry to the whole person—to the individual, to the family, and collectively to the community. And because we know that the one and only truly effective body is the local church, which is The Body,

In a phrase, compassion is part of Christ's Great Commission to bring Jesus to the world. Compassion is part of Commission.

A WHY question always has outgrowth that is in a circle. That is, human institutions or organizations, have life cycles, while at the same time struggling to understand and respond to the why of imperative, and commission.

This is no less true in the Church of the Nazarene. So, as might be expected, the denomination went through circular phases of engagement, disengagement, and reengagement.

The very early leaders were engaged with compassionate projects in a wide range of ways. But then, for about 40 to 50 years, the church disengaged for reasons that can be understood in a larger context. It was, in part, as a counter reaction to what was happening in the broader world of the Church. The late 19th and early 20th Century was a time of revolution in thinking. There were schools of Biblical Criticism which called into question the very foundations of Scriptural precepts and teaching. There was a shift in the Ecumenical movement of the church away from direct evangelism to “social gospel” when Christ’s call became a call to such things as social justice, land reform and distribution, and a host of other social issues. The second generation of Nazarene leaders began to stand against this “liberal” trend in an effort to hold on to basic doctrine and understanding. And thus, disengagement.

However, at the same time, compassionate expression was occurring through local churches all around the world—and there are hundreds, maybe thousands, of examples of this. Finally, through the creation of an office of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries in 1984, there was again a reengagement.

Let’s explore this further.

The burning zeal of early holiness and Nazarene

leaders cannot be overstated. They roared in writing and voice against social evils and spiritual righteousness. Generally, they were an activist lot, willing to step boldly into controversy to apply the understanding of Scripture as explained by John Wesley and others. Often, they stumbled with abandon into action. They were engaged with the world.

In the early 1900s, issues included addiction to liquor, support for women's suffrage (it should be noted that Nazarenes from the beginning ordained women to the ministry), battling against the corruption of political machines in large cities (a good example being Dr. L. A. Reed, senior pastor at Kansas City First Church of the Nazarene against the Pendergast machine⁹), and rescuing the poor and downtrodden crushed under the industrial revolution in America.

By the time of the 1908 merger of groups to form the Church of the Nazarene in Pilot Point, Texas, USA, the church was supporting or sponsoring orphanages, homes for fallen women (often defined as women with illegitimate babies), and "rescue missions" in many cities. Other specific concerns were prison ministry, medical care with many clinics springing up, often out of a local church, and ministries to immigrant workers (such as Mexican

⁹ Pendergast machine refers to a political organization that dominated politics in Kansas City, MO for nearly 40 years. Thomas Pendergast was the "boss" of the organization that, through its corruption, controlled and directed state politics until he went to prison for tax fraud in 1939. The "machine" ended with Pendergast's imprisonment.

rail workers, Chinese workers arriving on the West Coast, Japanese workers in agriculture, and the plight of Native Americans confined to reservations).

Dr. Timothy L. Smith, author of *Called Unto Holiness*, writes, “The chief aim of the church was to preach holiness to the poor. And the first Manual of the new denomination declared an intention to “win the lost” through city missions, evangelistic services, and house to house visitation, caring for the poor, comforting the dying.”¹⁰

Bresee’s church in Los Angeles, California, USA, set apart deaconesses specifically for Christian compassionate ministries. They were in charge of distributing clothing for the poor and providing medical assistance to the ill who had no other way to secure medical help.

In the East, William Howard Hoople and Charles BeVier launched compassionate work in 1894 in a Brooklyn saloon. A. B. Riggs in 1904 commended the New England Holiness Association for their “devotion... to rescue work and relief for the poor.”

J. O. McClurkan’s Pentecostal Mission in Nashville, Tennessee, which did not merge with Nazarenes until 1915, was early on involved in mission and rescue home work. They affiliated with the Door of Hope Mission and sponsored the Pentecostal Mission Training Home for Girls.

¹⁰ Smith, Timothy (1962). *Called Unto Holiness*, pp. 113-114. Kansas City, MO: Nazarene Publishing House.

Phoebe Palmer, in her book, *The Promise of the Father*¹¹, declared, “Pentecost laid the axe at the root of social injustice.”

Seth Cook Rees wrote in 1905 a book titled, *Miracles in the Slums*. Among many incidents, he recalls sponsoring a converted prostitute in opening a rescue home in New York City, which consisted of a two-room apartment equipped with straw mats and crates for furniture.

In Texas, a Rest Cottage¹² was founded in 1903 in Pilot Point. Many people supported this faithfully. Evidence can be found of many district assemblies voting to send money to support this and other efforts of a similar nature. This Rest Cottage continued until 1972, during which over 4,500 girls were assisted.

Disengagement

Social concern of the general church for compassionate ministry reached its zenith at the 1919 General Assembly. Five General Assembly committees were related to social welfare work. District boards of social welfare were strongly encouraged and a five-member Orphanage Board was elected. There were continuing

¹¹ *The Promise of the Father* was first published in 1859.

¹² America once had hundreds of maternity homes, or shelters for unwed pregnant girls and women. Rest Cottage Association was a small chain of maternity homes inspired by the advocacy of Rev. Seth Rees, a holiness evangelist. Kansas City Rest Cottage and Pilot Point Rest Cottage were affiliated with the Church of the Nazarene. Other denominations sponsored Rest Cottages in other locations.

committees on rescue work and city missions.

The year 1923 seems to have been a watershed in disengaging from many of these activities. In that year, many previously semi-autonomous committees were consolidated into a General Board, a basic structure which still exists. By 1928 only three of the five General Assembly committees concerned with social welfare remained (Social Welfare and Orphanage, Deaconess, and State of the Church and Public Morals). In 1932, these three were lumped under one committee, and in 1948 this committee became simply the State of the Church and Public Morals.

Why the dramatic shift? Dr. J. Fred Parker, in his excellent analysis in an article titled “Those Early Nazarenes Cared,” suggests four reasons:

1. The financial squeeze made support of many institutions burdensome. (It is important to remember the Great Depression occurred during this time, which had worldwide reverberations and resulted in a dramatic retrenchment in foreign missions.)

2. There was a mild revolt, or pendulum swing, against institutions as adjuncts of the church, whose central mission was seen as saving souls. In an address to the 1923 General Assembly the general superintendents said, “Every effort should be made to keep down institutionalism.”

3. Underlying many attitudes was a pervasive feeling that somehow social action meant “social gospel,” and social gospel was equated with theological liberalism and

biblical higher criticism. It is helpful to note that in those days socialism was a political philosophy influencing many American and European universities.

4. There was a change in editorship of the *Herald of Holiness*, the official messaging instrument of the denomination. Many columns of space had been devoted, under the editorship of B. F. Haynes, an outspoken activist, to the social evils of the day. Haynes minced no words in his editorials.

With the arrival of Dr. J. B. Chapman as editor, there was a perceptible shift in the content of the magazine toward education, missions (meaning “foreign missions”), and church growth. It is difficult to say whether these were by design, by temperament of the editor, or simply a reflection of changing social attitudes in the church.

In foreign missions, compassionate ministry was standard practice. Health care, education, printing, feeding the hungry, even agricultural training were accepted as the norm. Back home, these activities were questioned as being out of the purview of an evangelistic church.

General superintendents, even into the 1960s and 1970s, warned that institutions would sap the spiritual vitality of the church. One general superintendent advised that the church had no business sponsoring retirement high-rise projects or using outside money to fund special ministries.

Meanwhile, during this period of disengagement, a

visionary corps of Nazarenes struggled on in the urban centers of North America, contending with all the old-new problems of alcohol, drug dependency, homelessness, unemployment, immigrants, race relations and civil rights, food and clothing distribution, and preventative and curative health care.

The philosophical debate continued in an effort to discover the most effective means to win people to Christ and, at the same time, minister to the whole person in His name.

The complicated reasons for “disengagement” have been explained earlier in this chapter. However, disengagement only refers to the official denominational structures as a whole. Local churches and individuals were never disengaged, with a plethora of ministries springing up as needs of society were revealed. The DNA of Nazarenes had been established by Jesus, by the early Apostles, by John Wesley, by Bresee and Hoople and others, and this imperative for social engagement was not going to go away.

Reengagement

The use of this term has many shades of meaning. From 1923 through the 1970’s, the Church of the Nazarene continued to be heavily engaged. However, the general denomination, coping with economic Depression, World War II, and other dramatic societal shifts, had reordered its priorities and adjusted its

structures.

Officially sponsored institutions, such as orphanages, rescue homes, and city missions, were no longer funded and sponsored, though some (a good example is the Kansas City Rescue Mission) continued to function and often to thrive. Again, it is important to understand that hundreds of compassionate ministries were flourishing, many under sponsorship of local churches.

There were a number of “high profile” projects, such as Community of Hope in Washington D. C., USA, led by Dr. Tom Nees. The Lambs Club project in Manhattan, New York City, New York, USA, was begun through sponsorship of the General Church and the New York district, and was a dramatic example of ministry in the heart of the city. Several Nazarene churches resisted “white flight,” “suburbmania,” and shifting demographics by intentionally staying in the city. For example, Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene, Bresee’s old church, stuck by its multi-faceted, multi-ethnic ministries, and stayed fully engaged in the community. The same was true of McClurkan’s old church Nashville First Church of the Nazarene, and several churches in New York, Boston, and other cities.

In this period, compassionate ministry continued unabated as the global church began to explode with growth.

However, for the purpose of this book, we define “reengagement” as the intentional 1984 creation of a denominational office of Nazarene Compassionate

Ministry office, led by Dr. Steve Weber (co-author of this book). This began to pull together the strands of compassion into a coordinated and cohesive strategy for the denomination, and stood as a beacon declaring the continuing full engagement of the Church of the Nazarene in its history and heritage, in its Wesleyan theology and activism, and in its healing touch to a broken and bleeding world.

As we move deeper into the 21st century, the cry of babies grows ever louder and the nurture of healing ever broader.

CHAPTER FOUR: EMERGENCY!

Disaster! It is just a word in the vocabulary unless you are personally affected. Lulled into a sense of security and self-sufficiency, many people are unable to face the instantaneous change that comes from natural and man-made disasters.

The extent of damage and loss of life is enormous when disasters strike. With the magnitude of such disasters, the amount and duration of response is also enormous. “How can my \$10.00 make any difference?” is a not uncommon statement.

It is apparent that the Church of the Nazarene is in no position to take the place of governmental agencies that allocate millions of dollars to meet needs resulting from disaster. There are thousands of para-church and other non-governmental agencies that appeal for our money and for the most part do a tremendous job of meeting needs.

Why then should the church become involved at all? With so many other agencies doing the job, why don't we just leave disaster response to the professionals?

The reason for our involvement centers around the availability of an effective delivery system. The church is the best and most efficient delivery system available in most disasters, because local churches are already present in the community, and they will know best how to respond to that community. It has a staff of honest, caring people, who are ready to help. There is normally a building, which can serve as a shelter, a staging area, or storage for supplies and goods. There is always an administrative structure headed by the pastor and key laymen who have various professional and vocational skills that are invaluable in times of emergency. In partnership with NCM, the resources of the church are normally called into action the moment disaster strikes. It is an opportunity to live out the gospel of the love of Jesus.

Can you imagine the cost of duplicating the resources that exist in the church during a time of disaster? Suppose the large disaster agency did not have the church delivery system there to help? To find alternative structures and personnel is time-consuming and often impossible.

In this chapter, we present some case studies of the Church of the Nazarene in action during disaster situations. The very beginning of the Nazarene Hunger and Disaster Fund traces its establishment to a massive earthquake in Guatemala. That disaster highlights another key point: in most disasters, the needs of the church to rebuild churches and parsonages are not addressed by any other disaster agency. Many missionaries and church leaders—as well as the communities they serve—

have expressed gratitude to the church for having made available the material resources to put the community back on its feet after disaster has struck. The church is present to respond in their communities in the immediate aftermath as well as during the long years of recovery. This is particularly important in world areas where people don't have safety nets. There, the impact of disasters can quite literally become a matter of life and death. With the hope of Christ, local churches can stand in that gap.

☞ **When Deadly Quakes Shook Mexico** (Originally appeared in NCM Magazine-Winter 2017)

Late on September 7, 2017, a massive 8.2-magnitude earthquake shook the Mexican states of Oaxaca and Chiapas. The quake killed at least 96 people, although the true extent of the damage may never be known. Then, 12 days later, a second 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck about 400 miles north, near Mexico City. The second quake killed more than 300 people. Both turned entire neighborhoods into rubble.

Almost immediately, local churches mobilized to respond. In Oaxaca's Juchitan district, the area hardest hit by the earthquake, churches set up 26 feeding points where volunteers cooked and served three hot meals to 8,000 individuals every day—24,000 meals a day. Most people were sleeping outdoors because of strong, ongoing aftershocks, so several churches also set up hospitality areas on their property to provide a safe place for families

and individuals. Weeks later, even after many were able to go home, the churches continued to provide 5,000 people with two daily meals—10,000 meals each day.

One of the greatest needs was medical care. Hospitals were destroyed in the quake, and not only did people have needs related to the disaster, such as dust inhalation and high blood pressure related to anxiety, but individuals' prescription medications were buried under the rubble. In response, dozens of local medical professionals, including doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and psychologists, came together to volunteer their time. Mobile medical teams made up of medical professionals as well as dozens of volunteers, primarily from Mexico, traveled from neighborhood to neighborhood to provide medical care. More than 100 youth from Nazarene churches joined each week to provide activities for children and spiritual care. In September, the teams ministered to more than 3,000 patients, and the ministry continued on into the weeks that followed.

When a deadly quake struck central Mexico less than two weeks later, churches came together again. Within the same day, churches were mobilizing people to provide water and sandwiches to exhausted first responders and volunteers trying to rescue people from the rubble. They also collected and distributed food, water, and hygiene items to disaster victims. They provided shelter through large tents and immediately began to remove debris and help repair homes that could be made livable again.

The Marathon Of Disaster Response

At first, reports from leaders in Mexico likened the response to a sprint: scrambling to get food, water, and medical care to those who needed it most, as well as finding places for people to sleep. As that sprint transitioned to a marathon, stories of hope and compassion appeared. One such story came from Oaxaca, where many children were taking refuge at a church. Recognizing the fear and sadness they must be feeling, two women took charge by planning games. One woman, a psychologist, was able to help children begin to work through their fear and trauma.

Through food, medical care, and compassion, the church in Mexico mobilized quickly and effectively to care for people who were injured and grieving. A message from a group of responders noted that the events awakened the local church, and that young and old together took action. Perhaps more than anything, what they communicated was this: we are all with you, and God is here.

Missionaries Roberto and Rhesa Rodriguez, who directed the Nazarene Border Initiative and served in Mexico after the quake, shared that they loved “seeing volunteers from all over Mexico pulling together to meet the needs here both physically and spiritually.”

In fact, the holistic focus sets church-led disaster response apart. Not only did the medical teams offer quality care for physical conditions, but volunteers also listened to and prayed for those affected. As a result, they reported that many people came to faith in Christ.

And because the church is there before, during, and after disasters, local pastors are already there to connect them to a welcoming congregation.

Dr. Rene Rivas, a Nazarene doctor from Guatemala who spent time volunteering with the medical teams for several days, observed: “Even though the walls of the temples are broken, the church is strong in Juchitan.”

“I thank God for belonging to the Church of the Nazarene, a church whose leaders taught me compassion through the Bible and through practice,” Rivas wrote. “And here we are trying to help people in need and receiving blessing from God.”

When Waters Rise

The water rose almost to the tops of mango and banana trees. Three weeks later, once the waters finally receded, those trees would not be able to produce fruit. Rice fields, mud-walled homes, roads, and bridges were all destroyed.

Over the summer of 2017, more than 1,000 people died in massive flooding across South Asia. The worst flooding in a century was created when high temperatures caused heavy monsoon rains in the Himalaya Mountains. Melted snow rushed down the mountains, across Nepal and India, causing rivers to overflow. Bangladesh, where the rivers meet, experienced flooding on a massive scale. Fully one-third of the country was under water, causing many thousands of families to lose everything. Tens of millions of people were displaced, and food shortages

turned into a long-term crisis as waterlogged crops died.

Jacinte,* aged 35, and her husband and two children, ages 10 and 4, spent eight days out on a road while waiting for the waters to recede. During that time, they had no shelter or safe drinking water. They had no food either—until they received a relief package with enough food for a week through Bangladesh Nazarene Mission, the compassionate ministries arm of the Church of the Nazarene in Bangladesh.

The family had very little to begin with, but they lost absolutely everything they owned: clothes, food, beds, and 20 hens. The mud walls of their two-room, 100-square foot (9.3-square meter) home, crumbled in the flooding. Although they were able to make small repairs with sheets of tin that floated by, their home would need to be rebuilt.

In communities surrounding local Nazarene churches, approximately 63,000 people were affected. Packages of rice, lentils, potatoes, oil, and soap were distributed to families and individuals among the poorest in their communities. Depending on the size of the family, the packages would last five to 14 days.

Safina,* a 20-year-old mother of three, was filled with relief when she received a food package. The flood destroyed all of her family's stored food, and she couldn't get her children the food they needed.¹³

“During the flood, two of my children became sick,” she says. “Now they are underweight and malnourished.”

¹³ Safina, one of 10,000 who received food aid, called it a “a blessing.”

Mobilizing Volunteers

In India, Nazarene churches also distributed emergency food relief—enough for a month—to 2,200 families in 24 rural areas where people were already living in poverty. Many had lost their crops and livestock, in addition to their homes, in the floods.

The churches' focus was on the most vulnerable families and individuals, both church members and other neighbors. It was important to Nazarene leaders that they also serve people who were not part of their churches, regardless of their faith traditions.

Volunteers played a critical role. In fact, much of the work was accomplished by 50 youth from Nazarene churches. They spent two days distributing rice, lentils, salt, oil, and soybeans, plus soap, to flood victims.

The churches in the affected areas are also working toward creating shelters so that the next time flooding happens, people can stay inside instead of on the roadside.

While the road to recovery will be long, immediate aid sustained people in the beginning days of the crisis.

☪ **Feeling the Force of the Storms** (Originally appeared in NCM Magazine-Winter 2017)

Hurricane Harvey

When a citizen volunteer carried Pastor Maxine Williams away from her south Texas home on a jet ski, it was the first time she had been on one, she said the ride

felt like an eternity as floodwaters brought by Hurricane Harvey rose.

Eventually, Williams caught another ride on a raised truck and made it to the home of a member of Grace Church of the Nazarene, which she leads in Port Arthur, Texas. Soon, though, the group noticed waters rising there too. They decided to evacuate by catching another ride with the owner of the truck.

As they were leaving, they realized a senior adult nearby needed help. As the waters were rising quickly, they risked going back to rescue their neighbor. They all made it to the church, where they joined 60 other flood victims. Afterward, that neighbor began visiting the church.

With a little help from Nacogdoches and Woodland Churches of the Nazarene, the Port Arthur Grace Church became a fully functional shelter complete with beds, food, and other necessary supplies.

The hurricane made landfall on 25 August. In the hours following, Nazarene churches across south Texas—from Houston and the Woodlands to Orange and Port Arthur to Beaumont and Pasadena—mobilized to help those in need. Multiple churches served as shelters and points of distribution as supplies flowed in from local sources and other areas of Texas. And hundreds of volunteers traveled to serve, from Texas and across the U.S.

Helping Hands After Harvey

The drive from Tehachapi, California, to Orange,

Texas, took 28 hours. For the six members of the Tehachapi Church of the Nazarene, it was an easy trip to make despite its length. They knew the community had seen some of the worst of Harvey's fierce rain, howling winds, and rising floodwaters.

When the team arrived, they found the streets lined with piles of household goods and furniture, all of it molded and ruined. They were there specifically to help the Spell family. Rebekah Spell, who works as the children's pastor at Orange First Church of the Nazarene, and her husband, Aaron, have five children. They've faced natural disasters before and have always been able to put their lives back together afterward. This time, though, the floods from Harvey destroyed their house and many of their belongings. The family of seven was living in a camper on the church's property with no idea how they would begin to start over.

Together with professional construction workers and a truck full of supplies from California, the group cleaned, hung drywall, and began the process of rebuilding the Spells' house. In California, the whole Tehachapi church joined the effort by giving enough to cover the costs associated with rebuilding, purchasing new appliances, and replacing cabinets, floors, and furniture.

While the house wasn't quite move-in ready when the team left, the Spells were soon able to move back into their house and begin turning it into a home again.

Hurricane Irma

In September, Hurricane Irma tore a catastrophic path through the Caribbean, devastating many island nations, including St. Martin. The storm hit the island with full force, ripping up trees and leaving piles of debris where once there were houses and buildings. Three Nazarene churches were severely damaged, and news sources reported that most structures were destroyed or damaged. According to Nazarene leaders there, 75 percent of church members lost their homes entirely.

It was difficult to get supplies there, but sister churches on the nearby island of Martinique were able to use their status as an official region of France to get a container of supplies to St. Martin, which is a collectivity of France.

After hitting the Caribbean, Irma continued north to the U.S. state of Florida. There, churches continued to mobilize. Within hours, a Nazarene response team from Virginia was in New Smyrna, Florida. They stopped at the flooded home of Adrian and Elizabeth Calhoun. A member of the team offered this beautiful observation of what it means to be the mobilized church: “You are not alone.”

Timing Was Everything

When Hurricane Irma headed toward Florida, churches in south Texas decided to help. They knew better than anyone what those in the storm’s path would face. Before people could start over, they would have to clear their homes of debris, throwing out the practical and

sentimental alike, in heaps of moldy memories.

The south Texas churches had received massive support, including a surplus of Crisis Care Kits containing toiletries and other necessities. So, they put out the call to see if anyone would be willing to transport kits to Florida. It was a big ask: road closures, fuel shortages, and traffic would make the trip difficult.

Pastor Darin Pound and Ed Warwick from the Temple, Texas, First Church of the Nazarene were up for the task. They, along with volunteers from other churches, filled a box truck to capacity with six pallets of water, thousands of care kits, and diapers.

What would normally have been a 14-hour trip turned into a multi-day trek. God's timing was evident, though. Several times, they found a gas station with fuel at a crucial moment. At others, they decided to fill up early only to find their destination had changed, and the extra gas would take them the added distance. Ultimately, they made their way to Cudjoe Key, one of Florida's lower keys. It bore Irma's brunt when she first made landfall in the U.S.

Then, as they unloaded the truck with the help of pastors and volunteers, a U.S. National Guardsman approached to find out if they had any water. He told them they had just run out, and a group of residents needed water immediately.

“God is good,” Pound says. “His timing is perfect!”

Hurricane Maria

Following closely behind Hurricane Irma, Hurricane Maria carved a similar path. In Dominica, at least 15 people died. The island itself was in ruins, and weeks after the storm passed, there was still a severe food shortage.

In the small town of Bataca, the Nazarene church had been preparing. A few years earlier, the church turned the lower floor of its two-story building into a compassionate ministry center. When the weather turned, 50 people headed to the center for shelter. As winds pounded the island, those huddled in the center's back two rooms listened as the storm tore off the church's roof and destroyed everything in the sanctuary. It blew off the doors of the shelter, too, but everyone inside remained safe. Thanks to food supplies the center had stored for emergencies like this, those 50 people had food to last for two days.

Most homes in the area were demolished. It's no exaggeration to say many of those gathered would have died if the church had not opened its doors.

The Nazarene church in Bioche, on the western side of the island, also had a compassionate ministry center stocked with water filters and Crisis Care Kits. In the days following Maria, volunteers distributed these items to neighbors in need.

Persistence In Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico was already without power after

Hurricane Irma when the full force of Hurricane Maria ripped through the country on 20 September. Tens of thousands were left homeless by the flooding, including many families from Nazarene churches.

Weeks after the hurricane hit, communication lines were still down, and the whole island was without power, causing life-or-death situations for some with medical conditions requiring power sources for treatment. At the time, 60 percent of people still didn't have access to potable water, and roads were impassible. For weeks, water and gasoline shortages worsened.

Still, churches mobilized quickly to serve those in need after the winds stopped. The Church of the Nazarene in Catano lost a large chunk of its sanctuary. It wasn't gone long, though. In the midst of twisted piles of metal roofing and broken lumber, the congregation rebuilt the wall that was destroyed. The town surrounding the church had more than 300 displaced residents, so the church also actively volunteered in shelters, including providing activities for children in the shelters. The Loiza Valley Church of the Nazarene offered meals to their community and collected resources to distribute to those in need.

Seven feet of water flooded Arecibo. People had to ration food and water, and many people lost homes and livelihoods. Two pastors gathered their congregations together to worship days after the storm. Pastor Martin encouraged her church to remember, "Maria might have taken our properties ... but she did not take our joy or our hope of eternal life."

When the ports opened up and shipments of aid supplies started pouring in, dozens of volunteers from Nazarene churches in Puerto Rico worked tirelessly to distribute hundreds of thousands of pounds of food, water filters, Crisis Care Kits, baby supplies, and more to those in need.

Volunteers from the Dorado Church of the Nazarene went to Naranjito, an impoverished town where they regularly minister, to distribute aid. The church in Vega Baja took supplies to a home for senior adults that was lacking resources. Volunteers from the Catano Church of the Nazarene took aid to La Puntilla, a distressed neighborhood that was flooded by ocean water.

As the group was leaving La Puntilla, one volunteer heard a young girl say to her mother, “Look, Mom! Now we have something to eat.”

The Future

As the ministries of compassion have continued to expand around the globe, one thing has become very clear; there are many God-called volunteers who are becoming more and more involved with these responses to the “least of these brothers and sisters of mine” (Matthew 25:40). These actual opportunities will be discussed in a later chapter, but in the context of disaster, the tremendous contributions of Nazarene volunteers need to be recognized. When disaster strikes and the needs become known, there are literally thousands

of Nazarenes, and people of other tribes and even beyond the faith community, who want to become involved. These people are giving of their time, talent and treasure in order to make a significant impact upon a hurting world. Lives are being saved, and needs are being met.

One man who represents this tremendous dedication and desire to serve his local church, and beyond, is Dr. Gary Morsch. Gary is the son of a Nazarene preacher, and was one of the very first medical volunteers to serve his church via Nazarene Compassionate Ministries.

Gary was trained as a medical doctor, and later added a Master of Public Health degree to his professional tool kit of service. His desire to serve was instilled in his life by a pastor-father who never missed an opportunity to reach out to the “least of these” with whom he came in contact. Gary’s first significant volunteer experience was while serving with Nazarene Student Mission Corps in 1972 in Bolivia. It was there, under the mentorship of a young missionary named Larry Webb, that Gary began to understand his strong sense of calling and opened his eyes to the needs of the world.

After completing his medical training, Gary moved to Olathe, Kansas, USA, and opened his family practice. It was no coincidence that his arrival was the very same month that the church opened the first office of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries. Gary was right there, offering not only his professional skills as a medical doctor, but also offering to provide his own funding for whatever he would be asked to do. It wasn’t long before Gary was

volunteering in all four of the Nazarene hospitals around the world, which were functioning at the time, as well as visiting the hospital in China which had been founded by the Church of the Nazarene.

One problem that Gary had struggled with for some time was the concept that “God only calls pastors.” Gary felt strongly that God calls everyone to ministry, not just professional clergy. This led to the first of many books written by Gary Morsch. The title is: *Ministry Is Not Just for Ministers*. The die was cut. All of his early experiences as a volunteer. First, with Student Mission Corps, and later with the Office of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, led Gary to an increasingly strong call—as a layperson—, yet just as real and persistent as any professional clergy person. He became more and more involved. Giving of his time, his talent, and his financial resources, to this idea of lay involvement in Compassionate Ministries. Interestingly enough, Gary never felt directed to seek a full-time medical missionary position with his church. Rather, he was directed to mobilize as many people as possible to volunteer in missions. He began to recruit and invite groups of volunteers to go with him on his many mission trips.

This first such group that Gary recruited were several members from his local Rotarian club in Olathe, Kansas in 1989. Understanding that it would not be possible to build a Nazarene Church, since this was to be a Rotarian project, Gary worked with the local Nazarene missionaries to partner with the local Young Women’s Christian

Association in Belize City, Belize. (Prior to 1973, known as British Honduras). The project was a rehabilitation of the entire YWCA facility which was in such terrible need of repair that it was on the verge of closing its doors. It was at this point that Gary began to understand the obvious truth that God was looking to Gary to expand his pool of volunteers far beyond the membership rolls of the Church of the Nazarene.

After several similar trips, Gary's personal growth in understanding God's will for his life led him to found his own non-profit organization called Heart to Heart International in 1992. (As of this writing, Heart to Heart International has worked in more than 160 countries, and delivered more than one billion dollars (USD) in primarily medical aid to hurting people.) Heart to Heart was to become a "Faith Friendly" organization. Not limiting its volunteers to those of any one faith tradition, or even to people of any faith group. Everyone is welcome to offer their time, talent, and treasure to serve the "least of these."

When Gary is asked how he arrived at this very unique approach to volunteer mobilization...which is basically to not exclude anyone from having an opportunity to serve, Gary will tell you this story:

On one of his first trips on behalf of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, Gary was asked to consult with the Nazarene Hospital in Washim, India. While on this volunteer trip, Gary decided to "stop by" and volunteer with a Catholic Nun by the name of Mother Teresa in Calcutta. Upon his arrival at the Sisters of Charity

facility in Calcutta (now Kolkata), Gary was introduced to Mother Teresa (who assigned all the volunteers to their particular assignments). Gary, in his clean white doctor's scrubs, with a brand-new stethoscope around his neck, walked into Mother Teresa's office, so excited to meet this lady that he had heard so much about. After a brief introduction, Mother Teresa wrote out a note, folded it and handed it to Gary and instructed him to report to the head nun at the "Home for the Dying." Gary was thrilled. What better place than a home full of dying patients for him to practice his skills as a Western trained physician?

As Gary entered the Home for the Dying, and was introduced to the head nun, he handed her the folded note from Mother Teresa, upon which she had written down Gary's volunteer assignment. As the nun read the note (which Gary had not opened), she smiled and said, "please follow me."

Gary followed the nun into the men's ward, which was full of dying patients, and a cadre of volunteers, none of whom were medical doctors. Gary was so excited to become immersed in a room full of the "least of these." However, the nun continued to lead Gary through the men's ward into the women's ward. Not to worry, the same conditions prevailed: a ward full of dying patients, being cared for by a group of overworked volunteers, none of which were medical professionals. Truly, this was where Gary belonged. But the nun continued to lead Gary through the women's ward and into the kitchen. Gary was so impressed. These beautiful nuns were going

to feed him before he began his volunteer duties for the day. However, the nun continued through the kitchen and out the back door of the home for the dying. Once outside, Gary was confronted with the large four-foot pile of stinking garbage. There were two five-gallon buckets and a shovel. The nun said, “Your assignment for today is to take all of this garbage to the city dump. You can’t miss it, just go down this road for several blocks and you will run right into it.”

Gary was dumbfounded. Here he stood, in his nice clean scrubs, holding his stethoscope in his hand. He had flown out of his way, actually all the way from the United States, in order to volunteer his services as a medical doctor, with years of some of the best medical training offered anywhere on earth. Yet here he was, staring at a large pile of garbage. He was confused, but not about his frustration; *What a complete waste of my time. Don't these people understand the concept of stewardship? Using a highly trained medical doctor to haul garbage to the dump? Any of those young college-age volunteers could do this job—why me?*

But Gary did the job that he was asked to do. At the end of the day, he had finished taking the large pile of garbage to the dump. He was hot, sweaty, and extremely irritated. When the call came for the volunteers to cease work and return to their quarters, Gary was about to leave, when he decided to say good-bye to the head nun who had taken him to his garbage disposal assignment. As he sat outside of her office, he looked up at a sign that was hanging on the wall. On the sign, was one of Mother

Teresa's famous quotes: "We can do no great things, but only small things with great love." Gary felt as if his heart had been pierced with an arrow from God. *This is why I came to Calcutta—this was the lesson that I was to learn, he thought. I have not put any love into what I have been doing this day.*

This lesson has become the core principle driving all of Gary's volunteer efforts. Ministry and service is all about doing the small things with great love. *I must be willing to do anything, to be flexible, to be willing to wash feet. It is not so much about WHAT I am doing, but it is more about WHY I do it. This volunteer assignment is not about me, but it is about you, it is about kindness and service. It is about true compassion which is defined as: "There can never really be any peace and joy for me until there is peace and joy finally for you, too." It is about HOW I do this assignment.*

From this very humbling experience, Gary went on to found Heart to Heart International, with its more than one-billion-dollar (USD) impact on the world of hurting people. But if you were to ask Gary what is most important, it would not be the size, or even the impact, of Heart to Heart. He would say that what is most important is that every person find his or her calling into service. For Gary, "Compassion as a Lifestyle" is much more than a cute slogan or tag line for NCM. It truly represents his life mission.

In later years, Gary has founded two other organizations, both of which uniquely fit his concept of ministries of compassion. In 1993, Gary founded "One

Heart - Many Hands.” This is an organization that comes along side of the Church of the Nazarene at every major denominational conference. They provide a week-long service project for the city in which the conference is being held. The first such undertaking was in Indianapolis, Indiana at the General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene. More than 300 volunteers came early to Indianapolis and rehabbed dozens of low-income houses. They built wheelchair ramps, and refurbished bathrooms. They did anything that these low-income homeowners could not afford to do for themselves. The mayor and the Governor (Mike Pence who later became Vice President of the United States) were so impressed with what happened that they took this event and sought to make it a model for other conventions which were coming to their city. Other cities have had identical reactions to these incredibly effective volunteer efforts which now involve more than 2,000 volunteers at each denominational event.

The second organization that Gary founded was a for-profit group called “Docs Who Care.” This group of medical doctors and nurse practitioners offer their services to rural hospitals. Gary didn’t start out to build a large organization, he simply saw a need and set out to do something about the need for staffing rural hospitals. He staffed the first hospital himself. This freed him from his traditional family practice, and allowed him to increase his volunteer travel time significantly during each month. As he learned more about the need, he recruited other like-minded health care professionals who currently staff

125 hospitals in seven mid-western states in the central part of the United States. One interesting fact about these health care providers who work for Docs Who Care: many of them share Gary's passion for service. When the earthquake struck Haiti in January 2010, it was Docs Who Care staff who volunteered for the first six months following that earthquake. They were the vanguard of over 1,500 health care professionals who gave of their time, talent, and treasure to minister to the thousands of earthquake victims.

How can Gary's passion be summarized? This is difficult. When asked this question, Gary reflected upon his somewhat haunting vision. "When God calls us, and He has called every one of us to do something, and if we fail to respond, there is going to be something missing in our universe," he said. "What impacts the world is when each one of us does our part." He went on to explain his role in his local Nazarene Church, College Church of the Nazarene in Olathe, Kansas. "As a member of my local congregation, this is always the place where this obedience to volunteering should start" he shared. "Every single member of College Church should sense their unique calling. And if every one of us does our small thing, if every member makes their unique impact, the world will be changed, beginning right here in Olathe." He goes on to tell the story of his preacher-dad who would often say to Gary, "Taking a plate of chocolate chip cookies to our neighbor is just as noble and important as anything else, including Dr. Billy Graham speaking to 70,000 people in

a stadium somewhere.”

When asked what he would write about in another book, Gary answered, “If I were to write another book, I would address the issue that I believe many people get trapped into: the idea that they should wait for God to hit them over the head with some kind of a calling. We often think of a calling as some kind of significant event, or even mystical. But the truth is that God is calling all of us all of the time, in many different ways. We do not have to wait for something dramatic, because the call has already been given. You do not wait for a call, God has already issued the call to all of us. All ages, all nations, from every spectrum of the social-economic scale. The question is: Are we going to respond?”

Gary Morsch, in incredible example of one man answering his own, very unique, calling from God to serve the “least of these brothers and sisters of mine.”

CHAPTER FIVE: A PIECE OF BREAD

There is nothing that typifies Nazarene Compassionate Ministries in the minds of many Nazarenes more than the food security¹⁴ projects present in every world region. Nazarenes have always been a compassionate people, and we seem to be in good company with highly reputable organizations when it comes to this priority of taking care of hungry people. Feeding those in need has always been a part of serving others. And when we serve others, we are serving Christ:

☺ Matthew 25:34-35 — “Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, my Father has blessed you! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the creation of the world. I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat....’”

☺ Isaiah 58:10 — “If you give some of your own food to [feed] those who are hungry and to satisfy the

¹⁴ Food security directly impacts the ability of lower-income families to provide the basic necessity of having even the minimum number of calories to stay healthy. Food security ministries encompass food distribution and feeding programs as well as long-term agriculture and farming projects.

needs of those who are humble, then your light will rise in the dark, and your darkness will become as bright as the noonday sun.”

☺ Isaiah 58:7 — “Share your food with the hungry....”

☺ Ezekiel 18:7 — “He is a merciful creditor, not keeping the items given as security by poor debtors. He does not rob the poor but instead gives food to the hungry ...”

☺ Luke 3:11 — “Whoever has food should share it....”

☺ Proverbs 22:9 — “A generous person will be blessed, for he gives some of his food to the poor.”

☺ James 2:15-17 — “Suppose a brother or sister does not have any clothes or daily food and one of you tells them, ‘Go in peace! Stay warm and eat heartily.’ If you do not provide for their bodily needs, what good does it do? In the same way, faith by itself, if it does not prove itself with actions, is dead.”

☺ Proverbs 25:21 — “If your enemy hungers, give him food to eat....”

☺ Acts 6:1 — “In those days, when the number of disciples was increasing, the Grecian Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food.”

As we reflect upon these Bible verses, we are reminded of this very basic truth from Scripture: We are compelled

to share our blessings with the less fortunate. In 2019, many NCM initiatives like emergency relief, refugee response, and child development centers worldwide encompassed food security as a significant component of our compassionate response.

One of the beauties of the NCM system is the undesignated donation. (Think, for example of the Africa Disaster Fund, which allows NCM to utilize these donations in the geographic areas, and the most severely impacted and marginalized peoples in these regions.) The message from these types of donations is: “Send the money where it is most needed.” Trust and confidence in a system that does just that, sending the food and other necessities to where it is most needed. Many times, these localized food security projects receive absolutely no major media publicity. Perhaps it is for political reasons, or lack of film crews from CNN or Fox, BBC, or any other news agency, being sent to cover these “minor” needs. But, for whatever the reason, many times little if anything is said about the suffering or dying. Yet, the NCM delivery system is there. The local churches know where these needs are, even when the major news outlets “take a pass” on covering these non-major events.

This chapter attempts to share some of these lesser known events. Feeding hungry people can be a tricky business. What happens when the resources are depleted and the people are still hungry? Long-term food security through things like conservation agriculture, community farms, economic security, and sustainability has to be

considered as one partners with those who are vulnerable. Still, the Scriptures are clear, the situation of our world makes our job no less important of a priority than it was for those very first disciples in the early days of the church that we read about in the sixth chapter of Acts.

☞ Baskets of Love: Responding to Food Shortages in Venezuela (Originally appeared in NCM Magazine-Winter 2017)

At first, Carmen thought of the Saturday church services at the Church of the Nazarene in El Llanito, Venezuela, as an activity for her children. A single mother without a permanent job, she was overwhelmed with looking for work and finding odd jobs to scrape by. With her children out of the house, she had a few hours to do chores and find something to feed them that day.

Carmen* lives with her children, Deo and Daniela, in the Andean region. Not only has work been hard to find, but there is also a food shortage plus rising prices. Recently, the children were eating only one meal a day. Every night, Carmen worried that she wouldn't be able to find food for the next day. Sometimes she didn't even want to wake up to the reality she faced; her children were without even the most basic necessity, and she didn't know what to do. The church's Saturday service became a safe place where she could take her children as she tried to figure it all out.

As Deo and Daniela began to attend church more,

Carmen began to notice a difference in them. They began to pray over meals, thanking God for the food they had even when it wasn't enough.

The pastors at the church began to learn about the family's situation from the children. They began to pray together for food and for Carmen. Then one of the pastors began to visit the family at home.

One day, the pastor showed up with a basket full of staple foods for the family. The food had been gathered through a ministry they simply called *Cestas de Amor*, or Baskets of Love.

Carmen wept for joy at the sight of the basket. Today, Carmen's prayers for a stable job have been answered. Her children's prayers have also been answered—now their mother goes with them to church each week. She has even invited some of her neighbors to join them.

Baskets of Love is run through local Nazarene churches in Venezuela. So far, churches have been able to care for 60 families. There is a great need for food support in Venezuela, and the churches hope to help even more families in the future.

Across Venezuela, lack of access to food is causing hunger and malnutrition; families are eating less nutritious food or skipping meals. During food shortages, it's important to provide critical nutrition, and churches are doing just that by distributing staples and hot meals through Baskets of Love. They're also considering the future by teaching families how to grow their own food

and helping them set up community savings groups.

To support the church's work to alleviate hunger through food security, visit ncm.org/foodsecurity

☞ Breaking the Cycles: Shepherd Community Center Serves Indianapolis Neighborhoods (Stevens, Callie-The Greening-2021)

“... from the bottom of my heart, thanks to you and the center for helping me feed families.”

These are the words of one of Shepherd Community Center's partner schools, who had just been able to deliver eggs to one of the students' families. The family had been looking everywhere, trying to find food during the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, they will be able to get regular meals from Shepherd.

The Indianapolis-based center first opened its doors in 1985. Today, Shepherd regularly serves more than 500 families in the community annually. The programs are created to nurture the whole person and the whole community, considering the physical, emotional, spiritual, and academic development of each individual.

Defining poverty, which can be financial, spiritual, emotional, and more, can sometimes be complicated. So Shepherd developed ten assets as a guide and measure. Then, poverty is defined as the extent to which a person or family has (or doesn't have) these assets: financial, emotional, mental, spiritual, physical, support systems,

relationships and role models, knowledge of hidden rules, self-advocacy, and knowledge of organizational structure.

This approach allows the center to see people as people, not as a cost factor or dollar amount. It's the whole person that matters, and the ten assets can help identify poverty cycles in which people might be stuck. Allen Southerland, one of the senior leaders at Shepherd, notes that breaking those cycles long-term is the goal.

“The way we do that is to try to just build those ten assets in their lives so they can make choices toward sustainability and choices toward stability,” Southerland says.

This whole-person care has been particularly important during the pandemic, which was officially declared in March 2020. Because Shepherd already had so many community-based programs in place, they were able to pivot to begin caring for families struggling with augmented economic hardship and hunger.

Food in particular has become a pressing issue as a result of COVID-19. The zip codes¹⁵ Shepherd serves are a food desert, or an urban area where it is difficult to buy high-quality fresh food for an affordable price. Midst pandemic-induced economic turmoil, food needs have become even more dire. Southerland says that during the pandemic, Shepherd is serving meals six days a week to an average of 2,000 to 2,200 people.

¹⁵ In many countries, zip codes are called postcodes or postal codes, and designate a geographical area of a city.

“There’s really not a food issue in our country; there’s an access to food issue,” Southerland shares. “So the thing to do is ask, ‘How do we help our neighbors access the food that’s there?’”

Story after story speaks to the weight of Shepherd’s presence in the community, not as an organization, but as people who have relationships with their neighbors. Those existing relationships—through staff, through the police officer and paramedic that work with Shepherd, through schools—are making it possible to reach those in great need.

Often, Shepherd partners with other organizations or community entities, like the school at the beginning of this story. One of those partners is a senior living center nearby, where Shepherd staff called to offer food delivery. The staff member at the center excitedly accepted, explaining that she had been unsuccessfully calling around the city for extra food for the tenants. In reaction to the offer, she told them she was overwhelmed with joy.

↻ Conservation Agriculture Means More Food Security (Stevens, Callie-The Greening-2021)

Chisomo, aged 25, is in her second year of farming, using conservation agriculture techniques. After the first year, she was so pleased with the results that she doubled the size of her plot from half an acre to a full one.

Conservation agriculture is a system that improves food production for small-scale farmers. Three main

principles, which include minimal soil disturbance, use of organic soil cover, and crop rotations, keep land fertile and healthy. Training and resourcing helps the farmers learn how to harness higher crop yields, which help both feed their families and generate income.

In Malawi, where Chisomo lives, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries partners with Canadian Food Grains Bank¹⁶ to work directly with farmers. The project that began there in 2013 with only 21 farmers has grown over seven years to include more than 1,000; plans are already in place to grow it further still. There is also a special focus on gender inclusivity—many of the farmers are women.

After Chisomo harvests good seeds from her field, she meticulously selects those that are good and carefully stores them for the next planting season. In these small seeds, she says she sees a future where she and her family have regular access to enough nutritious food.

“I can struggle with food, but this is my future,” she shares.

Chisomo is also part of a savings group, a common piece of NCM’s food security ministries. Savings groups allow for plans for the future rather than planning season

¹⁶ The Canadian Food Grains Bank is a partnership of 15 church-based agencies working to alleviate hunger through food assistance, long-term agriculture and livelihoods programs, and nutrition projects. Founded in 1983, members of the Church of the Nazarene in Canada, and Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, have been partnering with local Canadian farmers who donate crops and agricultural land to the bank.

by season. With small loans, farmers can expand their fields, purchase more seeds, or start small businesses. Each piece turns into more food down the road.

The food that the farmers grow supports their families as well as a local Nazarene child development center, where children receive educational, spiritual, nutritional, and physical care, and Nazarene churches. Some of the farmers also volunteer to help cook the food for the children at the center. When combined with the better soil, healthier plants, and higher yields, the whole model invests in both the individuals and the community. More sustainable long-term growth is inevitable.

Alan Chimtolo, who is both a pastor and farmer, shares that conservation agriculture is changing the whole community. At first, people were skeptical of the new practices. But many have seen the progress and become part of the program.

“Conservation agriculture has become a prayer answered in our areas,” Chimtolo says.

All of these examples add to the supply of food in areas of the world where every ounce produced counts. These feeding, and related initiatives, funded and encouraged by NCM will continue. As our world continues to suffer from areas of famine and drought, as well as lack of unjust business and/or political practices, containers of food will continue to flow as a result of the efforts of the Canadian Food Grain Banks, and other similar organizations. But long after the last container has arrived into the area of

need, and the last sack of rice, maize, beans, or some other high-protein food blend has been delivered, there will be people with hoes, axes, and other tools who are doing all they can to help themselves.

There is a centuries-old saying, usually attributed to Confucius, that goes something like this: “Give a man a fish, and you’ll feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you’ve fed him for a lifetime.” However, experience is increasingly teaching us that there needs to be a third part added to this wise old saying: “But who gives him access to the river? Who provides him with the fishing equipment with which he needs to fish?” Feeding initiatives are usually easy for us to over simplify in our minds. And, not unlike the example we read about in Acts chapter six, the root cause of hunger may not be a food shortage at all, but rather some form of prejudice, or some other form of sin that hoards the precious resources, causing them to pile up in a food granary, when hungry people live just down the road.

CHAPTER SIX: EMPOWERMENT, THE UNLEASHING OF POTENTIAL

Almost intuitively, as Christians, we are drawn to the idea of fulfilling the biblical mandate to reach out to the “least of these brothers and sisters of mine....” As we survey the Scriptures, we are continually confronted with the command to show compassion. This biblical call to care for the poor transcends time and geography. From the beginning of the New Testament Church we have been told, “Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world” (James 1:27).

After hundreds of years, it seems that this admonition from James still rings true, especially if we understand that “orphans and widows” refers to anyone who has been marginalized by society, being discriminated against, imprisoned, or lack basic access to such things as food security, pure water, a place to call home, or any of the other necessities which would allow them the ability to have control over their own lives.

It is now clear that the church has significantly reengaged in ministries of compassion over the past few decades. The old, tired debate concerning “evangelism” versus “social action” have been replaced with a new discussion concerning just how we should go about this call to action. How do we implement this call to empowerment for the “orphans and widows” that we find in ever-increasing numbers, all around us?

Over the past decade there are more and more books being written, the point of which is basically asking the reader to consider why we are doing these ministries of compassion, and if we are making a positive or a negative impact.

One example from my own experience (Steve): For decades, local churches have been sending groups of medical professionals as part of medical mission groups. These highly skilled medical doctors, nurses, and other health-care providers volunteer their incredible array of professional expertise in areas that are significantly underserved. They go to people who have no doctor, or health care system, readily available. The usual timeframe for these types of mission trips is one to two weeks. During that time, much “good” is accomplished and hundreds of patients who would otherwise have not been privileged to see a medical professional, have been treated. In addition to excellent care, they receive state of the art medicines provided by these volunteer groups.

However, when we take a closer look at many of these types of deployments, we find that the “good”

which seemed so obvious has actually created a negative impact. One example would be the person with high blood pressure who is diagnosed and provided with the proper medicines to care for this very serious condition. However, after these precious life-giving medicines have been used up by the patient with high blood pressure, there is created a far greater problem: Where will he or she find additional medicines to continue to treat this chronic condition? In the end, the person is left in a worse condition than when they started. Obviously, this was not the intended outcome of the well-intended medical team. But it is the reality nonetheless.

The point of this example, and the ever-growing number of books like *When Helping Hurts* and *Toxic Charity*, is to ask us always to keep in mind the long-term impact of our interventions into the lives of people to whom we are attempting to minister.¹⁷

As we begin to take seriously this biblical mandate of compassion and empowerment of these precious orphans and widows, it might help us to consider a concept that is sometimes referred to as “The Joy Exchange.”¹⁸ In the following diagram, we see the mind-set (perhaps subconscious) of what happens when we attempt to come to the aid of people in need.

17 Read *When Helping Hurts* as a part of a small group study at your local church.

18 Stewardship Commission. Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization. Pattaya, Thailand. October 2004.

Us (those who do the giving, “handing down”)



Them (those who receive the gift)

This “top down” approach (or “God complex”) is the belief—conscious or otherwise—that your way of life is superior to others. It is assumed that we are well-positioned to determine what is best of these “other” people. But the truth is, if we, those who want to help, would simply take the time to ask two basic questions, we would instantaneously improve our efforts significantly.

Question number one: What are you attempting to accomplish? This is a question that needs to be asked *by* one who wants to help, *of* the person who wants help.

Question number two: How can I help? This is a question that needs to be considered and humbly asked *by* one who wants to help, *of* the person in need of help.

It is immediately apparent how different this approach is. Rather than showing up with a “solution” in hand, assuming that you know what the need is, the time is taken to find out from the other person what their priorities really are.

When our local church made this shift in our approach to mission trips, our ministries changed significantly. Not

the least of which was a change from a “hit and miss” approach (e.g., Going to a new location every time we made a mission trip), to the development of long-term partnership with the people that we were wanting to help empower, and share the love of Jesus. Our current project has a five-year written partnership agreement between our local church and the people with whom we are working.

This new approach is an example of “The Joy Exchange,” as seen in this second diagram:

(No longer “Us” vs. “Them”)



(But, “We” working together for the long-term good.)

The impact both *of* our local church and *upon* our local church, has been forever altered for the better. We are learning how to not assume we know what is best and are taking the time to ask these very important questions. Over time, a Joy Exchange is experienced by both groups.

This is far more than a “feel good,” warm and fuzzy, reaction to helping people. This is a genuine attempt at developing lasting friendships, which have impacted not only the members of our mission teams but our children and grandchildren as well. To be more specific, one of the great takeaways for our local church families has been the impact of seeing the incredibly strong, three-generation, extended-family support structure that is part of so many cultures. It is very different from the North American

culture. We are learning, first-hand, how to improve our own families by our participation with these brothers and sisters who are not objects of our compassion, but are becoming friends and partners in ministry.

Examples of this basic idea are found throughout the ministries of NCM.

☞ **Becoming Somebody: Church-based Vocational Training Helps Women Discover Their God-given Dignity in Liberia** (Originally appeared in NCM Magazine-Winter 2018, Luthye)

In a church building in the heart of Monrovia, Liberia, a small group of women gathered over the course of a few days to talk about their hopes for themselves and the other women in their neighborhoods. The phrase they repeated over and over was “become somebody.” They wanted to have the opportunity to become somebody, and they envisioned a future in which other women—particularly those who are vulnerable and living in poverty—would have the same opportunity. And they believed local churches should be leading this effort.

Their dreams have turned into the Empowering Women with Dignity project, which centers on vocational training. Through the project, they are working to see vulnerable women equipped with skills that enable them to provide for their families, experience dignity and confidence, and live as valued and respected contributors within their families and communities.

A Mother's Motivation

“I want a better life,” a woman named Marie shares. “I’m not educated. I want my children to know something.”

Marie,* aged 44, is learning to sew clothing at a tailoring class she attends at Grace Chapel Church of the Nazarene, located in New Kru Town. Marie’s life—and those of most of the people in this dense urban neighborhood—has been marked by poverty.

“I never went to school,” she says. “As a child, I worked for my aunt.”

When she was a young girl, Marie’s mother sent her to live with extended family. The expectation was that the aunt would send Marie to school. Instead, she treated her niece like a slave.

“She treated me very bad,” Marie says. “I had no rest, ever. From early in the morning, I was working, working, working. From seven years old, I was selling in the market for my aunt.”

At age 15, Marie ran away and found her mother. Her mother wanted to send her back to school, but then civil war broke out, and those plans became impossible. Marie, herself, became a mother at age 19.

Today, she has five daughters, including four children ages 7 to 19, but only two are able to live with her. The others are with an uncle, who can afford to cover their school fees and give them a chance at education.

“I’m very sad not to be able to see my children,” Marie says. “I want them to be beside me.”

Marie’s goal is to start a tailoring shop so she can provide for her children’s basic needs, and also ensure that they finish school so they have opportunities for success in the future.

“If God blesses me and I get a business, I can take care of them,” she explains.

Louise,* aged 40, enrolled in a tailoring class at Grace Chapel for similar reasons. In their New Kru Town home, she and her husband care for six children, ages 5 to 13, including three who are children of relatives. Her husband works hard as a math teacher, but they can’t afford to meet the children’s needs on a teacher’s salary.

Louise has what she calls “a little business” selling coal, but tailoring skills will allow her to start a more profitable and sustainable business.

Then, Louise says, “I can pay tuition, and buy clothes, food, and shelter for my children. It’s difficult now because I’m not making much income.”

Her hope for the children in her care is “to see them doing better, to be better educated. I want them to be self-sufficient. I want a better future for my family.”

Louise notes that most of the women in her neighborhood “want their children to have a future, but they don’t have a way to do that.”

Passing on Knowledge

Women from local Nazarene churches in Monrovia have come together to equip other women to create better futures for themselves and their families through the Empowering Women with Dignity project. Three churches serve as centers that offer vocational courses, savings groups, and life-skills workshops. In addition to tailoring, women come to learn catering, soap-making, and fabric design.

When Mamie,* aged 50, was widowed, she was left to care for three school-aged children, ages 12 to 16, as well as other family members. Needing a way to provide for their needs, she enrolled in a catering class.

After completing the course, Mamie was offered a job from a Liberian government official to provide catering services to the workers on his farm for nine months. Not only was she able to use her income to put food on the family's table, but she was also able to ensure her children could attend school.

However, Mamie wasn't satisfied to simply care for her own family. She was inspired to use her knowledge to help other women. In her small community on the outskirts of Monrovia, many families are living in extreme poverty. Mamie saw baking as a way to help them earn some income, so she started her own class with 20 women.

"So many people don't have money to feed their children," Mamie says.

While the catering classes at the church centers have

the advantage of large ovens and a stock of kitchen tools, the women in Mamie's class use what they have at home. They bake by covering outdoor stoves with pieces of galvanized roofing sheets, and they stir their batter with glass bottles.

Even though the equipment is simple, the women in the class have been able to sell their baked goods to support their families. The group has been selling cornbread, donuts, and cookies in their community. With the income they've earned, the women have been able to cover the cost of their children's school fees.

"We came together to do something for ourselves," shares one woman in the class. "When we learn, we can do businesses for our very own selves. I feel proud. ... A little bit of happiness came to me."

Mamie's husband was a pastor, and she sees this class as an extension of the ministry they started together.

"God cares about this," Mamie says. "I pray for the community to be changed."

☞ For Girls, By Girls: A Youth-led Justice Club in Ghana Is Changing the Future for Hundreds (Originally appeared in NCM Magazine-Winter 2017, Stevens)

In Sumprecia Yaro's rural village in northeastern Ghana, educating girls is typically frowned upon.

"Right from childhood, the girls are made to believe that higher education makes it difficult or impossible for

a girl to have a husband,” Sumprecia says.

In fact, there are a lot of things girls and women aren't allowed to do in her village. They are not considered equal to men and, therefore, can't make important decisions or inherit property. Those who choose to go to school have to scrape together funding on their own. Girls are expected to marry and devote their entire lives to supporting and serving their husband, children, and extended family. Very often, they have no choice in the matter.

“Girls are given out to marriages arranged by parents or as a gift to friends,” Sumprecia explains. “Women are advised to always obey, [and] men are allowed to discipline their wives just like their kids.”

Sumprecia grew up in Yapala, a small farming village. She was one of 17 children, including her siblings and half-siblings from her father's two wives. When she was old enough for “grade 1,” she started following her friends to school. Although she was not enrolled, the teachers encouraged her to stay. Eventually, she started doing any kind of farming activities and odd jobs she could find to pay the school fees and enroll officially.

Her mother helped as much as she could, but by the time Sumprecia was qualified for high school, funds had dried up. In her village, it's common for men to offer to help girls pay for school, but repayment is expected in the form of sexual favors. Exploitation is prevalent, and so is teen pregnancy.

“Only a few brave mothers will try to educate the girl

child to the first basic educational level,” Sumprecia says. “Most girls drop out or become pregnant before ‘grade 9.’”

Without funding, Sumprecia sat out of school for three years, even though she was qualified for high school. Longing to finish her education, the teenager boldly approached the pastor of the local Nazarene church she attended to ask for help. He directed her to the denomination’s district superintendent, a man who had grown up in a different community and culture and was happy to work with her on ways to finish her education. Sumprecia’s first year high school fees were paid by a compassion fund the district had set up, and she also received two pigs to raise. The profits that the pigs and their progeny generated allowed her to finish school without having to turn to men who would exploit her.

Through the church’s support, Sumprecia became the first educated girl in her family.

She says that the Nazarene superintendent encouraged her to keep up with her classes and never think of quitting. He even suggested that through her efforts, other girls could be empowered to believe they could succeed.

“For the first time, I felt like I am capable of doing something good, and could do more,” she says.

A Dream of Justice

Sumprecia’s feeling that she could do more wasn’t just a passing notion. She went on to found the Nazarene

Girls for Justice Club as a way to equip and empower other girls.

Sumprecia knew her story wasn't unique. She also knew that many girls weren't as fortunate as she was: when they left school, they often didn't get to go back. She says God began to speak to her about forming a club to support other girls the way she had been supported.

"I had a lot of encouragement to dream of living and doing anything that men could do because I am not a lesser human being," Sumprecia says. "I always find ways to share this same dream with other girls and to encourage them."

In 2009, the dream God gave her for the justice club came to fruition. Since then, young women have been coming together to create tangible solutions for the problems they face.

At first, running the club wasn't smooth. In order to garner the respect and support of the men in the community, leadership of the club was given to a man in the beginning.

This generated a lot of tension. How would the young women learn to accomplish things themselves if they weren't allowed to lead? Still, they didn't let the awkwardness stop them. Sumprecia, along with 14 other girls who had similar stories, came together to start the first club.

"We freely discussed our issues and found ways to respond with biblical teachings and prayers," Sumprecia

says.

After about a year, the church leadership helped the club transition its structure. Now, the club functions independently under the leadership of young women. Nazarene district leadership continues to provide support in the form of mentoring and leadership training opportunities, as well as finances for larger project proposals. The church leaders also engage with local police when legal justice is needed for specific situations in the lives of the girls, such as sexual assault.

The club hasn't just continued to function; it has exploded. The original club with 15 members has grown to more than 750 members, plus others who aren't yet registered officially. The club consists of groups who meet across four zones in 11 different communities. The groups meet on the first Saturday of each month, and the local group leaders also meet together every three months. Once a year, all members are invited to a club-wide gathering at a central location.

While the Nazarene Girls for Justice Club was born out of a local Nazarene church and still bears its name, girls from other denominations and even other faith traditions are also welcome. Any girl who is facing an injustice herself, or wants to help others address injustice, can join.

Aiming High

The support the club provides is multi-faceted and seemingly endless. Together, members contribute “love

offerings” during their meetings and manage a bank account where funds for their ministry are kept.

They use these funds to address real-life problems girls are experiencing. One of the most successful activities of the club has been running a piggery to help girls continue their education. The members work together to raise pigs. When a girl receives a pig, she is able to sell the piglets to cover school expenses, in the same way Sumprecia did when she continued her high school education. Recently, the piggery was destroyed by a storm, so they are now working to raise the 5,600 Cedi (\$1,265 USD) needed to re-establish their herd. This time they plan to build a sturdier structure.

The club has a farm where peanuts, maize, and rice are grown to earn additional income for club projects. They also buy sewing machines and provide vocational training for girls who want to learn a trade. In addition, they invite women who have found professional success to speak, and they organize specialist to come teach various skills.

Sumprecia notes that this approach is working. “The club empowers girls and encourages them to aim high in life,” she says. Many people have seen the fruits of the club. Girls graduate and are now gainfully employed or learn a trade and are now leading in training others.

Since the club’s inception, more than 450 girls have either completed high school or learned a vocational skill to support themselves. Many have also gone beyond high school, including Sumprecia, who studied medicine and

now works as a nurse.

In addition to coming up with practical ways to meet tangible needs and helping girls stay out of exploitive situations, the club also works to address emotional and spiritual concerns. They start by making sure members understand and experience the love of God, and they talk a lot about living in a Christian relationship before marriage and when married.

“We have helped more than 1,700 girls to have a positive view of themselves and to live a biblical, moral right life,” Sumprecia says. “I am proud to say, teenage pregnancy and teenage marriages have reduced drastically from 90 percent to 20 percent in the areas we serve.”

Doing More

While the clubs still do not see strong support from men in the community, more women are getting involved. Mothers are changing their ideas about the importance of school for girls, and more often than not, now hope their daughters attend, rather than discouraging it.

The girls who are involved in the club are pioneers: no other women have taken on the responsibilities of leadership the way they have. As members graduate they become community leaders, teachers, wives, mothers, and more. And because of the Nazarene Girls for Justice Club, they will teach their peers and daughters that they can do more, that they can dream more.

Esther first learned about the club when its leaders

helped a 13-year-old girl in her community avoid an arranged marriage. When Esther learned about the training, support, and justice work they were doing, she decided to join.

As part of the club, she was able to continue her own education. “I was thrown out of class because I could not pay my fees,” Esther explains. “The club helped me with two piglets, and now I have been able to take care of my school needs.”

Not only did she finish primary school and high school, but Esther is now studying at a teacher-training college.

“I love this club,” she says.

From these brief examples, it is clear that many of us have much to learn about a true “joy exchange” that releases the enormous potential found in all people. *Lord, please forgive us if we have ever been tempted to believe that our way of life, or that our culture is superior, to others. We know in our hearts when the love of Christ transforms us into new creations, that we are instinctively drawn to reach out to others. But Father, help us to always stop to ask the basic questions of the “Joy Exchange” before to set out to “do good” in the name of our Savior. Amen.*

CHAPTER SEVEN: THE HEALING TOUCH

The veteran missionary escorted the young lady to the hospital. Dr. Orpha Speicher, M.D., had recently arrived in Washim (Basim), India after a long and wearing journey by ship from the United States. The year was 1936.

Her training in medicine at Loma Linda University had been a lengthy process. Initially, the only reason she entered medical school was to follow the instruction of General Superintendent H. F. Reynolds, who had told her, “Young lady, if you want to become a missionary, become a medical doctor.” Orpha’s call was to become a missionary, although she thought as a teacher.

Now here she was—ready to view the building that was to become the Nazarene hospital in India. To her horror, she looked at a building that had been a school but was now closed. There were rats, birds, and bugs infesting it. The rooms were stacked with broken furniture, the walls covered with blackened boards, the plaster falling and cracked.

She turned to the veteran. He smiled and said, “This is your hospital. You will have to create what you want.”

The young surgeon, out of the United States for the first time, in a new country with a difficult language, discovered there was no equipment, no trained staff, no nurses, no patients, no money—and in this unpretentious way, Reynolds Memorial Hospital was born. Orpha Speicher did it all. She overcame suspicion and hostility in the town; cleaned, scrubbed, and repaired the building; lobbied for money; and began to train staff. Through the years she drove trucks, mixed cement, designed buildings, and started a nurses' training school.

Dr. Orpha Speicher typifies the commitment of those in compassionate ministry. No task is too large, no job too small, no assignment too dirty, no challenge too awesome, to undertake in the name of Christ.

The “Speicher story” has always been happening in missions and compassionate ministries. Dr. David Hynd carved out a hospital in Bremersdorp (now Manzini), Swaziland (now Eswatini). Dr. T. Harold Jones did the same in Acornhoek, Republic of South Africa (the Ethel Lucas Memorial Hospital). In later years, Dr. Dudley Powers was founding medical superintendent in Papua New Guinea.

In pioneering work, it has always been that way and always will be. Medical missions—health concern and care—has always been part of the Christian mandate. Name the most famous missionaries—Carey, Livingstone, Schweitzer, Moffat, Morrison, and so on—and all have had a medical component as part of their ministry. It might be an aspirin, a bandage, a salve for sores, comfort

during deadly epidemics, a stethoscope, even a Band-Aid—missions and medicine have gone together like a horse and carriage.

In this book, we are not giving a history of—nor philosophy of—medical missions. We are telling a sampling of some things happening today in this important area of compassionate ministry.

Very early in my missionary career I (Steve Weber) came across a situation that has had a profound impact upon my thinking. I was observing, over the months, that the same little children were returning over and over again to our Nazarene clinic. Of course, on the one hand this was a good thing. (In terms of our reports to the government, and to our mission headquarters. More patients mean that we had placed our clinic in the correct geographical location). However, the more I studied the situation, the more troubled I became. These same returning little patients, for the most part, were suffering from such things as intestinal parasites, protein deficiency, and similar problems. This was my first introduction to the concept of “Community-based Health Care.” In other words, there might be a better way to deal with these little folks than prescribing worm medicines.

Upon further research, we discovered that ALL of the water wells in the area were polluted! We invited professionals to assess the situation. The bottom line was this: the water in the entire area was bad. These children would suffer from intestinal parasites for as long as the water remained contaminated. So, we had a hard choice

to make: should we reallocate some of our incredibly precious medical budget to deal with the water problem? How would it look to the government (and to our mission headquarters) if our number of patients significantly decreased as a result of cleaning up the water supply? (Not the best reaction, I realize, but it was a significant consideration in my mind.) Fortunately, we decided to do the right thing. We even found another agency who specialized in cleaning up contaminated water sources. Our patient load did decrease. But as a friend of mine once told me, “Never trust a health care system that rates its success by the number of beds that are filled.”



Like most things in life, I came to understand that healthcare is a delicate balance. In underserved areas of the world, like my home town in Nebraska, USA, which hasn't been able to attract a medical doctor to come and

live there since 1948, there must be an emphasis upon preventing the diseases before they attack. (Case in point, the little folks with intestinal parasites.)

Note the diagram. In many places around the world, people are blessed with incredibly well-trained clinic and hospital staff. These facilities are equipped with the best and newest tools to treat both chronic and acute illness. But, unfortunately, this is not the case in many places around our world. (Including my home town.) Therefore, our responses must be contextualized to these situations where the needs far outweigh the resources. Thus, the need to take very seriously the concept of Community-based Health Care.

Responding to the health care needs of people has been part of the Nazarene approach to ministry since there have been Nazarenes. (See the timeline in the Appendix of this book for some examples.) In this chapter, we will look at some examples of these responses which are closely aligned with the mandate of the local church to be a caring and loving community. This obviously includes the concerns for the physical as well as the emotional and spiritual needs of the community in which the local church finds itself.

↻ Digging Deep: In Mozambique, Local Churches See God in Water and Sanitation (Originally appeared in NCM Magazine-Winter 2018, Stevens)

The beauty of the global church is that we are all over

the world, to stand in the presence of God's people is to be home. In Mozambique, that was made clear by the local Nazarene churches. "Hoyohoyo," people said. Welcome. Come share life with us for a time.

A Long Journey

In the last decade, the discovery of offshore oil has incited an economic boom in Mozambique. The waterfront in Maputo, the capital city, shows the surge in growth. Multi-story skyscrapers are so clean and shiny that they're difficult to look at directly. Cranes stretch skyward all over the city, and a half-built suspension bridge extends across the bay.

Yet, most of this perceived windfall will never be felt by the average person living in Mozambique. According to the World Factbook, 46.1 percent of the population was estimated to be living in poverty in 2015, though poverty has continued to increase due to current global and national crises.

A few hundred miles north of Maputo in a community called Babana, Beatrice, a young mother of six, dreams of a local school. Her children have to walk 14 kilometers to the closest one, which means they spend about four hours a day in transit. Other rural communities have similar challenges, and often the roads to school are dangerous.

Until recently, Beatrice had to walk almost as far to get water for her family. And one trip would never be enough—gallons and gallons are needed to cook meals, clean, bathe, do laundry, and stay hydrated. "Because my

family is a big family, in the past we used to have three buckets of water that we were using for many people, and it was not sufficient,” she says.

The water they brought back needed to cover the needs of 18 people between Beatrice’s six children and extended family members.

Water for All

Although there are communities like these all over the country, Babana, along with all the other villages in this story, is located in a district called Chibuto. It’s in this district that a new Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) project is beginning through a partnership between World Hope International and Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, part of which involved the drilling and installation of 10 borehole wells in Chibuto in 2017.

Currently, 6,000 people across 10 communities are targeted to benefit from the comprehensive WASH projects. In each community, 10 volunteers are trained in well-maintenance, hygiene and sanitation promotion, and upkeep; they will also help spread awareness about hygiene and sanitation in and through the local Church of the Nazarene.

While each borehole was installed next to a Nazarene church, the water is available to the whole community. Miguel, one of the church members in Babana, notes the impact of both the global and local church.

“The day we received this borehole, this is a gift of the church,” he said. “It’s the church supporting the church here, but also the entire community. So, we’ve been rejoicing for this.”

The churches that are near the boreholes are not large buildings. Sometimes, they aren’t buildings at all—one group is still meeting beneath a large cashew tree, although they requested prayer for a structure. Yet the churches are well-known in the surrounding villages.

It is true that the communities surrounding the boreholes are often small, and the churches may be known in the same way people everywhere know the buildings in their neighborhoods. But it goes deeper than cursory awareness. In another village called Mukotuene, Palmira, who has 10 family members living at home, says that the well there has made a difference in her church.

“There are people that had given up the church, but then when this borehole was drilled they came back to be part of this church,” she said. “But also, there are new members that came because of what the church is doing in this community—because of the well.”

Finding Good Water

At a glance, it could seem like water is abundant in Chibuto. Even in winter, the dry season, the ground is covered with growing things. Along with inedible plants, crops like sweet potatoes, cassava, corn, and red peppers are abundant. And although they aren’t in season, the canopies of the trees—mango, papaya, and banana, to

name a few—are tall and lush.

The danger, though, is whether or not water is safe to drink. According to the World Factbook, 48.9 percent of Mozambique's population only has access to unimproved, or unsafe, water.

In Palmira's community, the closest water before the borehole's installation was stagnant. Even that swamp was far away, and vulnerability begets vulnerability; drinking the stagnant water meant people often had to make the walk while they were sick.

Lidia lives alone close to one of the new boreholes; her husband has passed away, and her children have grown up. She used to have to transport her water by herself, and so she had to choose between making many trips with a small jug or one trip with a large one.

“Years before we used to fetch water far away, so with the 20-liter bottle it took many hours because I would have to walk and rest, and walk and rest,” she says.

Now, Lidia fetches water three times a day from the borehole, which is less than a five-minute walk from her house.

As the name implies, boreholes are drilled deep into the earth, pulling up water via a two-handed pump. They are both more reliable and less dangerous to fetch water from than hand-dug wells, and they provide easy, fast water. They provide safe water and more reliable too. It's harder for the water to get contaminated, which means less sickness overall.

One woman, Helena, is clearly full of the joy of the Lord. She gets all the other women in the community to dance with her, picking up the empty buckets near the borehole to use as props. She says that the gospel gave them good water and good health.

Helena has also noticed that learning how to take care of the water helps cut down on illness. “There is a change, because since we received this water source we were taught how to take good care of it, how to use the water, and to keep the water in closed containers,” she says.

“There is a change,” she confirms. “For example, the diarrhea and these waterborne diseases—cholera—they’re reduced.”

Sanitation Cuts Illness

Wells are a part of the WASH projects in Mozambique, but they are not alone. As sanitation and hygiene are part of the title, they are also an aspect of the long-term plan. The goal is to expand knowledge of both to help address the spread of illness.

Cholera, diarrhea, respiratory infections, and other illnesses are all concerns throughout Mozambique. In March of 2019, cyclones and flooding caused a cholera outbreak impacting 6,382 people. Similar outbreaks have occurred every year for the last five years.

The frequency of illness is precisely why the volunteers and staff helping with the WASH program take their positions so seriously. Each month, Victoria Mamuque,

the WASH Project coordinator for NCM, leads groups of volunteers in presentations at schools and hospitals. In June, the presentations focused on the importance of handwashing.

“It’s important to help people to understand how to prevent disease like cholera and malaria,” Victoria says.

At Mukotuene primary school, a group of volunteers taught several hundred children how to use a two-liter bottle as a hand-washing station. It’s a clever design: holes at the base of the bottle release water when the cap is loosened, but the flow stops once it’s tightened again and pressure is re-established. It’s a variation on a tip-tap, the jargon for plastic bottles that become faucets. The children dissolved into laughter during the tip-tap demonstrations.

Another version of the tip-tap helps further explain the name: a plastic jug with a hole in the side is suspended from a frame, releasing water when it’s tipped to the side with a rope. Both are examples of ways people can practice better hygiene with things they have on hand already, not things that have to be purchased with funds that aren’t there. The exception to this availability is soap, although charcoal ashes can be used to clean hands in a pinch.

In Babana, Beatrice led a song praising the sanitation and the role it played in her life. “Sanitation is an ax who cuts every illness and everything bad,” she sang. “Sanitation will cut every illness.”

Attending to Illness

Because WASH programs intend to address the whole person and the whole community, the approach to sanitation is holistic too. Those principles of cleanliness are straightforward and familiar: washing hands, cleaning dishes, and keeping houses clean. But another consideration for proper sanitation is making sure the proper facilities are available in the first place.

There's a clear hierarchy of needs, and if food and water aren't taken care of, digging a pit latrine becomes low on that list. For that reason, people in many rural areas of Chibuto did without bathrooms. Until recently, that created another considerable vulnerability to disease.

Victoria has slowly been identifying the need for latrines and addressing it. Through personal relationships, the most vulnerable families in eight communities were identified and given cement covers to create bathrooms in 2018. The slabs are stable and long-lasting. They also have covers, an important feature for mitigating pests.

Angela, who has lived in her community for ten years, says that the new latrines are an exciting addition to each household. She says she has noticed her health is better. "Since our latrine has the lid, this helps in decreasing the sickness, so life is improved," she says.

In each of the eight communities, the latrines are brand new. Some of them are already in use, while others sit in rows, drying in the sun. The excitement for them is universal. Telma, a mother of seven, says that life is improving. "We are so happy and excited for what's

happening regarding the new projects as we receive the latrine slab,” she says.

Excitement is clear in the sheer effort each household puts into digging their latrine. That’s part of the agreement—the latrine covers are provided, but each family has to do the construction themselves. When WASH volunteers initially visited households, more than 180 were willing to build their own latrine if they had a cover.

“I’m so excited because there are things we didn’t have in the past, but now we have it, like latrines,” Angela says. “And we have the hand wash facility, so I’m excited about it.”

Creating Space for Hope

People can be reluctant to share hopes. Maybe it’s because they feel so personal; if they get brought into the sun, will they wither? Or, worse, will they be revealed to be those most terrifying things: foolish, ridiculous, unattainable.

In Mozambique, it is the same. Asking about hopes brought swift smiles, demurred answers. But when pressed, those shared hopes were so global: jobs, homes, family members, and education.

Sometimes, when asked about the well or the latrine cover, people said they had never even hoped for something like this. Certainly, cement latrine covers won’t change everything. Single wells will not bring electricity, or church buildings, or mills, or adult literacy classes, or

all the other things people listed as prayer requests.

They will do as Beatrice sings, though, and cut disease. And perhaps they will also provide space for other hopes to grow.

Helena says it succinctly, comparing the living water of Christ to the water from the well. “The fact that I have Jesus in my life—I will never get thirsty,” she says. “Also, I drink water from this source and then my health improves because I am drinking clean water. So, I have life.”

☪ Drops of Mercy: In Sierra Leone, Churches Reflect God’s Love Through the Gift of Clean Water

(Originally appeared in NCM Magazine-Summer 2016, Luthye)

Standing where the Alligator and George Brook Rivers converge in Freetown, Sierra Leone, you’ll find hundreds of shanty houses squeezed together along a concrete labyrinth of narrow walkways. You’ll also see that the water collecting here has become a giant sewage pit.

This is Kroo Bay, the largest slum in Sierra Leone’s capital city.

Pa Alimamy Kargbo Kabempa, section chief of Kroo Bay, pulls out a ledger reporting a population of 14,800 people within 2,622 households. Most families are from rural communities. Many originally came to escape a brutal 11-year civil war. Others came looking for a better life with employment and education for children. Instead, families of six, on average, live in one-room homes made

of corrugated metal sheets.

Theoretically, the streams should flow easily to the Atlantic Ocean, but the filthy water is stagnant. Wealthier communities dump household garbage and raw sewage, which flows downstream. In an impoverished area with few sanitation facilities, many Kroo Bay residents are left with no choice but to use the water as their toilet too. Here, children play and bathe, alongside pigs who root in the muck, and swatting at swarms of deadly mosquitoes carrying malaria.

Safety Nets

Not long ago, Sierra Leone was battling the Ebola virus, which caused 3,000 deaths. It was a crisis, to be sure. Yet even months after the country was declared Ebola-free, another crisis remains. Malaria is the number one cause of illness and death in the country, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Each year, more than a million cases are reported, and thousands die each year, making Sierra Leone the country with the fifth highest prevalence of malaria globally.

“Children die from malaria,” says Chief Kabempa, a determined, grandfatherly figure. “I want health for the community.”

When Rev. Vidal Cole, the Nazarene district superintendent in Sierra Leone, met with Kabempa and other community members, the priorities they named were related to malaria: bed nets and tools to clean garbage and stop water stagnation.

“Mosquito coils don’t solve the problem, and people can’t afford nets or insecticides,” Kabempa says.

The Church of the Nazarene in Sierra Leone has partnered with Kroo Bay to provide bed nets for 1,500 households. At about \$10 (USD) each, insecticide-treated bed nets are the most cost-effective way to prevent the transmission of malaria through mosquito bites.

Adama,* aged 28, is a mother of three children, ages 6, 3, and 7 months. She says her 3-year-old was sick recently but is now improving. That’s no small victory in a country where 41 percent of childhood hospital deaths are related to malaria, according to WHO.

Fear is a constant companion for parents of young children, but bed nets help everyone sleep more soundly. “The net is doing very well,” Adama says. “When I have it, the mosquitoes don’t bite.”

The project is providing nets first to children under five, and pregnant women—the most vulnerable. In Sierra Leone, 18 percent of children die before their fifth birthday, which is the highest rate of under five deaths in the world, according to UNICEF. Pregnancy reduces a mother’s immunity, making her more susceptible to malaria, which increases the risks of miscarriage, still birth, and low birth weight. By preventing malaria, bed nets are saving lives.

Katiatou,* aged 20, is also a mother of three children, ages 6, 3, and 9 months. She works as a petty trader selling snacks, but when a child is sick, she not only has to pay for

medical care, but she also misses work and the income that comes with it. Her older children have both had malaria. “I can’t work when they’re sick,” she says. “The net helps.”

Fatmata,* aged 75, lives in a one-room home with four grandchildren, including an infant granddaughter. Their mother died from Ebola, and their father passed away years earlier. The grandmother once had a soap-making business, but the last time Kroo Bay flooded, the waters carried away all her supplies—and her livelihood.

At least now there is one thing she doesn’t have to worry about. Before, she and the children were sick from malaria periodically, but with the new bed net, she can sleep peacefully, knowing they are protected from disease-carrying mosquitoes. “Blessings on the church [that gave the nets],” Fatmata says.

Rubbish Round-Up

Alusine,* aged 30, a young leader in Kroo Bay, is part of a group of 25 who work from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. two days a month clearing out garbage from the waterway where mosquitoes breed. The Nazarene church provides gloves, buckets, and other tools to assist the group in their work. He points to a bridge crossing the water. Pieces of trash catch on the concrete footers, adding to the problems of stagnation and flooding during rainy seasons.

“If we reduce the garbage, we will reduce the flooding and mosquitoes,” he says.

Simple access to basic health care can change the

facts listed above. In response, Nazarene Compassionate Ministries partners with clinics, hospitals, and community-based health care programs around the world to provide education, training, resources, and support for health care providers and communities in need of both physical and spiritual healing. Some additional recent highlights include:

☺ HIV and AIDS outreach in Eswatini, where NCM-Eswatini has reached out to 22,356 clients to provide treatment support and care. Ministry members regularly maintain relationships with clients to follow up with testing and care regimens. This project is in partnership with Columbia University ICAP¹⁹ and has been in place since 2010. A separate program also enables a taskforce to provide psychosocial support.

☺ During the COVID-19 pandemic, which was ongoing at the time of this publication, NCM supported more than 180 new projects in 85 countries, reaching more than 350,000 people.

☺ A new initiative will activate community health workers in five countries in Africa, where they will resource community members in partnership with local clinics and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) projects.

☺ WASH projects in 13 countries are impacting more than 60,000 people directly through schools, churches, and clinics.

¹⁹ Columbia University ICAP stands for Columbia University International AIDS Care and Treatment Programs.

☺ In Liberia specifically, community health volunteers are promoting health, sanitation, and hygiene across 26 communities and 9 elementary schools, despite the challenges of distance and access during the rainy season. The wells continue to serve approximately 30,000 people.

We began this chapter with a story of Dr. Orpha Speicher. Many, many similar stories could be told out of the archives of Nazarenes doing ministries of compassion all around the world. Almost without exception we find these highly-skilled and dedicated people swimming upstream, competing for scarce resources. Continually needing to explain that their ministry to the body is important and part of the verses in Matthew 4:23 and Matthew 9:36 formula of Jesus teaching, preaching, and healing wherever He went. We will only know when we arrive in heaven the incredible contribution that these wonderful people have made to the building of the Kingdom of God. In our combined years of ministry (over 100 years), the authors of this little book have been privileged to know and love many of these dear health care professionals. They come from every corner of the Nazarene world. They continue to show the compassion of Jesus in sacrificial ministries that warm the heart, but most importantly, they are living reminders of the fact that the “purpose of the Christian life is not about doing more things for God, or even fixing people, it is simply to love people the way God loves us...to give everyone we

encounter a taste of heaven on this earth.”²⁰

²⁰ Scazzero, Peter (2017). *Emotionally Healthy Relationships: Day-By-Day*. New York: Zondervan. (pp.145-146)

CHAPTER EIGHT: NO PLACE TO CALL HOME

Few of us can really understand the sobering thought: “I can never go home.” There are many different definitions of what a refugee is or is not. Some of these definitions are political; others are economic. For the sake of this publication, a refugee is anyone, for whatever reason, who can’t go home.

Displaced persons require yet another definition. Displaced people are just that: people who have been displaced by human-made or natural disaster. Even though the causes are quite different, the response is nearly always the same. People who have lost their place of residence, and are struggling to understand what has happened to them, what they should do next, and where to go, have special needs. Most of us will never experience the totally disconcerting feeling of having no home, no base, no center, no turf, no stability, no special closet to store the things of our lives. We can barely understand even a small portion of the suffering, the tenor, the need to belong, the need for help. As the politics of our world continue to destabilize and disturb, people are increasingly impacted. On every hand are people who have been displaced,

refugees from war, famine, or some other tragedy. The way they live their lives, view God, and understand themselves has undergone traumatic change. To the people living as refugees the Church of the Nazarene must continually be ready to minister. For the love of God is clearest through the actions of His people toward one another.

Ever since the beginning of the office of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, there has been a high priority placed upon assisting local churches in their attempt to come alongside those people who have been forced to flee their homes. There are several different scenarios related to helping people who have no place to call home:

Whenver possible, especially in the cases of natural disasters, assistance is given to resettle these people back into their original homes as soon as possible. The best solution, normally, is to help in some type of rebuilding effort of the original homes in the very same location. This makes good sense in locations where there is insurance and land ownership. However, in many places around the world, this is simply not possible. For example, after the terrible earthquake in Haiti in 2010, hundreds of thousands of people ended up living in tents (some of them for several years). Their homes had been totally destroyed. They didn't own their homes, nor the lands upon which their homes were located. In most cases, the land owners had no interest in rebuilding the "low-cost housing" facilities in which these people had formerly lived. In this tragic situation, it was the local churches who came to the aid of their church members

and friends. In some cases, it took several years, but—over time—the “tent cities” in and around the capital city of Port-Au-Prince slowly dwindled from over 1.25 million dwellers to something less than 30,000. (A very different story from the normal short “news cycle” that moves our thinking on to the next global tragedy and tugs at our heart strings in seemingly endless fashion.) It was an incredibly touching sight to see local churches reaching out to their communities in endless acts of compassionate concern. One of the more touching and practical ministries I personally saw during this time was church members’ homes being opened to the residents of the tent cities for them to take their showers before leaving for work each morning.

If resettlement back to the original home is not possible due to war or some other form of political unrest, then some other solution must be found. One of the very first child-sponsorship programs which was introduced by Nazarene Compassionate Ministries was developed to assist a Nazarene District in Central America which was attempting to assist the children in one part of the country whose parents had been killed in a vicious civil war. A children’s home was opened to assist these war-orphans until longer term housing and/or adoptions could be arranged for these precious children with no place to call home.

Increasingly, the refugee crisis has developed into a global crisis. As you will read on the pages to

follow, the numbers of people who have been forced from their homes and from their countries of birth is reaching staggering proportions. But as you read about the incredible numbers of people who now fit into this category of “people who have no place to call home,” do not be tempted to throw up your hands in frustration and say, “What can I do in the face of such overwhelming numbers?” Remember the advice that Dr. Gary Morsch received from Mother Teresa: “We can do no great things, but only small things with great love.” Perhaps you will never be in a position to open your home to a neighbor who has lost theirs to some crisis or disaster. But you can call together some compassionate friends from your local congregation and volunteer to serve refugees in your community, pray for millions of people displaced around the world by focusing on geographical areas, look for local places to donate gently used clothing or furniture, food, or toiletries to refugee families. These offers of practical compassion, give both dignity and hope to people who have come to live in a new land and start over. Likewise, you could engage a refugee resettlement agency in your community to find out what they need and provide it.

☞ **Seeking Refuge** (Originally appeared in NCM Magazine-Summer 2017)

Six years of war in Syria have destroyed communities and torn families apart. In that time, more than 11 million people have been displaced from their homes due to violence and persecution. Five million people have gone to

other countries, where they are now living as refugees. In nearby countries and around the world, the global refugee crisis has affected more than 60 million people. There are currently 21 million refugees living outside their home countries and more than 40 million who are displaced. More than half of them are children.

As long as war and violence exist, so too will refugees. It can be easy to turn away from the crisis because those numbers are too big and too hard to face. But it is our hope that we can begin to see the refugee crisis through the lens of individuals, each with a story of loss and hope for the future.

Every story is unique. Some people have left jobs as professors or doctors or lawyers, destined to relinquish professorial status for low-wage work. Others left behind family members, hoping desperately to someday be reunited. Some left in groups; others, alone. Some had time to say good-bye, while others had only minutes to grab what they could and run. Every story is different, but they all involve people who have left everything in the hopes of anything. Every story is different, but they all involve children, women, and men who are loved and who are made in God's image.

These are just a few of their stories and a glimpse into how God is using the church to serve those in search of refuge.

Even though Mahdi* was young, experiencing persecution for his faith was nothing new to him. He

and Amira* had just married. They were from different countries in the Middle East, but they shared a common faith in Christ.

Mahdi and Amira lived and ministered in her home country of Syria in an area that had originally been relatively safe. Early in 2015, they made a trip to visit Mahdi's family. On the way back, the crowded passenger bus they were traveling on was pulled over, and armed men boarded it. It was quickly evident that this was not a random military check. The men were taking control of the bus and kidnapping everyone on board. The driver and passengers were forced to travel for several hours on back roads to a predetermined destination. As they unloaded, the men and women were separated. Mahdi gave one last word of encouragement to his new wife.

Though treated roughly and locked into one small room together, the women were not abused. But throughout the night, they could hear the tortured cries of the men in the next room. The night seemed to have no end, but at some point, in the early hours of the next morning, the captors grew tired and the beatings stopped. Amira had no idea if Mahdi was alive or dead. She only knew that she was still alive, and she prayed without ceasing that God would somehow deliver both of them.

Soon after the sun rose, the door of the women's room scraped open, and a captor called out her name. Would the next moments deliver torture, abuse, or death? With a shaking hand, she acknowledged her name, silently praying for strength and deliverance. Rough hands dragged her

through the door and pushed her into the cold morning air. Amira was thrown at ragged feet. When she lifted her head, she looked up into the eyes of her husband. Mahdi grabbed Amira's arm, and they began to limp into the landscape toward freedom. She was hardly able to register what was happening as her husband pulled her painfully forward. Although a limp and dried blood made it clear that Mahdi had been beaten throughout the long night, Amira was thankful he was alive. Cold, hungry, and wounded, they walked for hours. They refused to stop, frightened that at any moment their captors would come for them. As the day wore on and the distance grew, they felt a burgeoning sense of safety. Eventually, they stopped in a village, where they asked for help.

Journey to Safety

Many months later, Amira told her story while gathered with a group from various nationalities, all sipping tea in a home in Croatia, where she and Mahdi landed after fleeing from Syria. Amira sighed and her shoulders drooped.

“We have no idea what happened to the rest of the passengers on the bus, nor do we know why they let us go,” she said.

The kidnapping was the event that catapulted the couple into escaping Syria in the fall of 2015. Unlike many other refugees who were also beginning the journey to Western Europe to flee violence and persecution, Mahdi and Amira determined to make Croatia their destination.

When they arrived, they joined a refugee community being housed in temporary—and often challenging—living situations.

After hearing that a group was offering free English classes in the dormitory where they were staying, both Mahdi and Amira enrolled. It soon became clear to them that their teachers were Christians, and when a worship gathering was planned in the home of a missionary family, both were quick to respond. They also began to find many others within the refugee community who were hungry to know more about Christ. To the surprise of Mahdi and Amira, opportunities for them to speak about the Lord were suddenly all around them.

Making Connections

Through their English teacher, Amira and Mahdi connected with a local church in their new city. Their story took another exciting turn one Sunday morning when Amira noticed the Nazarene logo being displayed on a video. She was acquainted with a Nazarene pastor back home, and she knew the denomination. Neither she nor Mahdi had realized that the English teacher, the pastor, and the congregation were part of the Church of the Nazarene until that moment.

Soon after, the couple received word that their three-year resident visas had been approved by the Croatian government. That meant that they could call this country, this congregation, and this community home. With stability for the future settled, Mahdi and Amira

approached the church leaders, who had been such a significant part of their journey, to ask if they could volunteer officially to help other refugees the way they had been helped.

Mahdi also indicated a desire to fulfill his call as a pastor through the Church of the Nazarene. Today, Mahdi and Amira are learning the language and culture of their new host country, and Mahdi is working his way toward ordination. They have found community through the Church of the Nazarene in Croatia.

☞ Standing on Holy Ground: People Living as Refugees Create a Global Church (NCM Magazine-Summer 2018, Sipes)

Croatia lies about halfway between Greece and Germany. When the border passages to the rest of Europe shut, people fleeing violence and persecution found themselves stuck there, stranded between their landing point in Greece and their destination in Germany.

And so it is there that they now try to make a life for themselves, many living in old buildings re-purposed into refugee camps.

The Nazarene church in Zagreb, Croatia, is ministering to individuals and families stuck in that middle space, providing clothing, food, educational programs, assistance with residency, and spiritual support. Two of the main hosts are Mahdi and Amira, who understand what it means to be refugees themselves. They had arrived

in Croatia like the rest, but connected with the Nazarene church at a crucial time. The Scotts, Nazarene missionaries in Croatia, were praying for leaders to connect more deeply with people living as refugees. It turned out Mahdi worked with a Christian ministry previously and had taken coursework for pastoral licensing.

The stories told by the families in the makeshift camps in the old buildings told stories that were all too familiar. Some had to leave behind family members. Some had experienced the loss of loved ones or the pain of not knowing what has happened to them. All had fled violence and persecution.

The night before at a church service held in a storefront in the city, other residents shared their stories too. The place was a beautiful mess of activity, with people kindly maneuvering their way through crowded spaces to set up food, prepare music, or just talk with each other. There were several foreign volunteers in the rooms and a few who were local to the Balkan²¹ region. The vast majority were refugees.

The city seems to be the middle point, a layover in a long journey. But what became clear while we stumbled through multilingual singing in the church service was that this was holy ground.

²¹ The Balkan region is also known as the Balkan Peninsula, and refers to the area geographically in Eastern Europe that includes Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and portions of Greece and Turkey.

In the midst of songs in six languages, we sang one in English, “No Longer a Slave.” We heard people sing of God’s deliverance from their enemies and the abatement of their fear. We heard those who had been cast about in inflatable rafts, desperate for solid ground, sing about the God who split the sea for their safety. We saw people lifted from a middle ground to holy ground.

This country was not the chosen landing place for many living as refugees, and being stuck there feels like a burden. It’s not a life they chose. But at least some have found a place of healing and rest in our church: a holy ground where they’ve found new life.

☪ Active Compassion: Venezuelans Find Refuge and Aid in Brazil (Originally appeared in NCM Magazine-Winter 2019, Stevens)

William,* aged 52, and his family were sleeping on the streets near a bus station in Boa Vista, Brazil, when they heard someone preaching in Spanish. They are strong followers of Christ, and they moved toward the pastor to hear what he had to say.

William had left Venezuela with his wife and daughter, who was pregnant at the time, and they knew their money was not going to last. By selling some of their items, they had just enough for the multi-day bus fare and food for the journey. They knew they would have a difficult time when they arrived, but even that seemed like a better option than staying; their daughter needed antibiotics,

and there weren't any available. Through the Church of the Nazarene, the family was able to stay in a small shelter.

“By the mercy of our Lord, the Hispanic Nazarene Church opened their doors,” William says.

For the last six years, Venezuela has been in various states of turmoil and unrest. Hyperinflation has caused prices of essentials to skyrocket, and people are left without any way to buy food regularly. By the end of 2018, prices were doubling on an average of every 19 days. Medicine has become increasingly unavailable. Diseases and illnesses thought to be eliminated—such as measles and diphtheria—are beginning to reappear. In a country that had once eliminated malaria, incidents of that illness are rising too. Out of 24 states, 10 have had cases reported.

People are leaving because they feel that they don't have a choice. According to the United Nations, three million Venezuelans have left the country since 2014. William says his family came when they couldn't afford anything in Venezuela anymore. “I came for a better future for me, for my daughter, for my grandson that was to be born,” he says.

Expansive Care

The pastors and congregation at the Church of the Nazarene in Boa Vista, Brazil, knew they wanted to do something to help. Boa Vista is not far from the border with Venezuela, and many people were coming there. In March 2016, they began to reach out to people in public spaces such as parks, where the hundreds of

people crossing the border end up in makeshift camps with little shelter. Within a year, the church had started a food distribution service on Thursday nights that served approximately 1,500 people every week. The need for more was becoming rapidly clearer.

From that first response, the church in Boa Vista has started a Spanish-speaking church to minister to the Venezuelans in Brazil, where most people speak Portuguese. About 200 people attend the new church, 40 of whom stay at a shelter housed in the church's buildings. New classes have also grown out of the need; about 400 people attend Portuguese classes, and others are learning marketable skills such as baking and sewing.

Julio,* aged 43, has been staying at the church in Boa Vista, where he is able to help with some carpentry work. He traveled to Brazil with his family; at home in Venezuela, the lack of food and medical attention was becoming dangerous for his wife, who was pregnant at the time. "At least here, there is food, nourishment," he says.

While Julio hasn't been able to find steady work, he and his family have been aided immensely by church members. They have supported them with everything, he says. They have helped with food and shelter and by giving him carpentry work around the building. It has not been easy for the family, and the road ahead is not simple. Julio is fortunate to have skills in carpentry, which should make it easier to find a job. But without being able to speak Portuguese, finding work may continue to be difficult. The church has become like a family, though.

“In the midst of everything, God is the church,” he says. “You have to have faith, give thanks for everything too. ... But the church for me is the whole world.”

Ongoing Response

Jhnelis,* aged 18, is newly married, living at the shelter at the church with her husband. She has a large family at home, and no one was eating as much as they should. “I had to come here so that I could work here and help my family from here, sending what I can, and all because it was the only way they could survive,” she says.

For the first few months, the couple was able to find work selling items in the street. That work ended, though, and so did the income stream. From there, her story is an echo of so many others: They were forced to sleep on the streets, living from day to day. Jhnelis says she was almost at her breaking point when the people from the church found them. Now, the hope of being able to help her family continues to compel her; she misses them, and she wants to provide for them. “I couldn’t return or think about such things,” she says. “I came here for a better future, or to fight for a better future, so I stayed for that.”

Work is hard to find in Boa Vista because it is not a huge city; the population is close to 280,000. Compared with Manaus to the south, which boasts a population of almost 1.8 million, Boa Vista just doesn’t have the capacity or opportunities to accommodate so many people looking for work. And the 40 people the new Spanish-speaking church is able to shelter feels dishearteningly insignificant

in the face of the tens of thousands of Venezuelans who have come to Brazil.

Transportation is one of the biggest areas of need. It's difficult to pay for bus tickets with only the hope of work. Brazil is a very large country; getting to the bigger cities by bus takes several days, and expensive airfare tickets are out of the question.

With the numbers of people immigrating so high, one inclination might be to become overwhelmed. But story after story from those living in the shelter at the church in Boa Vista speak instead of the church's overwhelming response in love. Basic needs are met there—a roof and food. So, too, are spiritual and mental needs through the Spanish-speaking church and classes. The church saw the need for God's love and so has shared it in as many ways as it can.

☞ **A Chance to Dream Again** (Originally appeared in NCM Blog, 25 May 2017, Dutra)

Although news coverage of the Syrian refugee crisis has come in waves, the exodus of Syrians fleeing their country has not slowed since a vicious civil war began in 2011. While we often hear of those exiting to Europe, 2.3 million children and their families are living in countries that share borders with Syria. Lebanon and Jordan currently host more refugees in comparison to their overall populations than any other countries in the world, according to the U.N. Refugee Agency (UNHCR).

For more than five years, Nazarene churches in Jordan and Lebanon have been providing ongoing food aid and household supplies to thousands of refugees, in addition to offering medical care, English classes, and friendship. In addition to immediate needs, churches are focusing on the future by providing education for children. Scholarships are available so that children living as refugees can attend accredited Nazarene schools.

Many children in Syria have missed out on years of education during the war; in fact, a third of schools there have been rendered unusable because of violence. In neighboring countries, refugee families who once had stable lives have been plunged into poverty, making the cost of tuition for schooling out of the question. In fact, children living as refugees are five times more likely to be out of school than other children, says UNHCR.

Without school, children have limited ways to adapt to new countries, regain stability, and heal from trauma. Without education, a child's future is limited and dreams start to wither, but with education, hope thrives.

These are a few stories of children who have been displaced by war and how Nazarene schools are helping them find hope again.

Regaining Stability: Sami's Story

“Three years ago, my life changed forever,” says Sami, aged 11.

That's when Sami, his parents, and his four brothers

left their home in Aleppo, Syria. His parents worried about the constant bombing and feared for the lives of their sons, so they fled to Jordan.

Even though Sami's father had family in Jordan, they struggled to cross the border. For several days, they waited in a camp. Once, they were forced to leave the border temporarily because the fighting drew too close to the area. Finally, his father was able to make contact with family members, and Sami and his family crossed into their new home.

But Sami's life had started to come undone before they even left Syria. His friends were leaving daily, and he was lonely. He couldn't attend school regularly because of the war.

"When something as simple as stability is absent in your life, it can have negative affects elsewhere," he says. But in Jordan, Sami started attending a Nazarene school every day. The friends he made stayed in school too. He has found stability, and now he dreams of becoming a doctor one day. "Learning and gaining progress in my studies has made me hopeful for my future," he says. "Based on how my life has been up until this point, I am so incredibly grateful for this chance to dream again."

☞ **My Hope in Life: Rasha Story** (NCM Magazine-27
October 2016, Luthye)

"We left our country, Syria, because of the current situation," says Rasha, aged 13, with a quiet, sad voice.

Four years ago, she came to Lebanon with her mother and four siblings. They were supposed to meet her father there, but when they arrived, he had left for Turkey. They haven't heard from him since.

Although her two brothers are working to help their mother with household expenses, money is scarce. Thankfully, Rasha received a scholarship to attend the Nazarene school nearby.

At first, she had a hard time fitting in. She didn't know English, which is the language taught at the school, and she even struggled to understand her Lebanese classmates. But her teachers and a new friend encouraged her to continue with her studies. Now, she also dreams of becoming a doctor and wants to help people in Syria.

"The Nazarene school gave me hope and confidence to fight for a better tomorrow," she says.

Although Rasha initially struggled in school, she is now at the top of her class in eighth grade.

"I thank God for everything, for the difficult and the beautiful things that happened in my life," she says. "I believe that God is always with us and He will never abandon us. This is my hope in life."

☞ Hope to Continue: Halil's Story (NCM Magazine-21 October 2016, Luthye)

After his father was kidnapped in Syria, Halil and his mother and brother fled to Lebanon.

“I love my father and I am missing him every day,” says Halil, age 14. “If he lives, our lives will be easier and more beautiful. I love my mom. She sacrificed so much for us.”

Today, Halil attends a Nazarene school, where he is working hard to catch up after missing many years of formal education. He says the school has helped him make huge progress in his education. He holds on to the hope that he will be able to achieve his dreams and help improve life for his family.

“The Nazarene school always encourages us and gives us hope to continue,” he says. “They are like a family to me and they help me move forward and evolve in life,” he says.

Halil has also found hope in his newfound faith. “My spiritual life is great,” he says. “I know Jesus, and I took Him as a personal savior.”

CHAPTER NINE: THE CRUCIBLE

So, what is church? It seems like a simple question that should have a simple answer. But it is not simple.

A check of the internet to find a definition comes up with one primary definition of church. Building! Virtually every dictionary definition is tied to the idea of a structure.

But we have a better idea. A church is a group of people who agree on a common purpose, choose to fellowship and worship together, take on the joys and travails of life together, and engage in a mission together. A building is a convenience. But look around the world to learn that church can be a cathedral or a cloth tent, large or small, air-conditioned or not, under a tree or in a house, underground or above ground. It does not matter. Because the church is people, and people always make things complicated.

Through recorded history, a crucible has been a bowl or pot made of porcelain or other material where metals can be mixed under conditions of extreme heat. The

purpose of a crucible is to take a mix of substances, subject them to extreme temperatures, out of which something new will emerge.

A crucible can be compared to a church. It is a place where people of any and all stations in life can be together, sometimes under great pressure or distress, sometimes during great joy and peace, and together become something new and fresh. A church is an organism AND an organization, with human beings including all their faults, failings, and foibles, divinely ordained as the Body of Christ to carry out the mission of God (*Missio Dei*) in the world. The apostle Paul uses the analogy of the human body (hands, feet, head) to describe the Body of Christ, the Church.

The local church is like a crucible. A boiling cauldron of single-purpose but multiple activities. A place where there can be disagreement of method, but singleness of purpose. In other words, there can be unity without uniformity.

In the context of the Church of the Nazarene, the local church is not an autonomous body—out on its own doing its own thing. It is connected to a larger body, called the denomination, which by our definition, is a global body of believers who agree on a statement of belief and a commonality of purpose. That cauldron is a boiling pot of creativity, of a multitude of activities, which extends to well over 150 nations of the earth. By definition, it is a body of “outwardness,” which is concerned with the suffering of the world and brings hope of redemption and

renewal.

The health of a local church is not based on size or building, not on campus or programs. The meaning of health is the ability to reach out, bringing in, and going out, accepting and welcoming. In other words, a strong inner core like a crucible with an outward look to the community and to the world.

One expression of the church is mission. As Emil Brunner, a Swiss theologian, said long ago, “*The Church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning.*” Without mission (Missio Dei) there is no church. It gives life to everything else.

Mission is often done by proxy, that is, through giving, through prayer, and other support of “the cause.” But proxy mission is not enough. There should also be personal involvement. And thus, in the Church of the Nazarene, there has proliferated a number of volunteer programs that provide opportunity for personal involvement—hands-on mission.

For example, Maureen Dickerson, long time librarian at several Nazarene universities, volunteered her time over and over again, to go to Bible colleges and educational institutions around the world to set up libraries and resources for students. Dan Dillon, from Idaho, has been volunteering on a virtual non-stop basis for decades with teams often serving in frontier locations of difficulty and danger to improve physical facilities. The list goes on to thousands in almost every field. In the early days

of Nazarene work in Russia, a “geek squad” often came to set up computer laboratories for student learning in theological education.

Of course, these thousands of volunteer “missioners” carry with them the love and message of Jesus. They become His hands, His feet, His voice, often speaking to places that will or cannot hear the Gospel from any other person. Many times, their skill set as professionals gives them entry to other professionals, and some of the resulting new material out of the crucible result in stories that are a panorama of miracles.

In the Nazarene context, the World Evangelism Fund (WEF) is like the foundation, the floorboard. This pooling of money provides a foundation, the support, for the ministry as a whole. Without it, the general denomination could not do all they do in the exercise of the mission of the church.

Think about compassionate ministry this way. It is a delivery system. The people who engage in acts of compassion, whether in a program or as individuals, are delivering love, care, and concern to those in need. That delivery system was formed—somehow—in the crucible, the Church, the Body of Christ. “

The Church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning. Where there is no mission, there is no Church; and where there is neither Church or mission, there is no faith.”

(Emil Brunner)

CHAPTER TEN: IT WAS ALWAYS THERE

History is a compelling teacher. In today's world, it is easy to think that compassionate ministry—as expressed in the church—is some new “invention” or “creation.” But history compels us to listen to its call. Compassionate ministries have always been there.

The roots of compassionate ministry in the Church of the Nazarene go back to the very first foundings—even before the mergers which were consummated in Pilot Point, Texas in 1908. The ministries of small groups, mostly local churches, almost without exception, had a variety of what today we call “compassionate ministry centers.” In fact, many of the local groups started as “rescue missions” or “gospel missions” whose focus was the urban core of North American cities.

It is also helpful to note that many of the early Nazarene leaders came out (were known, in fact, as “come-outers”) of established churches, primarily Methodist in polity and Wesleyan in theology. They brought with them a passion for the lost, a burning desire for social reform in the cities, and a “renewal” of spiritual vitality in and for the

cities. They also brought with them a level of education ranging from Bible colleges to major universities. It is one reason education was planted from the beginning in the DNA of the denomination. (It is worth noting that most new denominations began with Bible colleges and then migrated to graduate schools of theology, and seminaries, and liberal arts colleges. The Church of the Nazarene went against that normal trend and started with liberal arts colleges, and in 1944, at the General Assembly, authorized creation of a graduate school of theology, Nazarene Theological Seminary, and then waited 20 more years to the 1964 General Assembly to authorize creation of Nazarene Bible College.)

From its early founding and up to 1925, compassionate ministry in the Church of the Nazarene struck at the core of the hardest social issues of the day including alcoholism and temperance, unexpected pregnancy and single parenthood, drug addiction, racism and discrimination, the rights of women including the suffragette movement for women's voting rights. In other words, social reform, or what some labeled the "social gospel."

Out of this background, Dr. Tom Nees wrote his doctoral project on the subject "Holiness Social Ethic in Nazarene Urban Ministry." For his research, Nees spent hundreds of hours in the archives of the denomination reading every pamphlet, article, and headline in official publications to garner background on the connection between holiness theology (one stated purpose of the Church of the Nazarene was "spreading Scriptural

Holiness”) and social reform and urban ministry.

He discovered what Dr. Timothy Smith, long time professor at Eastern Nazarene College (in Wollaston, Massachusetts, USA) and Johns Hopkins University in Maryland had concluded. That social reform and Wesleyan theology were matched in content and purpose, right up to 1925 when there was, what Smith termed, “the great reversal.”

By 1925 many factors had entered the bloodstream of American society and the conservative elements of the denomination steered the church toward a more “evangelistic” priority. And, for the next five decades, there was a neglect on the general level of the earlier passions for the true depth of John Wesley’s theology. There was also a turning away from (a drive for/to) urban ministry—one that was not renewed until the 1980’s. In the meantime, World War I, the Great Depression, World War II, technological advancements, and the New Deal of the Roosevelt administrations had set a framework in which the denomination was living and reacting.

So, who is this Tom Nees? Tom grew up in a Nazarene parsonage, son of a prominent leader, Dr. L. Guy Nees, who was pastor, including Los Angeles First Nazarene, Bresee’s mother church, district superintendent, college president, and Global Mission director. Tom was under the influence of his father’s wide-ranging experiences and passions for ministries to all people all the time. “Meeting human need” was an ongoing theme.

After graduating from Northwest Nazarene College (now University) and Nazarene Theological Seminary, Tom and Pat pastored three local churches before being called as pastor of the important and influential Washington D. C. First Church of the Nazarene. It was during these years he began work on the doctoral project mentioned above.

After some years, Tom sensed it was time to move on and became the founding director of what became known as Community of Hope, beginning its work in a ramshackle housing project on the 14th Avenue Corridor of Washington, an area noted for high crime and proliferation of drugs and other problems. One of the unique features of Community of Hope was that from the very beginning it was staffed and eventually led by people from the community—an indigenous enterprise funded from the general Church of the Nazarene, private donations, and federal funding. Now, three decades later this ministry has matured into a multi-million-dollar enterprise carrying out the same mission as its original founding charter.

In reflecting on this, Nees today says “back then you had to explain why you are engaged with human need in the community. Now you have to explain why you are not engaged with human need in the community.” That is a good thing, a positive development. The attitude has changed radically since those early days when the church was coming out of its general hibernation. And yet, according to Nees, “our theology has not caught up with

our practice” in understanding not just the what, but the why we do what we do as part of our Wesleyan heritage and belief. So, a lot has been done. But there is more to do.

To summarize, the Church of the Nazarene was born in a blaze of evangelism and social reform. It then went into a kind of theological hibernation as it related to social reform. However, even in these decades, there were pioneers and heroes, all parts of local churches, engaging with human need in urban centers. Then, starting in the late 1970s and 1980s the church began a long process of re-engaging on a general level. Creation of the office of Nazarene Compassionate Ministry was part of that process. And today we are where we are, with thousands of local churches and leaders fully engaged with a dizzying array of ministries as an expression of the “good news” of the Gospel, being the hands and feet of Jesus, to hurting people in human need.

It was always there. It has always been that way.

AFTERWORD

“It has been quite a ride.” Steve Weber and I have said this often in our quest to review our original Greening work of 30 years ago, and as we have observed all the subsequent “water under the bridge” events that have flowed into this update and revision.

We have been struck by the breadth and diversity of activity. At the same time, we have often noted that there “is nothing new under the sun,” by which we mean that the principles are the same. The impulses for action remain true. People are largely unchanged in their character or behavior. A few bad. Most good. Motives mixed, but results almost always positive.

So, for us to have the privilege of participating in this update, “it has been quite a ride.”

Many years ago, my parents took me to the headwaters of the great Mississippi River. I had often crossed that mighty river at St. Louis, Missouri, and at Memphis, Tennessee, USA, where the breadth was impressive. And, in New Orleans, where the sheer power of the river was breathtaking. The river was ablaze with activity, barges and freighter ships, yachts and cruise pleasure boats, people fishing, and oil barges. The river seemed always

to be muddy, which labeled it with one of its taglines, the “Big Muddy.” But I had never thought about the beginning of the river—in Minnesota at Lake Itasca. There it is only 18 feet across and knee-deep. And pure. I remember sticking my feet in the cold water, looking down at the bubbling stream rippling across a sandy bottom through its channel with caters, tamarack trees, and sedge. There were wildflowers (this was summer) and tiny blossoms of sweet bedstraw, and some pinkish-purple clusters of flowers mixed with orange trumpet-shaped flowers of spotted “touch me nots.” I could hardly imagine that muddy, polluted, mighty river 2,318 miles (3,730 kilometers) to the south came from this innocent and pure flowing stream.

For me, this and other great rivers of the world have become a metaphor for what we title “compassionate ministry.” It flows from the pure and holy heart of God—and all of this activity is ultimately a result of God’s nature and character. John in Revelation 22:1 puts it this way, “Then He showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb....” John goes on to say, “On either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month, and the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations.”

This great river, flowing from the heart of God, is compassionate ministries, made up of many tributaries. Simply put, a tributary is a river or a stream flowing in to a larger river or lake. Tributaries are what feed the large

river with freshness, nutrients, and life. Every large river has hundreds, or thousands, of tributaries. Each tributary may have its unique characteristic and flow pattern, but all have in common their contribution to the larger river which becomes the composite of its tributaries. Some tributaries come from melting glaciers, others from falling rain, yet others from springs out of the good earth.

So, think of all these thousands of actions we have described in this book as springing (gushing) from the Heart of God via the local organization, usually a local church. They are tributaries which contribute to the whole, the larger river. Compassionate ministry is by definition and by description, the larger river. One that is always moving, never stagnant, always growing, always purifying.

As tributaries flowed into that river, there also were added the pollutants of human irresponsibility, and humanity's *inhumanity* to others, natural disaster, poorly distributed resources—all those things that represent the uneven landscape of earth. But in those tributaries are the purifying elements of Christian faith and character, providing “shelter for the orphan and widow,” sustenance for the starving, a “cup of water” to the thirsty. These are the ingredients of compassion—compassion as a lifestyle.

As Steve and I have reflected on this while reading hundreds of accounts of specific activities, some things have struck us again and again. One is the absolute primacy of the work of the local church. Nearly every activity (tributary) flows out of the local church—the

living Body of Christ in the world. Dr. Nell Becker Sweeden, current director of NCM, emphasizes this over and over again. Whatever action is taken on a corporate level is in support of the compassion demonstrated by the local church and its members. This is why Nazarene Missions International stresses “nurturing a spirit of missions in every local church.” It is an imperative, not a take-it-or-leave-it option.

Another thing that has struck your co-authors was what I label “historical consistency.” Visually, we have tried to portray this in the timeline you will see in this book. And these are just a sampling. We hope you have thoughtfully read and understood the demonstrated fact that there is a historical consistency—one action builds on another. One response flows out of a previous response—and all of it ultimately flows out of the Holy Heart of God. Like the pure waters out of Lake Itasca.

As David Kauffman wrote in the lyrics of his song:

“Flow like a river, fall like a rain
Streams of compassion, flow from his throne
Wide as the ocean, deep as the sea
Life-giving fountain,
Is God’s love for me.”

Franklin Cook and Steve Weber

APPENDIX

A SOCIAL HISTORY TIMELINE

AN OVERVIEW OF COMPASSION IN THE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE FROM 1853-2020



Five Points Mission established in New York City, New York, USA on the site of an old brewery. Phoebe Palmer, "mother of the Holiness Movement," is one of the Methodist ladies who founded the mission. Five Points Mission becomes a template for "the settlement house" movement and for later missions, like Peniel Mission in Los Angeles, California, USA.

1853



Compassionate
Ministry Development



Denominational
Development



The Salvation Army is founded in London's East End, England, by William and Catherine Booth, who combine Wesleyan theology with a "theology of the Kingdom" and center their ministry around the poor.

1865



People's Evangelical Church founded in Providence, Rhode Island, USA. This is the first congregation in the denomination.

1887

1890-1895



✚
Holiness people in New England rally behind the Bethesda Home for fallen women in Lynn, Massachusetts, USA.

✚
The Central Evangelical Holiness Union is founded in New England, USA. This is the first parent body of the future Church of the Nazarene.

1890

✚
The New Testament Church of Christ is founded in Milan, Tennessee, USA, by evangelist Robert Lee Harris.

1894

✚
Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene organizes in October. Bresee later says that its purpose is "the salvation of souls and the relief of the needy."

Los Angeles First Church institutes the deaconess order and recognizes Arabella Widney as its first deaconess. Deaconesses ministered to the sick and suffering, visited prisoners, distributed medicine and clothing, worked generally with the poor, and preached and evangelized when necessary.

✚
The Association of Pentecostal Churches of America is organized in Brooklyn, New York, USA, by William Howard Hoople, founder of three churches there.

1895

1896-1900



Rev. H. D. Brown, a Methodist, founds the Washington Children's Home Society in Seattle, Washington, USA. It operates from his house until 1908 when Brown Hall is dedicated. In 1904, Brown becomes the first Nazarene district superintendent, overseeing the Northwest District.



The Oklahoma Orphanage is founded by Mattie Mallory in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, USA.



The Holiness Association of Texas is incorporated with its headquarters in Peniel, a holiness colony near Greenville, Texas, USA.



Merger of the Central Evangelical Association and the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America. The latter's name is retained as that of the united body.



The Pentecostal Alliance (later Pentecostal Mission) is founded in Nashville, Tennessee, USA, by Rev. J. O. McClurkan.

1896

1898

1900

1901-1903



A branch of the Oklahoma Orphanage opens in Pilot Point, Texas, USA.



C. B. Jernigan organizes the first congregation of the Independent Holiness Church, which grows east in Texas.

1901



Rest Cottage, a maternity home for unwed mothers, opens in Pilot Point, Texas. Rev. J. P. Roberts is the founding superintendent. It operates until around 1970.



The Pilot Point orphanage moves to Peniel, a holiness colony near Greenville, Texas, USA, and is renamed the Peniel Orphanage. It becomes an affiliate of the Holiness Association of Texas.

Tim Moore and his spouse begin caring for orphan girls in their home in Nashville, Tennessee, USA.

1902

The Berachah Industrial Home for the Redemption of Erring Girls opens in Arlington, Texas. It is founded by Rev. J. T. Upchurch as an outgrowth of his Berachah Rescue Society, which had been undertaking social work in the slums of Dallas, Fort Worth, and Waco, Texas, among other places.

1903

1904-1907



The Kansas City Rest Cottage maternity home opens in Kansas City, Missouri, USA. Miss Lue Miller is the founding superintendent. By 1925, it had ministered to over 1,000 girls and women and over 500 children. It operated until 1941.



The Holiness Church of Christ results from the merger of the New Testament Church of Christ and the Independent Holiness Church. Headquarters in Pilot Point, Texas.

1904



The Peniel Orphanage now cares for 64 children: 27 boys and 37 girls. Bresee's Nazarenes on the Pacific coast agree to support the Hope School for girls and widows in Calcutta, India, a work begun earlier by two women in India.

1906



Rest Cottage Children's Home opens in Pilot Point, Texas.

J. F. Spruce moves with orphans from Kentucky and opens a family-based orphanage in Floresville, Texas. It later merges with the Peniel Orphanage. Door of Hope Rescue Home for unfortunate girls opens in Nashville under Pentecostal Holiness auspices.



The First General Assembly, held in Chicago, Illinois, USA, unites the Church of the Nazarene and the Association of Pentecostal Churches of America. Bresee and H. F. Reynolds are elected general superintendents of the united body, which adopts the name Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene.

1907

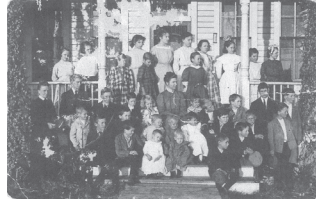
1908-1910



The Training Home for Girls (orphanage and school), with 35 girls in residence, is dedicated on 1 January 1908, an outgrowth of the ministry of Tim Moore and the Pentecostal Mission.

The Second General Assembly, held in Pilot Point, Texas, unites the Holiness Church of Christ and the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. After consolidation, the united church had work in six nations: the United States, Canada, Mexico, Japan, Cape Verde (now Cabo Verde) and India.

1908



The Oklahoma Orphanage moves to Bethany, Oklahoma, USA, where Mattie Mallory, district superintendent C. B. Jernigan, and others establish a holiness colony.

The Nazarene Home for unwed mothers opens in Bethany under Mrs. Johnnie Jernigan, who was previously an itinerate advocate for Pilot Point Rest Cottage.

Hutchinson Refuge Home Incorporated in Hutchinson, Kansas, USA; a ministry of Hutchinson First Church of the Nazarene.

1909



The Nazarene Rescue Home opens in Texarkana, Texas, a joint project of the Arkansas and Dallas Districts.

Peniel Orphanage must rely increasingly on Nazarenes after the Holiness Association of Texas disbands.

1910

1912-1914



The Rest Cottage of Oakland, California, USA, opens as a ministry of the San Francisco District. It ministered to unwed mothers until 1920.

Nazarene Rescue Home (Texarkana) merges with Berachah Home (Arlington, Texas).



The Nazarene Publishing House opens in Kansas City, Missouri, USA.



Hillcrest Rest Cottage is founded near Los Angeles, California, and operates for two years.



General superintendent Hiram Reynolds visits Nazarene orphanages at Khardi and Buldan, India.

1912

1913

1914

1915-1917



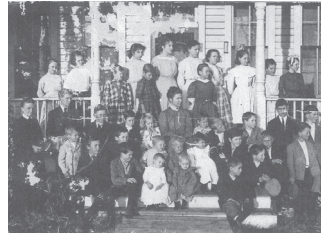
The Pentecostal Mission and the Pentecostal Church of Scotland (headquarters in Glasgow, Scotland) merge with the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene.

1915



Bethany Training Home for unwed mothers is founded in Memphis, Tennessee, by Rev. A. J. Vallery.

1916



Peniel Orphan's Home becomes a special ministry of Nazarene districts in the Southwest. There are 40 orphans in the home.

1917

1919-1921



An 18-bed hospital opens at Pigg's Peak, Swaziland (now Eswatini), supervised by nurse Lillian Cole.

The China Famine Relief Fund raises over \$25,000 to alleviate human suffering following appeals from missionary Peter Kiehn.



Nazarene Medical Missionary Union is founded by C. J. Kinne, founding manager of Nazarene Publishing House.



The Fifth General Assembly creates the General Orphanage Board.

Nazarenes drop "Pentecostal" from the church name to avoid confusion with the religious movement known as Pentecostalism.

1919

1920

1921

1922-1925



☛ Santos Elizondo establishes an orphanage in Juarez, Mexico, in connection with the church there. Six years later, there are 43 orphans.

1922



☛ Bresee Memorial Hospital opens in October 1925, in Tamingfu, China, with 100 beds. It grew out of the personal vision of C. J. Kinne, who supervised construction, beginning in 1923.

☛ The Sixth General Assembly combines orphanage and rescue work under the General Board of Social Welfare.

1923

1925

1926-1928



☪
An infirmary is established in Guatemala.

☪
Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital opens in Manzini, Swaziland (now Eswatini), under superintendent Dr. David Hynd of Scotland, who supervised construction, beginning in 1925.

☪
A training program for nurses is established in Swaziland.

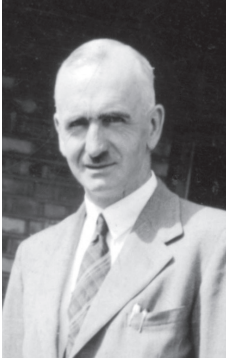
☪
Mary Parnell initiates a training program for nurses at Bresee Memorial Hospital (1927-1928)

1926

1927

1928

1932-1935



☛
Dr. David Hynd
launches the Red
Cross in Swaziland
(now Eswatini).



☛
Samaritan Hospital
and School of Nursing
opens in Nampa,
Idaho, USA, under
the direction of Dr.
Thomas Mangum.
One of its primary
missions is to train
nurses for overseas
service.

☛
Berachah Home
closes and reopens
as Berachah Child
Institute, which
operated until 1942.

1932

1933

1935

1936-1941



Reynolds Memorial Hospital for women and children opens in Basim (now Washim), India, under Dr. Orpha Speicher's leadership.

Dr. Orpha Speicher arrives in Basim (now Washim), India, to direct medical work there.

An orphanage is opened in Swaziland (now Eswatini) by Dr. David Hynd.

1936

1938

1941

1947-1950



☛
A nurses' training school is set up in India by Jean Darling from Canada; connected with Reynolds Memorial Hospital.



☛
Mbuluzi Leper Hospital opens in Swaziland (now Eswatini), supervised by Elizabeth Cole; connected to Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital.



☛
Kansas City Rescue Mission is founded by district superintendent Jarrett Aycock.

1947

1948

1950

1952-1970



☛
Ethel Lucas
Memorial Hospital
in Acornhoek, South
Africa, comes into
the church upon
the Internatioal
Holiness Mission's
merger with the
Church of the
Nazarene.

☛
Kudjip Hospital
develops in Papua
New Guinea through
the work of Drs.
Dudley Powers and
Evelyn Ramsey. The
hospital is dedicated
in 1967.

☛
Gilbert Leigh
founds New World
Ministries in
Chicago, Illinois,
USA.

1952

1965-1969

1970

1973-1976



☛
Christian Counseling Services is launched in Nashville, Tennessee, USA. Services include counseling, service to unwed mothers, foster care, and educating the learning disabled.

1973

☛
Community of Hope is established by Tom Nees in "the riot corridor" of Washington, D. C., after purchasing the 48-unit Cresthill Apartments. Community of Hope partners with Jubilee Housing to deal with housing for the poor and it starts providing food, clothing, and medical services in its immediate neighborhood.

Manhattan, New York, Church of the Nazarene purchases The Lamb's as a center for its multi-faceted urban ministry. Outreach to the poor, especially the homeless, is one facet of its mission.

1975

☛
Nazarene Hunger and Disaster Fund is created following the Haiti famine of 1975, and the Guatemala earthquake of 1976.

1976

1980-1982

✦ Nazarenes embrace "internationalization" as the model for their future—one church undivided by national borders.

1980



✦ Golden Gate Community Church is founded in San Francisco, California, USA, as an urban mission ministering to the homeless and persons in recovery. Later it ministers to persons with AIDS.

1981



✦ The Office of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries is created.

A survey by the Department of Church Extension shows that over 2,000 U. S. congregations are involved in some type of social ministry.

1982

1984-1989



The Association of Nazarenes in Social Work (ANSW) is launched in June, 1985.



Steve Weber is reassigned from Haiti by World Mission executive L. Guy Nees to serve as the first full-time coordinator of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries.

L. Guy Nees reported that over one million patients were treated in Nazarene world mission hospitals and clinics since 1980.

The first Nazarene Compassionate Ministries Conference is held with nearly 500 registered participants, confounding all predictions.

Nazarene Theological Seminary is the venue.



Nazarenes contributed over \$3.7 million (USD) to compassionate ministries, which was matched by another \$3.5 million from non-Nazarene sources.

1984

1985

1985-1989

1990-1996



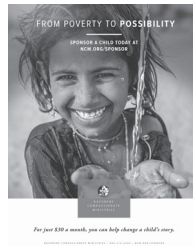
☪
Nazarene Disaster Response is created in response to widespread flooding in the United States.

The church reported over 50 compassionate ministry centers and 200 Good Samaritan churches in the USA and Canada.

☪
NCM Inc. is established as a separate non-profit organization.



☪
NCM's Child Sponsorship program assisted over 28,000 children, and Nazarene Compassionate Ministries funded 218 projects for disaster relief or social transformation.



1990

1993

1996

1997-2005



 The church reported 100 compassionate ministry centers and 700 Good Samaritan churches in the USA/Canada Region.



For the first time, a majority of Nazarene live outside the United States and Canada.



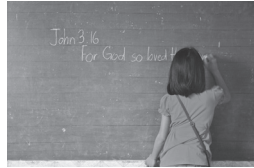
Nazarene Disaster Response responds to Hurricane Katrina and over 4,600 volunteers travel to disaster sites to provide services.


1997

1998


2005

2009-2013



 There are 175 compassionate ministry centers in the United States and Canada.

 Nazarene Compassionate Ministries has over 160 child development centers world-wide.

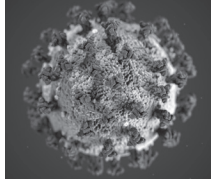
 The Board of General Superintendents designates the first Sunday in November as Orphan Sunday.

2009

2012

2013

2018-2020



✚ The global COVID-19 pandemic strikes, and Nazarenes around the world seek to assist populations impacted by the virus. Churches are closed due to social distancing restrictions, travel is curtailed for all leaders, missionaries, and workers; yet, the compassionate ministries of the Church of the Nazarene are robust globally.



29.3 percent of Nazarenes live in Africa, and 28.8 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Who knows what the next chapter will bring? Will we be ready? Will we remain committed to *Compassion as a Lifestyle* in the face of the unknown future?



What part will YOU play?

2018

2020

THE FUTURE

Act On It!

✿ After reading this book, what practical steps do you think you can take to become more intentionally engaged in compassionate ministry at the local level?

✿ Knowing the significant impact of compassion in action, and that actions taken by individuals make a difference, commit yourself to take action in areas that touch your heart. Share your insights with others, and together grow a ministry of compassion.

✿ Compassion is a lifestyle, and not simply a reaction to events or circumstances that arise. Are you willing to adjust your lifestyle to allow compassion to guide you? What steps would you be willing to take to make your lifestyle more compassionate?

✿ Learn about the hunger needs in your community. Find a local organization addressing hunger, and contact them to find out what their greatest needs might be. Then, explore how you can meet one or two of those needs from your means and skills.

✿ Find out if there are any “food deserts” in your community. These are areas where fresh, healthy food is unavailable or unaffordable to the residents. Engage with your local government to address this need.

✿ If you are in a disaster-prone area, find out if there is a Red Cross training so that you can volunteer if disasters strike. Find out how your church or Nazarene district is involved in emergency relief with NCM (many are) and what you can do to help.

✿ Do a web search about human trafficking in your city. Learn from reputable sources and organizations, and then pray about how you might be able to engage. The Point Loma Nazarene University Center for Justice and Reconciliation is a great resource. Visit the website <https://www.pointloma.edu/centers-institutes/center-justice-reconciliation>.

✿ Write letters or thank-you notes to your local health care professionals, whether in a hospital, clinic, or doctor's office.

✿ In many areas, there are Nazarene compassionate ministry centers that do local, community ministry. Find out if there is a center near you and contact them to see what their needs are. Consider those, and then volunteer, donate, or use your skills to support them.

✿ See if there are any refugee or immigrant support centers in your community. Give your time or resources to help them.

Personal Reflections

❧ CREDITS ❧

For Authors of Short Stories, NCM Magazine,
and Blog References
Compelling illustrations of the larger principles,
adapted for use in the chapters in which they appear.

- Page 24 **When Waters Rise: Providing Care After South Asia Floods:** NCM Magazine, Winter 2017.
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- Page 35 **Red Light Redemption in India:** Luthye, Beth Clayton. Published 20 May 2018 in NCM Magazine.
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- Page 96 **Breaking the Cycles: Shepherd Community Center Serves Indianapolis Neighborhoods:** Stevens, Callie. The Greening, 2021.
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- Page 112 **For Girls, By Girls: A Youth-led Justice Club in Ghana Is Changing the Future for Hundreds:** Stevens, Callie. Published 5 November 2017 in NCM Magazine.

- Page 125 **Digging Deep: In Mozambique, Local Churches See God in Water and Sanitation:** Stevens, Callie. Published 14 October 2018 in NCM Magazine.
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- Page 151 **Active Compassion: Venezuelans Find Refuge and Aid in Brazil:** Stevens, Callie. Published Winter 2019 in NCM Magazine.
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