

in deed and in truth

The New Has Come

Seed project stories from the Church in the
Americas



Dear Reader,

LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS... LETTING OUR LIGHTS SHINE... These themes resound through the pages of this small book!

In this collection are wonderful stories of what God has done through local churches and followers of Jesus in Latin America who trusted God, obeyed Him, and creatively used the resources He gave them to love their neighbors. You will also see the beauty of Latin America, her church, and her people.

Most of the stories in this booklet are about very small projects—we call them seed projects. They are small projects that can be accomplished in a small amount of time and that do not require large resources. A few of the projects in this booklet are not small—but they began as little expressions of God’s love. Isn’t that like seeds? Seeds are small but, when we plant and nurture them, they grow into something else—whatever their designer intended.

In some stories, we discover how to help someone by praying and listening—in others, we learn to ask people what they need—from youth in Brazil to families in Peru, from the schools of the Dominican Republic to the homes of Honduras.

Our thanks go to Zach Cann, a photo-journalist who took a two-year journey to document how the church of Jesus around the world is letting its light shine. Our thanks to the servants whose stories are told here—and to our hospitable and dedicated staff in Latin America who live what they teach and equip the church to serve.

We pray that what you will see and read here will expand your vision of what is possible. We also trust that these stories and photos will encourage you to give to God what He has already given you and your people—to bring glory to his Name and to extend His Kingdom.

Let your light shine!

Thanks,

The Harvest Team



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in deed and in truth



The New Has Come *Americas*

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*Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture quotations are from the New International Version © 1984 International Bible Society.

LINHAS TORTAS

[Crooked Lines]

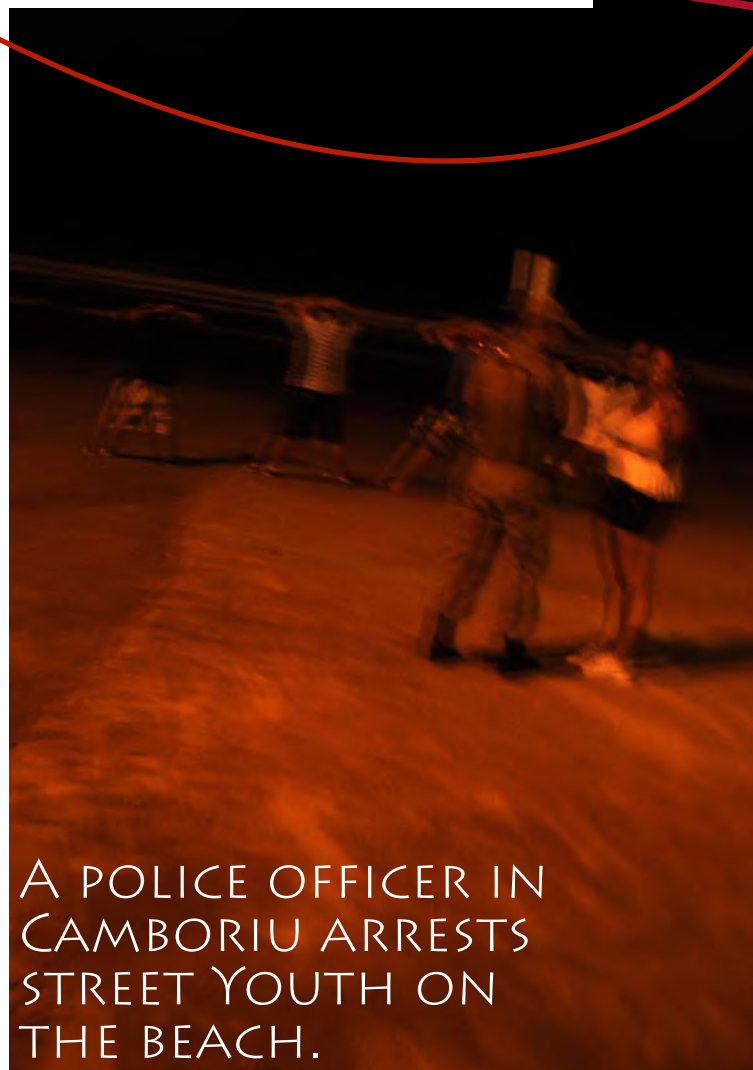


A CHURCH IN
CAMBORIU,
BRAZIL
DETERMINES
TO LOVE
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ONLY FOUND
IN JESUS.

They found Marcio on a street corner in Camboriu, in front of an old Catholic church. He was smoking on cigarette and drinking from a water bottle (but he wasn't drinking water). He readily accepted the sandwich that the group of 4 Christians offered to him. Pastor Bill and a group from his local church regularly minister to street children in their neighborhood. They greeted Marcio warmly. As Marcio ate Pastor Bill talked with him about Jesus. He shared how God sent his only son to die and receive the punishment that we deserve for our sin so that we might receive mercy through Jesus. After sharing the Gospel with him, Pastor Bill gave Marcio a big hug turned to go.

As the group was leaving Pastor Bill felt a tug on his shirt—it was Marcio. “I want to tell you something,” he said. “I have been a drug addict since the age of 11. My life has been full of suffering. And there have been many who come around and tell me I need Jesus. I never believed them. But then you and your church came to me. You say the same things, but this time I believe you. Do you want to know why?” They nodded. “You come back. Every few days or so you come back and remind me of Jesus, His love, and the church that wants to reflect that love. I am amazed you have not given up on me.” Through his tears he added, “I still do drugs and I am still homeless, but everytime I see you I feel there is hope.”

Pastor Bill smiled. “Marcio, we do love you. But we are not the ones who have not given up on you. If you believe in your heart that Jesus paid for your sins then you will be forgiven—you will be saved. That is the hope we want to point you to, Marcio. And we are here. You are welcome anytime.”



A POLICE OFFICER IN CAMBORIU ARRESTS STREET YOUTH ON THE BEACH.

The group then drove a couple blocks to the beach. There they met a young man with AIDS. They gave him some food and prayed for him. There were other homeless people on the beach that came for food and prayer as well.

“GOD WRITES STRAIGHT ON CROOKED LINES”

“DEUS ESCREVE CERTO POR LINHAS TORTAS”

DEUS



***Above:** Pastor Bill and his wife make a hot meal to give to those they meet on the streets of Camboriu.*

***Left:** Pastor Bill shares food and the Gospel with Marcio.*

***Below:** A group from the church listens to a young man tell the story of his life. Sometimes part of loving others is listening to them.*

***Opposite (Top to Bottom):** Pastor Bill leading worship; men praying; Cleiton teaching God's word.*



One man came walked up to the group asking for food. They were more than happy to share a couple sandwiches with him. When we spoke with him about the church he said, "I hate the church. They just use me. I am poor. I have nothing. And still, they find ways to use me!" No doubt there is some truth to what he said. "I'd rather go at it alone." And with that he went on his way down the beach.

Just a minute or two later someone came running saying the police were gathering up street kids just down the beach a ways. The police often do this after midnight, when most people are away. It is the city's way of making their city a better place. They round up street kids and the homeless and take them several miles outside the city and drop them off. The police warn them not to come back to the city. A lot of people have died because of this practice.

Thankfully, the church has better plans for the city. Pastor Bill and some others quickly ran to the place where the police has a group of about 10 kids lined up on the sand. They had their feet spread and hands behind their heads. The police were searching their clothes for anything illegal. Pastor Bill politely spoke to one of the officers and informed him that he had just spoken with one of these kids and given him a sandwich to eat. After some discussion the police let him go. Perhaps that young man will see he cannot "go at it alone."

Later that evening, a group from the church went to visit a home for those trying to overcome addictions to alcohol and drugs.

ESCREVE CERTO

Pastor Bill led the group in worship, and then Cleiton, a visiting pastor, shared from the Bible how it is only through Christ that we are made whole. The men listened intently as Cleiton read from 1 Timothy 1 where Paul writes, "I received mercy because I acted ignorantly in unbelief, and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost."

The time at the home did not last long, but it did encourage the men with fellowship and challenged them with the Gospel. Some have already given their lives to Jesus and have accepted his forgiveness. We pray God would soften hearts of others to do the same. There is a phrase in portuguese which translates: "God writes straight on crooked lines." In other words, it is God who does the work, and he works with broken, crooked individuals.

There is a poem by John Bunyan that speaks of how weak and worthless we are before the law—we cannot acheive righteousness on our own. The peom end with the wonderful and life-giving the Gospel of Jesus!

Run, run, run! the law demands,
Yet gives us neither feet nor hands.
Far better news the Gospel brings,
It bids us fly and gives us wings.

**"THE SAYING IS
TRUSTWORTHY AND
DESERVING OF FULL
ACCEPTANCE, THAT
CHRIST JESUS
CAME INTO THE WORLD TO
SAVE SINNERS."
1 TIMOTHY 1:15**





Serving With Soap



Selling soap to
neighbors on the
streets of Casa
Verde

A small local church in the sprawling city of Sao Paulo, Brazil makes and sells soap to serve their neighbors and those in need.

Jesus commands his disciples over and over again to love their neighbors. In the Gospel of Luke we see the familiar words of Jesus: “As you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.” It is a concept that is often heard and rarely seen. Only by the grace of God through Jesus Christ can anyone live in such a way.

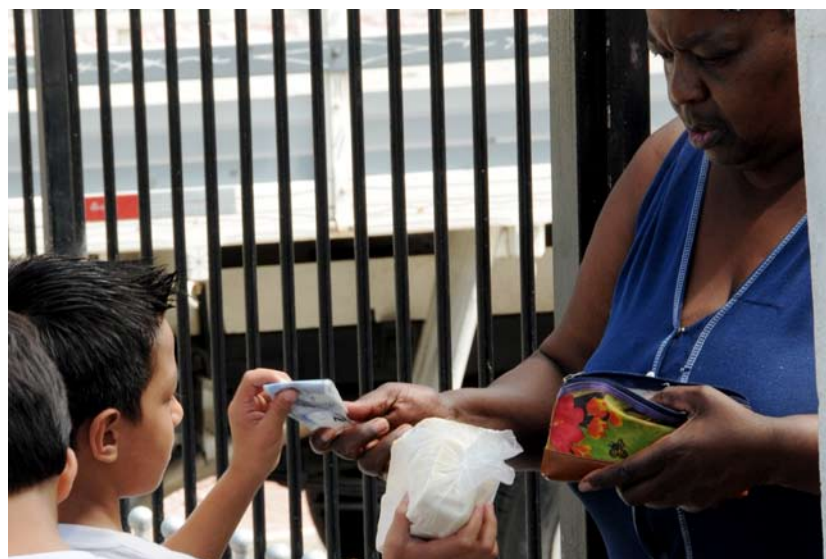
Christians, as disciples of Jesus in His Church, are called to love others—even our enemies. And Jesus promises that as the Church goes to make disciples of all nations that he will be there to end of the age (Matthew 28:18-20). It is a promise where Christians can find hope and endurance in their love and service to others—brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as enemies.

The Evangelical Hossana Church of Casa Verde have found Jesus’ promise to be true in their small acts of service. Pastor Kaoru Aoyama and his church have looked for small ways to serve their neighbors. Kazuko San, one of the members, found a cheap way to make soap from recycled cooking grease—something many restaurants usually throw away. She helped show some members of the church how to make soap that they could sell cheaply to the people in their community. Every month the church makes a batch of soap and the kids from the church go around to all their neighbors to sell it.

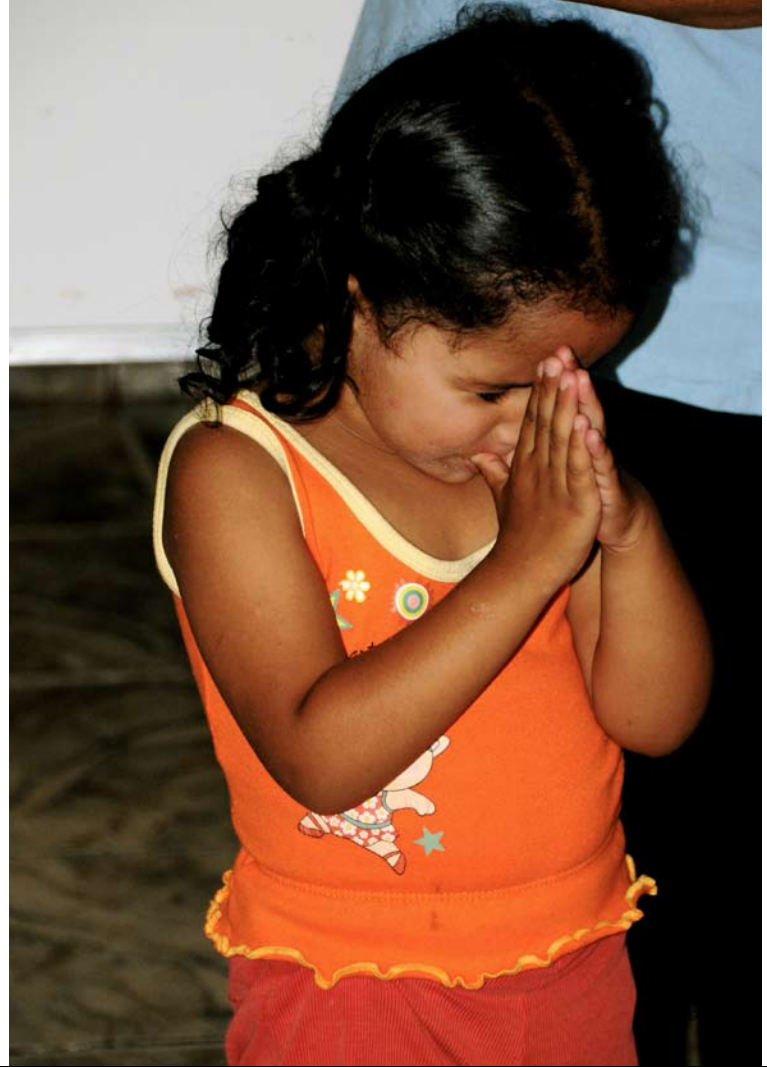
This small act of service has helped the church meet many of their neighbors and start to build relationships with them. It also provides the community with affordable soap.

A blessing came from this small project that the church did not expect. The money earned from all the soap was enough to pay for the materials to make the soap and there was even some left over. The church can take that extra money and use it for other service projects. An example of one of these projects can be found in the following story in this booklet.

This small church in Casa Verde, in the hills of Sao Paulo, have seen God’s grace at work in their lives and in the lives of their neighbors. Jesus is faithful to keep his promise to be with His Church!



Evangelical Hossana Church of Casa Verde



Rails and Riches

A church uses its God-given resources to bless a community both physically and spiritually.

In Luke chapter seven, Jesus explains how when someone has been forgiven much they love much. As Christians, we have been forgiven of our sins! Jesus Christ has forgiven us and loved us. Therefore we are able to forgive and love others. Our service and love toward others is a demonstration of the love God has poured in our lives. It is overflow. Obedience to Christ stems from a love for Him! “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you” (John 14:15-17). It is God’s love and grace that drives us and sustains us.

The Evangelical Hossana Church of Casa Verde is growing in their love for God and their love for others. In the previous story they sold soap to bless the neighbors in their community. In this way, God blessed the church with a small amount of money. The church decided they wanted to use this money to bless someone else. They decided to use the money to encourage and serve Christians and non-Christians in a very poor community on the outskirts of São Paulo—Recanto Verde.

The church prayed about how they might serve this community with what little money they had. They decided they would serve in two ways. First, they would



“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 4:19

help a Christian woman, Katya. The church in Recanto Verde often uses Katya’s house as a place to fellowship and worship. Katya’s son Diego is crippled and is unable to make it safely up and down the stairs without help. So the Casa Verde church bought supplies to install hand rails on the stair well and in the bathroom.

When Pastor Kaoru Aoyama and the Evangelical Hossana Church went to install the hand rails they also did a small activity with kids and youth from the surrounding neighborhood. They brought paper and crayons for crafts and had an opportunity to share the Gospel and pray with the kids.

The whole project only took one afternoon, but it was a tremendous encouragement to the church in Recanto Verde. Katya still opens her home every Sunday for the church to gather and worship, and more and more people continue to come as they see the love the church has for one another. God has opened the eyes of many to see that Christians are able to love much because they have been forgiven much! And our prayer is that God would open the eyes of many more.

Photos (Left to right): Katya helps her son Diego climb the stairs in their home; A young girl prays during the devotional time the church led at Katya’s house; Jonathan helps his friend Diego down the stairs; Jonathan listens to Pastor Kaoru share the good news of Jesus Christ and the love and forgiveness that he offers to those who believe in Him.

Hijos de Nadie



Local churches in El
Alto, Bolivia reach
out to street gangs
with the love of Christ

Street gangs are a way of life for many youth in El Alto. Many kids join these gangs to have some meaning, companionship and protection in life. As families fall apart, more and more kids turn to gangs to survive.

El Alto is also home to the Aymara tribe of Bolivia. The Aymara were one of the only tribes in the Andes to avoid the conquest of the Incas. They are a tough culture to work with. Arturo, a missionary in Bolivia, explained it in this way, “They do not adapt. They conquer. They impose their ideas and their worldview wherever they go.” They are a people that believe unity is found only through destroying opposition. They do not believe in choices. The leader chooses the way, and that is the only way. There is no option B. If you suggest another option then you must be prepared to fight or to be cut down. Because of this, gang violence and warfare are common occurrences.

Most people in El Alto fear these gangs, but several churches in El Alto have taken a different approach. Pastors and church members are realizing that these kids are really searching for what God has to offer them. These kids long for purpose and life—Jesus offers these to those that follow him (Luke 9).

One pastor of a small church in El Alto met a young boy who was a part of a notorious gang called “Hijos de Nadie” (nobody’s children). At first, the pastor just started getting to know the boy by opening his home to him. Over the course of a year, he shared how Christ died to save sinners and to give them a living hope. God, in his mercy, used the love of that pastor to save the gang member. That young man has now made it his goal to reach his friends (and enemies) for Christ. “I used to recruit kids to join our gang,” he explained. “Now I want to invite all those who will listen to follow Christ.” He quoted Matthew 6:31-33 where Jesus says, “Do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For unbelievers run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

Every week a group of pastors visit schools and colleges in their city to preach this same truth to students. Their hope and confidence is in the Word of God—“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” The prayer is that many will see their need for purpose, life and forgiveness and come to Christ.

Photos (Opposite Page): Walking down the streets of El Alto; A community in El Alto puts up a scarecrow as a severe warning to gangs and robbers. **Photos (Top to Bottom):** Pastor and former gang member; A former gang member shares the gospel with other youth; Two pastors committed to taking the Gospel to the youth who are dying to hear it.



Hijos de Dios





Local churches in El Alto have made tremendous efforts to reach out to children. Some churches offer after school programs for kids to have a place to study, eat a small snack, and play together. But not all the projects are big or ongoing.

One church wanted to serve the families in their neighborhood. As they looked around, they noticed that the local playground was shabby, broken, and rusted. They decided an easy way and effective way to serve families would be to fix the park by making it safe and look nice.

A group of church members contributed some tools, money, and time to the project. They purchased several liters of paint and some brushes. On a Saturday evening they met at the church and prayed that God would use this project for his glory and for the exulting of his name among the people of their community.

With over ten men and women from the church helping, the project took about five hours. They scraped away the old paint, fixed the broken swings, oiled the seesaws, and coated everything with bright red, yellow and blue paint. When the work was all done they prayed again that God would be glorified in their service to others. And then they returned to their homes.

Over a year later the paint is peeling, but people at the park still talk about how the church helped their community in a way no one else would. The playground is public property and the community was amazed that the local church would take responsibility for something the local government neglected. According to the pastor, this small act of love has opened the door to many conversations about why a church would do such a thing. The reason for any love and any good is Christ! He died so that we could be forgiven our sins and given new life. It is because of the love that God has lavished on his people, the church, that they are able and passionate to love and serve others.



**How great is the love the Father
has lavished on us, that we should
be called children of God! And
that is what we are!
1 John 3:1**



Peruvian Plates



A local church in Lima holds a Peruvian Food Competition for their neighbors

In early 2009 a group of Christians sold tomas for 2 months to raise money to buy and build a new house for widow in the church. It was a success, and in the process the church learned something new about their neighbors... they love to eat!

The church decided a good way to get to know their neighbors would be do something with food. But there was a problem. How could one small local church feed an entire community? The church did not have the resources to do it. They prayed and asked for wisdom and creativity for what to do. God answered. Just a few days later a church member was at a small restaurant near the church. The cook was talking about how proud she was that people in the community enjoyed her cooking. This gave the church member an idea—a food competition.

For the next few weeks the church planned the event. They made flyers and passed them out to the neighbors. They visited local restaurants to encourage chefs and cooks to bring their best dishes, and they talked with the city mayor about using the park right next to the church for their event. The idea was well received and the mayor even agreed to send his personal security for the event. The church also invited a couple students from a local dancing school to perform.

The next problem the church had to solve was how to protect people and the food from

Photos (Clockwise):
Machu Picchu Incan ruins; passing out flyers; putting the tent together; father feeding his son at the event





Photos (Top to bottom): Putting up the tent; a cook preparing her meal; judges tasting a dish.

Photos (Opposite): Dance students performing; a group of men from the community who joined in the festivities.

the hot sun. Some ladies in the church bought fabric and sewed pieces together to make a tent.



On the morning of March 29, 2009, the church gathered in the park to pray and begin setting up. Putting up the tent was more difficult than they thought it would be. The wind kept blowing the cloth everywhere and it was hard to tie down.

Despite several problems, by the time the event needed to begin, everything was in place. Praise God!

The cooks began to arrive and set up their tables. The event was free and families could either bring their own food or buy food from the cooks. Many families and people from the community showed up the event. Some came because of the flyers and others just stopped by then they saw the tent and heard the music.



Kids from the dance school performed a traditional dance to start the afternoon for the audience. The cooks started selling food to those who were watching.

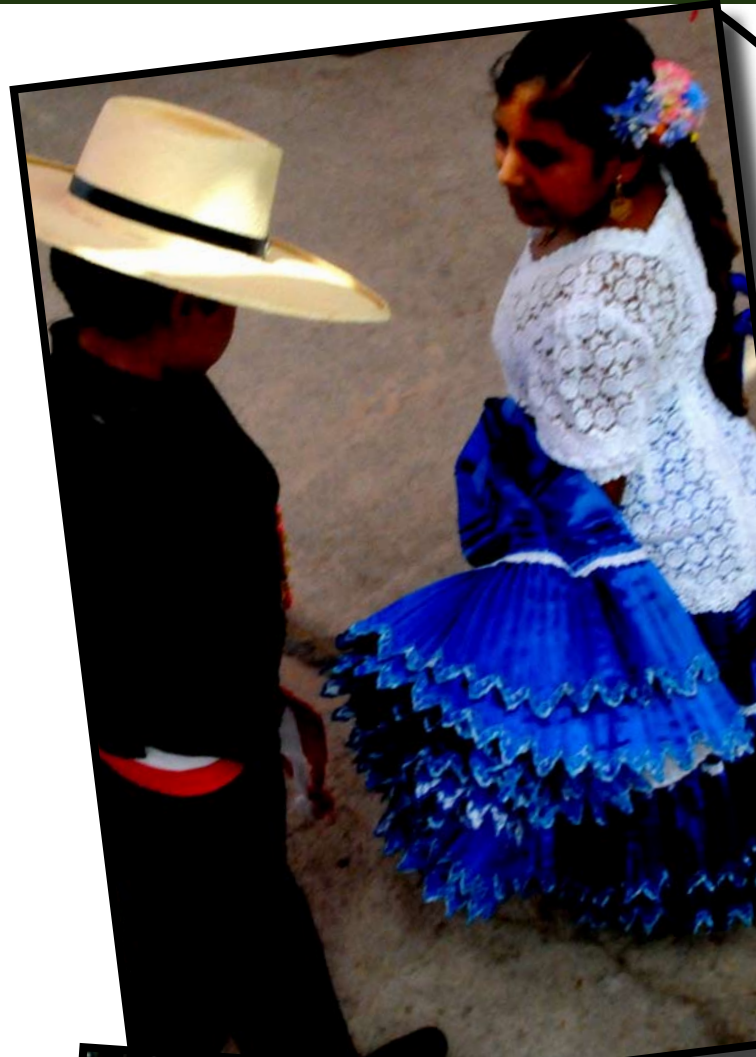
After a few hours of eating and fellowship the competition

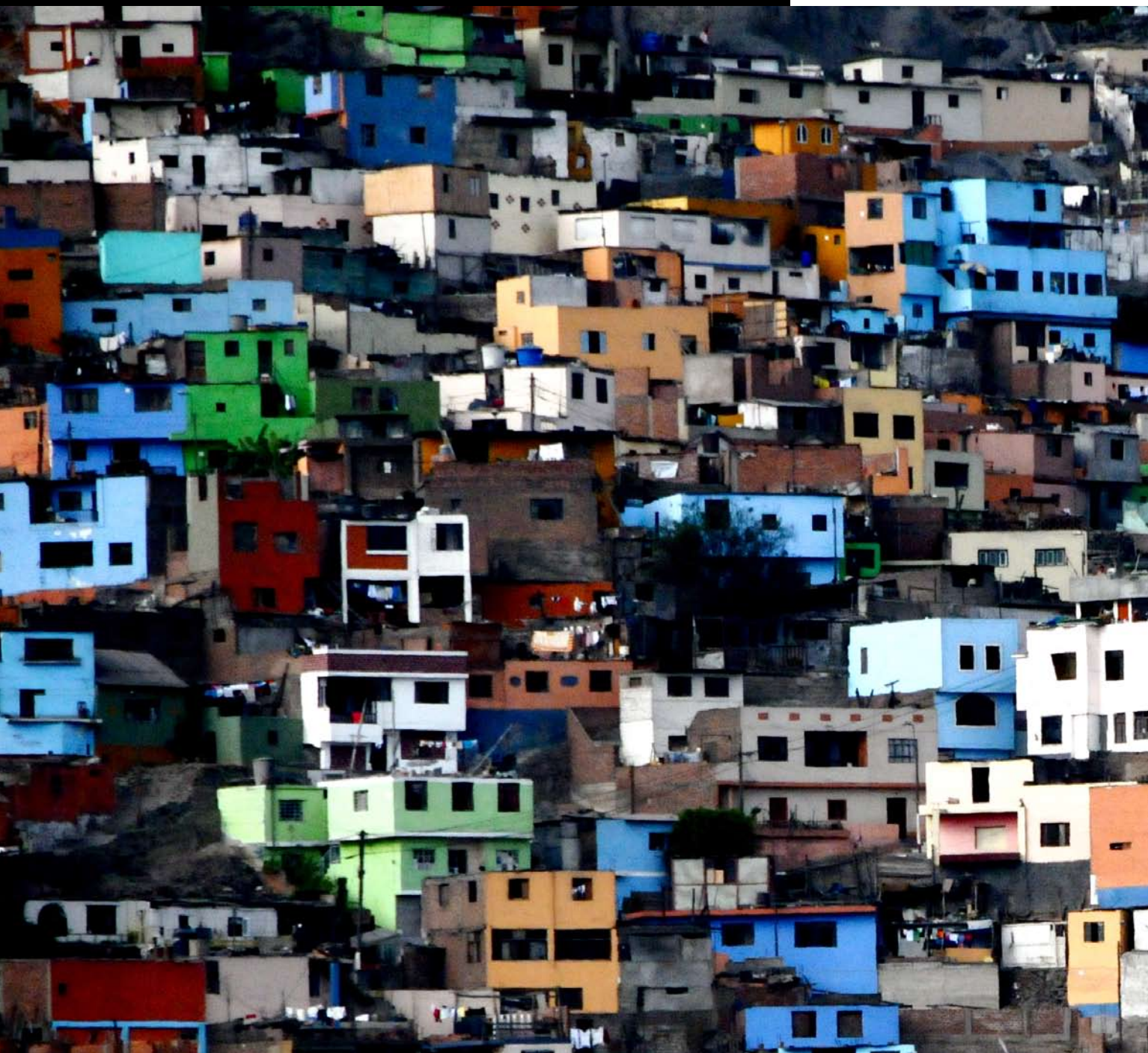
began and each of the cooks brought a plate of food to the judges table. One of the judges was a Christian chef from a large restaurant in Lima. Another judge was a nutritionist from the church. And the last judge was an American missionary visiting Lima.

One by one, the judges tried all the dishes. There were plates of rice and vegetables, stuffed potatoes, soups, and all kinds of fish. All the participants were congratulated and prizes were given to the top three cooks. First prize went to a mother who does not even cook for a restaurant! Everyone seemed to enjoy the event. So many people attended the competition that the cooks sold out of almost all their food.

The church worked hard to serve everyone who attended. The youth sang some worship songs for the crowd, and Pastor Atilio was able to share about God's provision during the food competition. People from the community asked about the church during the event. Many had never seen the church take an active role in reaching out to the community. The Catholic church down the street had a big building, the mormons came door to door with tracks, but this local group of people seemed to genuinely love and care for those outside their church building.

The church thanked God for this opportunity to love and minister to their neighbors and asked that God would continue to draw many out of darkness and into light. They prayed, as Paul did in Romans, that their hearts desire and prayer to God is for their salvation—something only God in his gracious work through Christ can do.





Christmas in the Slums

A local church brings the good news of Jesus and 450 Christmas gifts to children in the slum community of Cipreses in Lima, Peru

In October 2008, at the Harvest Staff Conference in Arizona, USA, Atilio was given a small wooden car to give away. Atilio showed the car to his church and explained how they would be able to bless some family who could not afford to buy their child a present for Christmas. The church thought, “That is great! But why can’t we do that for more children?” This question sparked a seed project. The church prayed about how they might bless a local community with some gifts and the gospel.

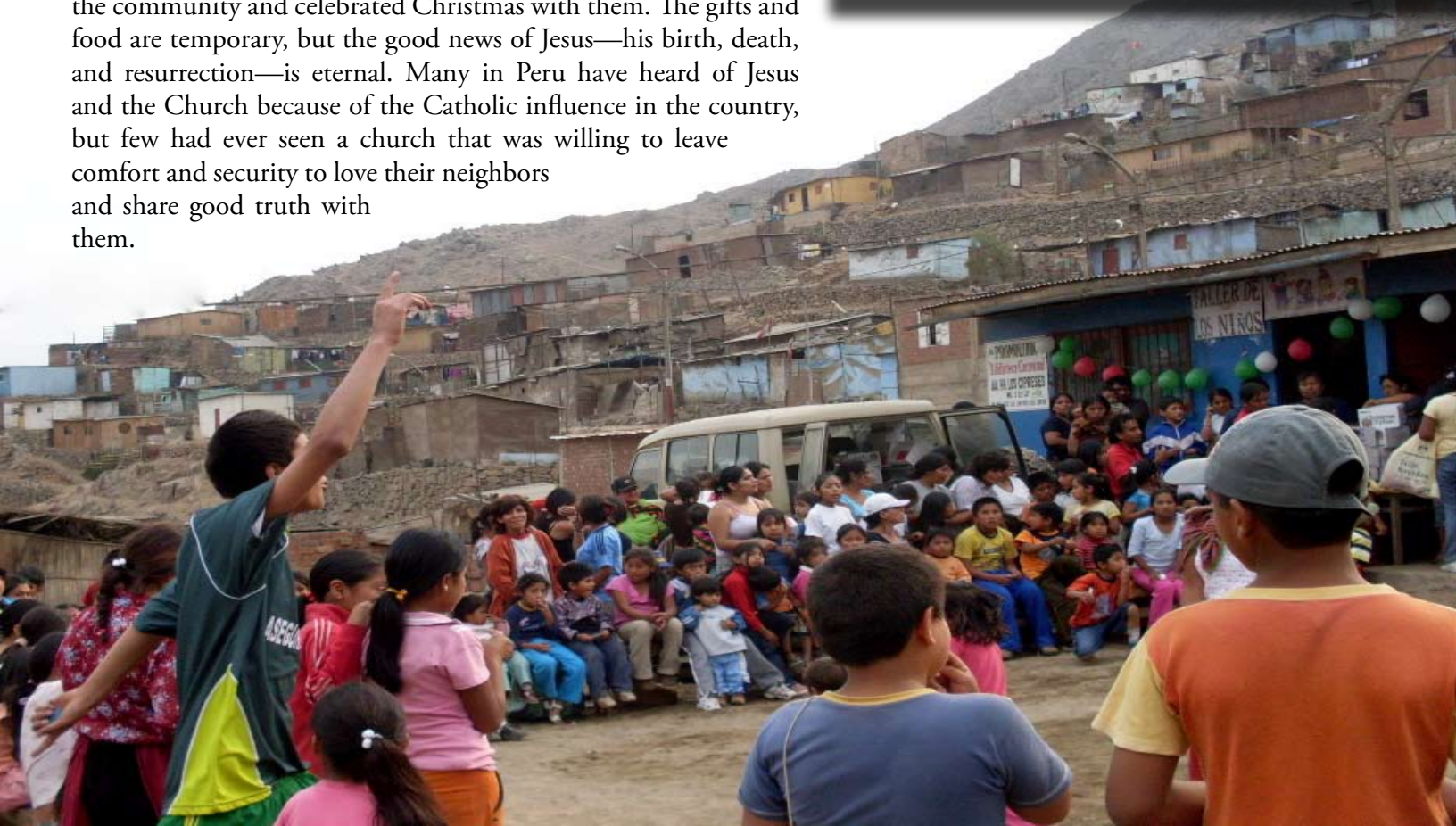


They planned an event to give out 130-150 gifts... that was all they could reasonably provide. However, a leader from the community informed them that there are over 400 children in Cipreses. She said, “You should bring gifts for all the children. If you come with only 200 gifts, you will leave the other half without. If you only bring 200 gifts it is better not to bring them at all.”



The church then decided to distribute 1,500 invitations to the community to participate in giving gifts. Atilio was skeptical... Could God provide 400 gifts? By the end of the day people had brought over 450 gifts.

On December 19, 2008 the church brought all the wrapped gifts to the community and celebrated Christmas with them. The gifts and food are temporary, but the good news of Jesus—his birth, death, and resurrection—is eternal. Many in Peru have heard of Jesus and the Church because of the Catholic influence in the country, but few had ever seen a church that was willing to leave comfort and security to love their neighbors and share good truth with them.



the **carapita** church



inviting in & reaching out





Pastor Virgilio and his church have a passion for ministry that is contagious. The church is located in Carapita, one of the poorest parts of Caracas, Venezuela. It is a community set on one of the many hills surrounding the city. The roads are steep and dangerous, most of the buildings are in poor repair, and yet there is such a sense of love, joy and peace at this small church.

In April of 2009, the church decided to invite youth from Carapita for a meal. The elders of the church cooked. Nearly forty people showed up to eat, play ping pong, and spend time talking with one another. There was no formal Gospel presentation, but Pastor Virgilio and others were very intentional to build relationships with those who came.

The girls were eager to make friends with the other girls who came, and the boys from the church went out of their way to include the visitors in their games and activities. One boy even said, "On the street we play games, but the older boys are always rough and mean. They play nice here."

The church not only invites people into their lives, they also reach out to others. Pastor Virgilio takes a group from the church each month to a local hospital. They sing with the residents, read scripture, talk with them, and even bring them flowers.

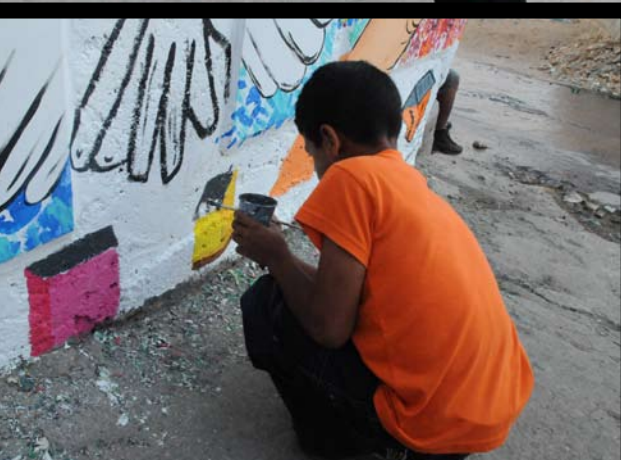
"It is good for the church to move outside its familiar routine and remember there are many who are suffering," said Pastor Virgilio. "Loving others is a healthy way to preach the gospel to ourselves. It is not always easy to love people who are different or suffering or who do not want help. And yet, Christ overcame all those obstacles to die for us!"

When asked about the cost of these seed projects, Virgilio mentioned that the greatest obstacle to serving others was rarely finances or time. The greatest obstacle to serving others is dying to our pride and attitudes. People are often busy with their own things and have a hard time making the effort to serve others. People often say they want to follow Christ, but few have the courage and humility to "go to him outside the gate and bear the reproach he endured" (Heb 13:13).





LOVE A LITTLE



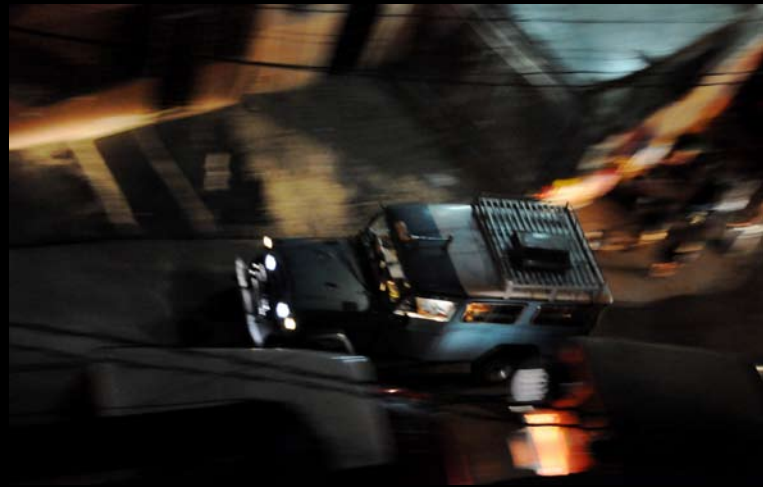
There is a popular worship song in Latin America that says, “Si tuvieras fé como un granito de mostaza, eso lo dice el Señor, ‘Tu le dirías a la montana, ‘Muevete,’ y la montana se movera.” It is essentially what Jesus said in Matthew 17:20, “If you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.”

A group of young people paint a wall on a street corner in a poor community of Caracas, Venezuela. These youth, from a local house church, got permission from a Christian family to paint on one of their walls facing the street. The wall just happens to be on a street corner where there is a lot of violence. The youth decided they wanted to paint an image of peace. As you can see in the photos, they painted a dove and hands lifted upwards. “How is painting a picture on a wall going to make a difference in the community?” I asked. They shocked me with their answer, “It’s not.” I jumped to the next logical question, “Then why do it?” To which they responded, “The painting is simply an expression of our faith in God to do a miracle in our community.”

The youth in this slum see that every act of service and demonstration of love is an expression of faith in God to do something great. Every time we share our testimony, or humbly serve our co-workers, or give help to someone in need, it should be done with the hope and expectation that God can and will use it for His purposes. When we try to serve others apart from faith in Christ, it only leaves us discouraged and worn out. And when we don’t serve others, it is probably because we have no faith in God.

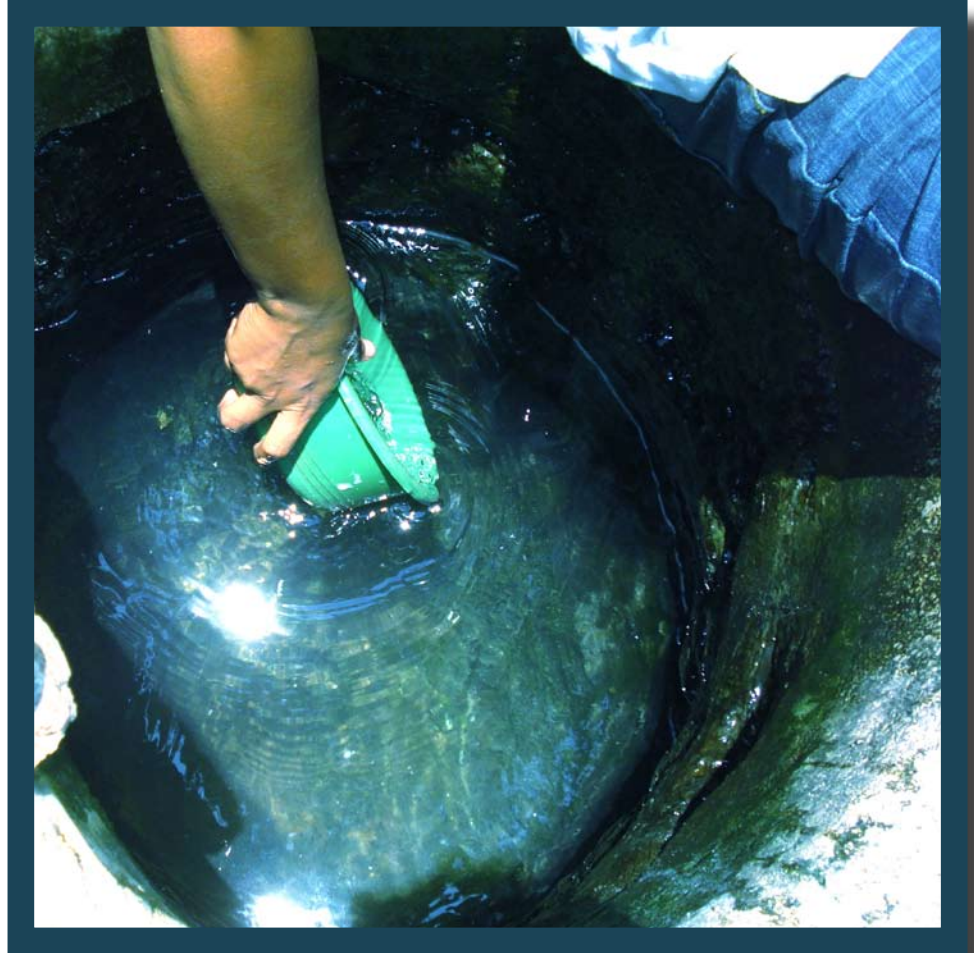
What does Jesus say about faith? “If you have faith the size of a mustard seed... nothing will be impossible for you.” In other words, if we have even a small, tiny, inkling of faith it will transform our ability to do things for Gods kingdom... imagine what that kind of power could do for even our smallest acts of obedience. A little faith makes a little love have great power. Why? Because it is faith in the power of God, which is infinite.

Do you ever feel like you have nothing to offer? Or that your testimony is useless? Or that loving your neighbor seems like a waste of time? He is able to take your small amount of love, time, money, experience, etc. and use it miraculously for His kingdom. Oswald Chambers puts it best when he says, “We should quit asking ourselves, ‘Am I of any use?’ and accept the truth that we really are not of much use to Him. The issue is never of being of use, but of being of value to God Himself. Once we are totally surrendered to God, He will work through us all the time.”



Water Living

A local church in rural Honduras strategically uses multiple seed projects to share love through action and the Gospel in word.



In early 2008 the church in El Moraicito decided to build a well for the community. The women in this small village had to walk for miles to the nearest river to fetch water for laundry and cooking. The church found a spot right outside the village to dig the well. Over several days men from the church used shovels to dig a pit about one and a half meters deep. They then used stones and mortar to build the walls. Within a few days, the village had clean, clear water just a few paces from the nearest home. It was a huge blessing!

In April of 2009 the church decided on another seed project. They wanted to dedicate the well to God and celebrate the blessing of having a well in the community. The church set a date for the dedication and began making plans. They wanted to include many people in the dedication so they arranged to go in the morning when many women and children from the village would be doing laundry.

Intentional Strategic Contextual

Families from the church saved up a little money to buy drinks and snacks for anyone present. And they invited Ramiro, a pastor from the capital city of Tegucigalpa, to share the Gospel at the celebration.

Over a year after the church had served its community by helping dig a well they met again to dedicate it to God and share with their neighbors about the true source of the water. Ramiro shared about how God provides for daily needs—food to eat, water to drink, and clothes to wear. He also told the story of the Samaritan woman at the well in John 4, where Jesus offers her living water: “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:13). Ramiro then shared about how Jesus came and died and rose again so that anyone who believes might have eternal life and forgiveness of sins.

The church then gathered around and prayed to thank God for the well and water which he had provided for over a year to their community. In all, there were about fifty people present—fifteen of them from the church. After the prayer the women from the church brought out the drinks and food for everyone. The kids rushed to enjoy the treats.

The church in El Moraicito was able to use small acts of love to find opportunities to share the Gospel and love their community more. The pastor of this small church is already excited to see what new opportunities they might have with the well in the future.

Photos (Top to Bottom): A group of girls helping their moms with laundry; Ramiro greeting people at the well and asking them questions about their families; Ramiro sharing the Gospel with all those gathered at the well; A group of kids enjoying the snacks provided by the church.



Chimney Project





Pastor Santos Apolonio observed that many of the homes of very poor families in the La Barranquilla community have no chimneys. Smoke from the stoves and fires fill the homes and cause breathing problems for many of these residents, destroying their health and shortening their lives.

The pastor met with some leaders of the Church to pray. What might God have them do to help these families? In the end, they agreed to support three families in the community by installing chimneys for them. The families would contribute the earth, bricks, water, cement and labor. The church would provide the chimneys.

When Pastor Apolonio and the elders presented the idea to the church they were eager to help. Some contributed funds to help purchase the chimneys.



Photos (Top to Bottom): A member of the church helps to install a chimney through the slats of a roof; A wood-burning stove is lit to test a new chimney and help the cement to dry.

Others offered their services and tools for the project.

On a hot and sunny day in May, several church members carried the chimneys down the dusty roads to each of the homes. After greeting the families, the workers mixed the cement, removed tiles from the roof and installed the chimney. It only took about twenty minutes at each house. The families were overcome with joy and gratitude that the church had noticed their needs!

Pastor Apolonio said, “The families are very well thanks be to God because they no longer have smoke inside their houses.” He is very grateful to God for the opportunity to serve and love his neighbors. Pastor Apolonio continues to pray for the salvation of one of the families who does not attend the church and is also praying for more resources so the church can help more families in the future.



Photos (Top to Bottom): The process of installing a new chimney.

plants and



parables



Christian students at a school in the Dominican Republic serve their school by planting trees.

Aurelisa is a teacher at a small school in El Torro, Santo Domingo. She is also a Christian. For several months she has been teaching some of her students about the value of serving others. Living as a Christian is more than just the words you say, but also the things you do. She challenged her students to observe their surroundings and find a way to serve the school and their community.

The students came up with an idea—plant trees. Deforestation has taken its toll on the island shared by the Dominican Republic and Haiti. The students wanted to make their campus look better, and they also want to take care of the things God has given to them. Aurelisa thought it was a great idea and began helping them plan how to do it.

They planned the event for the following week. Each student agreed to bring a tree, plant, or seed to school. A few students offered to bring tools to help plant the trees.

On the day of the project all the students gathered outside the school on the basketball court. They prayed and thanked God for the world he created. They thanked him for providing trees for food, shade, wood, and beauty—all gifts from God! “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1:20). They prayed that people would see their good deeds and give God the glory.

After the prayer the planting began. There were not enough tools for everyone to use, so they took turns. Some students used empty cans to dig holes for their trees. In a matter of two hours all the students had planted their trees in the school yard and along the outside wall.

After the project one of the students smiled and said, “It feels really good to serve our community in this way.” Aurelisa explained that there are many churches in the Dominican Republic. “Almost all of them teach their congregations that Jesus teaches his disciples to love their neighbors,” said Aurelisa, “but very few of them teach them how to do so. It is as if they have churches have missed the second part of the great commission: ‘teaching [disciples] to observe all I have commanded them.’”

In a simple way, this seed project helped teach students how to be disciples of Jesus—Christians who both share their faith boldly and live it out for all to see.

“Let your light shine
before men that they
may see your good
deeds and glorify
your Father in
heaven.”

Matthew 5:16





LITTLE, BIG

Students in the mountains of the Dominican Republic learn that small actions can have a big impacts

A group of school children in Mata de Café were encouraged by their pastor to find a way to serve their community. “But we are too young!” They protested. “What can we do?” Their pastor smiled. He told them the story of King David in 1 Samuel where God chose a shepherd boy to be King of Israel. He showed them how the bible teaches that “The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7).

The pastor explained that as they learn about Jesus’s love and how that was demonstrated on the cross, it is then good to learn how to serve and love others. The pastor then gave the children some examples of how they could serve in small ways.

The children were excited. They looked around at their community and decided a simple way to serve would be to pick up the trash from the roads around their school. Not only would this help the appearance of their community, but it would also help prevent the garbage from contaminating their crops.

The students met with their professor, Anyolino, and explained what they wanted to do. Anyolino, a member of the church, thought it was a wonderful idea and agreed to help in any way he could.



DIFFERENCES

The man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

James 1:25

On a bright and clear day in May, the students met in their small school building and prepared for a day of work. They brought bottles of water to drink and buckets to fill with the trash they collected. Their pastor even came to encourage them and pray with them before they began their small project.

To start, the students went around the school building to pick up any trash on the property. Then they made their way down the dusty road. There was a lot of trash to clean up. They picked up paper plates, plastic bags, soda bottles, beer bottles, and random bits of paper. It was a lot of work.

As they worked they walked by several of the small shops in Mata de Café. The people there stopped what they were doing to watch the kids. They asked one of the

students what was happening. He pointed to the buckets and said, "We are picking up trash." The students explained that they love Jesus and so they obey him. They asked, "Jesus told you to clean up the road?" "No," the children said with a smile, "He asked up to love our neighbors. This is how we decided to do that."

The students worked for a couple hours and then brought all the trash to a trash dump near the school. Then they all returned to the school and washed their hands. They were not convinced that their small seed project made a difference, but it was a lot of fun.

The next Sunday the pastor invited the students to come to the front of the church. The kids were nervous. They had never been asked to do anything in front of the church before. The pastor asked them to share the story of their seed project to the rest of the church. The pastor used the example of the students cleaning the streets of Mata de Café to encourage the rest of the church to look for ways to serve their neighbors.

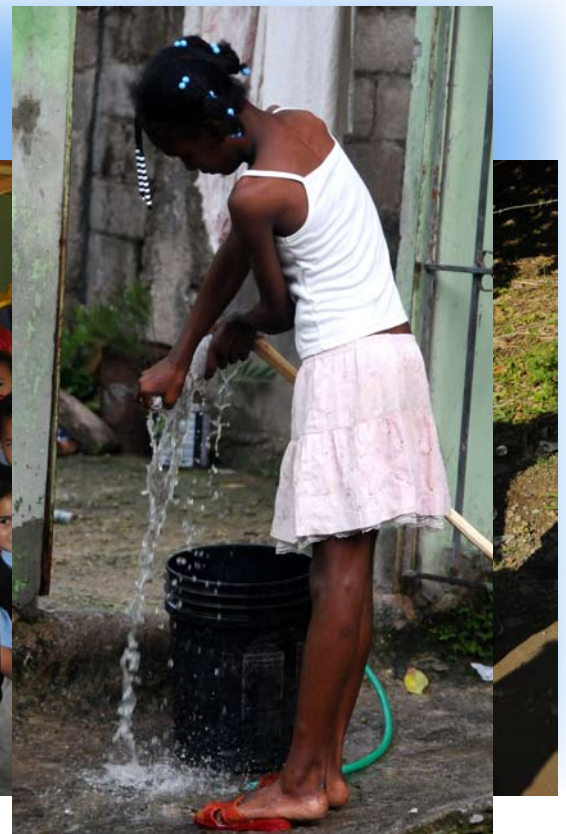
After the worship service was over the pastor approached the students. He reminded them that even the smallest action could make a big difference. "Your love and service has encouraged others in the church to do the same. Praise God!"

"The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

1 Samuel 16:7


Photos (Title Page - Left to Right): A group of students clean up trash from around the school; students cleaning up the roads of Mata de Café; Washing their hands after a hard days work.

Photos (Below - Left to Right): Mata de Café school building; Anyolino with his students; Helping one another pick up trash.







Talking Notice



A local church in the slums of the Dominican Republic wanted to serve the community in a simple way. Pastor Octavio and his congregation live and worship and serve in one of the poorest and most dangerous slums in Santo Domingo. The living conditions are very poor. There are so many needs it can be hard to decide where to begin.

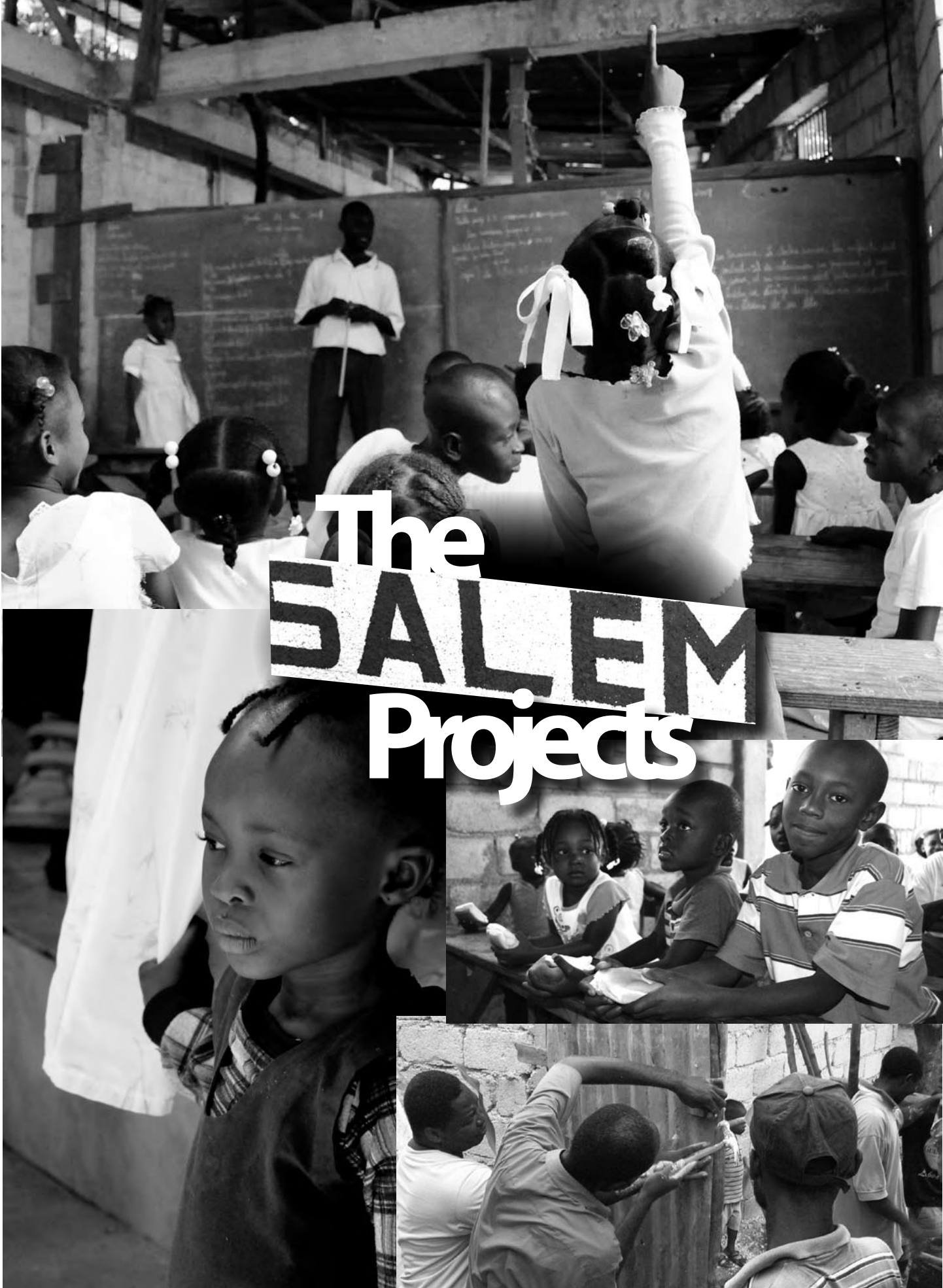


Octavio and his church have been serving for decades now and it has been amazing to witness the transforming power of the Gospel. Almost the entire community is aware of the presence of the church. Many still do not believe in Jesus Christ, but few can deny the powerful love Christians have for one another, for their community, and even their enemies.



In May of 2009 the church did a small seed project to go to several hurting families (some in the church, some not) and encourage them with food, prayer, and singing hymns. This simple project revealed that this church really knows their neighbors. Many in the community could hear the sound of prayers and worship.

Octavio prays that many would see the way they care for their neighbors, and by God's grace, come to know and glorify the God his church serves, loves, and obeys.



The Salem Evangelical Church in Haiti demonstrates the love of Christ to their community by giving of their time, resources, and talents.

In the Gospel of Matthew, when Jesus is asked about the greatest commandment he responds: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Augustine once said, “Love God and then do as you please.” The point he was making is that once we truly love God we will love others as we ought. And this thought is not original with Augustine. Jesus said, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching.” Love for our neighbor comes directly from the love we have for God.

Salem Evangelical Church is a small body of believers that wants to grow in their love for God and others. Through the Gospel they see how Jesus laid down his life, humbled himself, became a servant, and called his disciples to do the same. The church prayed that God would give them the same love, courage, and humility.

In early 2009 a member of the church was visiting with a poor family in his neighborhood. During his visit he realized that the family did not have a latrine. The family would simply dig small holes on their property. This was a health risk, but the family was too ashamed to ask for help. The member decided to present this need to his church. The church prayed about it and agreed this was a way they were equipped to serve.

Over the next month the church collected money to buy cement, wire, sand, nails, metal, and two buckets. The church is not wealthy but the members gave generously out of what they had. “Part of laying down our lives is not holding too closely to our own possessions,” said one of the pastors, Ronald Pelliton.

On May 23rd a group of 15 men from the church went to help build a latrine for this family. It took over a month to collect the funds, but only one day to complete project. They worked from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. digging a hole, covering it with metal and wire, pouring cement, and putting up the metal walls. It was a lot of work, but none of the men



physical
needs

complained. They worked hard with joy. Dieuvert, one of the members who helped build the latrine, expressed his joy by saying, “We are thankful to the Lord for this opportunity to serve our neighbors. It is an answer to prayer.”

The church soon saw other needs in their community. Many families in Salem are too poor to afford many activities for their children. The church noticed this put strain on the kids as well as their parents. Husbands and wives needed time alone and the children needed some activity. After giving the matter much prayer and thought, the church decided to host a camp on a Saturday for the children in their community. In this way the church could serve the parents and the kids.

During the weeks that followed the church went around to the homes in their neighborhood and passed out flyers that explained the church’s desire to serve their families by offering a camp for children. The response from the community was enthusiastic. No one had ever offered to serve their families before!

The day of the camp arrived and children poured into the church’s small concrete building. The church members who helped out were eager to care for these kids. They fed them a small meal of bread and tea. They played numerous games with the kids—burlap sack races, musical chairs, and even a game where the kids had to try and eat bread tied to a string without using their hands! All the children had fun playing together.

At lunch the kids were given another snack as they sat around a small television to watch a movie about the life of Jesus. Although many of the kids knew about Jesus, few of them had ever heard that he died on the cross to save sinners—including them if they would believe in him! After the movie, hands shot up in the air. They had a lot of questions! The church members tried to answer as many questions as possible. How long ago did Jesus live? If he is alive today, where is he? Am I a sinner? Can Jesus save me? Can he save my family too? The church had come upon another need—the ultimate need that each of these children has for Jesus Christ.

The day ended, parents came to pick up their kids, and everyone returned to their homes. The project was over, but the impact is still being felt. Many families have started attending the church. One of the pastors commented on how amazed he is that “God uses his Church in small ways to accomplish eternal things. We are small and cannot do much, but our God is great and he works through us!”



social & spiritual needs



Who is my neighbor?

Luke 10: 25-37

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?"

He answered: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."

But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

In reply Jesus said: "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. 31A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. 32So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. 34He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, took him to an inn and took care of him. 35The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'

"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"

The expert in the law replied, "The one who had mercy on him."

Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."







Isaiah 52:7: How beautiful are the feet of them who bring good news.

Today's headlines reveal the following: "Abducted Columbia Governor Killed", "American Airlines Overshoots Runway In Jamaica", "Police Fire Kills Afghan Senator", "At Fort Hood", "A 'Sense Of Sorrow' Clouds Holidays", "World Powers Mull Options If Iran Misses Deadline", "Terrorism Feared After Jackson's Arrest", and the list goes on. Every day we are reminded by reports through newspapers, news magazines, television, and Internet of what is happening all around us all around the world. How many disasters happened this past year? How many tragedies? How many murders? How many crimes? The news broadcasted is not pleasant, not joyous and certainly not good news.

People are living in darkness and are unable to see the glorious light of the Good News of Jesus! People are desperate for good news. In a fallen world where the outlook is bleak and dark, hope is needed.

In the midst of all this gloom, Light illuminates the darkest corners of the earth. Jesus, the Bright and Morning Star, ignites our beings with His love. With His passion, the church has been planting acts of Christian love all over the earth. With every seed sown in the blackest soil, His Love grows brighter.

Jesus is aware of the sin and suffering that is in the world. It does not take him by surprise. In Matthew chapter 24, Jesus is talking to his disciples and says: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Christ,' and

will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come." In other words, Jesus knows there is going to be trouble in world, but he also knows that such trouble and suffering is not going to bring about the end. Evil will not triumph! A few verses later Jesus tells us where victory is found: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."

There is a lot of suffering and turmoil in the world, but God is working! Jesus does not want us to fear the evil in the world, but to look to what God is doing. The following story is one testament to how God is moving victoriously in Arizona, USA.

Musical Outreach at Sunrise Vista Apartments

A local church in Phoenix wanted to help families overcome by bad news. In December of 2009 the church decided to serve the residents of an apartment complex near the church. A family there was in crisis following the stabbing death of their mother. The family asked the church group to pray for them, which they did. The group was also able to offer practical assistance by connecting them to affordable funeral services and to offer continued support in whatever they needed. The family has allowed the church to continue contact with them and expressed appreciation for our care of them.



On December 12th the church returned to the apartment complex. The youth choir sang while another volunteer from the church grilled hot dogs and hamburgers for the residents and participants. In spite of the sad event mentioned above, others in the community came out to listen and the children once again came out to play.

God was glorified. Program directors from a local community center came out to distribute information to the residents about their programs for youth in the

community. Church members came out to support the outreach. They gave of their time, money, and energy to serve in any way they could, whether through song, cooking food, playing with the kids, or simply listening to the residents. There was music, laughter and loud praise to the Lord.

The Longoria family ministered worship and exhortation in Spanish and English. Spanish-speaking residents emerged from their apartments and some came down to enjoy the food and festivities. By the end of the evening there was a large crowd eating, talking, and enjoying the music. The kids were having a great time on the playground nearby.

The church continues to pray for the residents of the apartment and that their continued interest and presence in their midst will bring many opportunities for the gospel. They pray that the drug dealers and addicts will hear the voice of the Lord and turn to Him and that the church will continue to befriend and serve this community.

Seed projects (acts of love), like this one, shine as beacons of light. Wherever the light is focused, the darkness dissipates. As Paul would say from 1 Corinthians 4:6-7, "For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us."

***So is my word that goes
from my mouth:
It will not return to
me empty, but will
accomplish what I
desire and achieve the
purpose for which I
sent it.
Isaiah 55:11***



**For God, who said,
Let light shine out
of darkness, made
his light shine in
our hearts to give
us the light of the
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I Corinthians 4:6-7



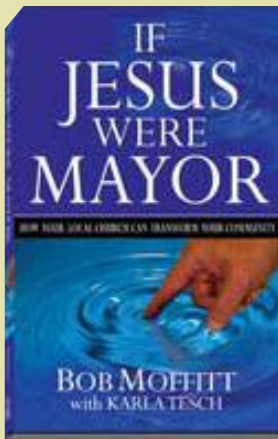
SEED PROJECTS: PURPOSES

- 1. Wholistic evangelism and lifestyle.** Seed projects are natural components of evangelism and discipleship. They help churches develop a lifestyle of wholistic ministry.
- 2. Freedom from dependency.** Seed projects demonstrate that the local church can do wholistic ministry without reliance on outside resources.
- 3. Experience and confidence for larger, ongoing ministry.** Seed projects provide experience in project planning and implementation. They enlarge the church's confidence for ongoing wholistic ministry projects. They often lead a church to larger demonstrations of God's love.

SEED PROJECT: CHARACTERISTICS

- 1.** Seed projects should be covered in prayer.
- 2.** They reflect God's heart of compassion—they are not manipulative tools for evangelism.
- 3.** They are motivated by God's intentions and carried out with God's strength.
- 4.** They are thoughtfully planned.
- 5.** They must be simple and short, small and uncomplicated.
- 6.** They are done with local resources.
- 7.** They are directed toward those outside the church.
- 8.** Those who benefit from seed projects should participate in them, as possible.
- 9.** An observable spiritual impact is built into the project where it is appropriate.
- 10.** They are evaluated by Kingdom standards.

Interested in learning more?

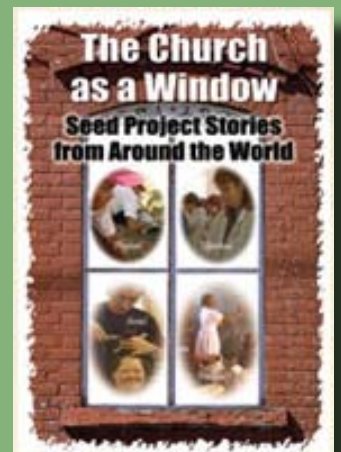


IF JESUS WERE MAYOR (Monarch Books)

How would your community change If Jesus Were Mayor? That is the question Harvest president Bob Moffitt addresses in his action-provoking work about God's intended role for the local church. *If Jesus Were Mayor* describes transformational effects of biblical principles in action. It offers principles, strategies, and tools to help local church leaders equip their churches for transformational service.

CHURCH AS A WINDOW: SEED PROJECT STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD (DVD)

Seed Projects on video! Six local churches from different parts of the world find practical ways to serve their communities and demonstrate God's love for their neighbors. From a village community in Cambodia to the capital city of Uganda, from a middle-class church group in Hong Kong to an urban slum church in Kenya, love may take different forms but it never fails.

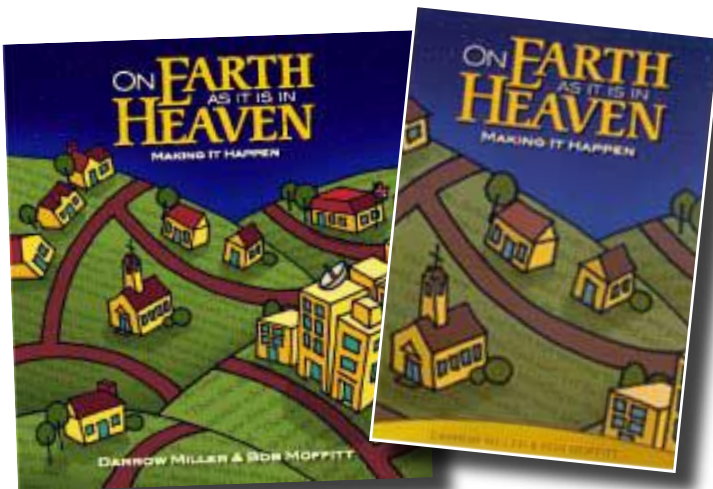
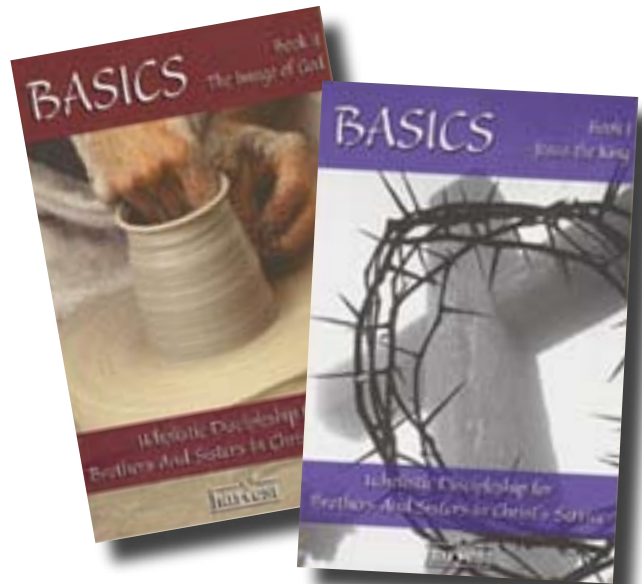


RESOURCE PAGE



BASICS discipleship series:

BASICS I emphasizes the relationship believers have with Jesus as their King and encourages them to understand that following Christ has implications in every area of life. BASICS II examines characteristics of God and their implications for those who have been created in God's image and are called to be like Christ. BASICS III looks at what Scripture says about various aspects of the Church, focusing on God's intentions for how we are to live out being the body of Christ.



On Earth As It Is In Heaven

Presented by master teachers Bob Moffitt and Darrow Miller, this 12-session video series is designed to challenge North American Christians to understand the concepts of biblical worldview, Christian service, and God's intention that the church impact its society. It is designed for adult Sunday school classes, Bible studies, home fellowship groups, and training institutions.

Local Church Ministry Training

Local Church Ministry Training (LCMT) is a two part training series. *Book I: Equipping God's People for Service* uses an interactive teaching format and eleven small group style Bible studies to prepare churches to corporately demonstrate God's love to their neighbors. Participants search the Scriptures for themselves and seek ways to apply the principles they are learning. *Book II: Mobilizing God's People for Service* goes further in helping train churches to be a window for the world to see God's intentions for the healing of our brokenness and the coming of His Kingdom.



“By this we know love, that He laid down His life for us... Little children, let us not love in word or talk, but in deed and in truth.”

1 John 3: 16, 18 (ESV)

“That people look out for themselves is nothing new. It is not news. The news is the Gospel—sacrificial service and unconditional love. It is a mystery to the world.”

-Bob Moffitt, Harvest



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