

# COMPASSION LINK

Assemblies of God World Missions

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THEORY AND PRACTICE IN COMPASSION  
MINISTRIES



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## PURPOSE

This publication is a service of the Assemblies of God World Missions (AGWM) Compassion Ministries Planning Committee with the purpose of providing relevant and current information on theory and practice of compassion ministries in AGWM circles and beyond.

The publication is intended to become a resource link between AGWM regions and ministries, and to offer information to our Assemblies of God churches and constituents, as well.

## EDITORIAL STAFF

- JoAnn Butrin Ph.D. (*Editor*)
- Bob McGurty
- Doug Sites
- Diane Campbell
- Neil Ruda

## EDITOR'S MESSAGE

The journal was proposed by a group of missionary practitioners who feel a need and desire to pursue knowledge and research in the field of compassion work.

Though a great deal of information can be found in books and other periodicals, as well as on web sites, it was felt that having information that came from our own practitioners and theorists would not only be a rich source of information and allow for cross-pollenization of regions, but would also begin to give written record to some of the great things being accomplished in and through compassion ministries work for the Kingdom of God.

It is hoped that the reading audience will find this journal not only a source of information, but also one of inspiration and hope.

—JoAnn Butrin

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## COMPASSION ROOTED IN THE GOSPEL THAT TRANSFORMS

By Byron D. Klaus

**T**he reality of human tragedies now occurring cannot be avoided by refusing to acknowledge their significant impact on so much of the world. 16 million children in Africa have been orphaned by AIDS. Some 35,000 children die daily from preventable diseases usually related to inadequate clean water and sanitation. A massive sex industry preys on the poor of the non-Western world where parents sell children into prostitution just to be able to survive themselves. Our hearts may break at the prospect of millions of people starving to death in Ethiopia in the next year, yet our corporate response as Pentecostal Christians requires more than sympathy or even empathy. The challenge of a response that is meaningful and biblically rooted requires honest and thorough awareness of our history as Pentecostals and our place in the larger framework of American Christianity.

### OUR HISTORICAL FOCUS

From its inception, the Assemblies of God has committed itself to the “greatest evangelization the world has ever seen.” The empowerment of the baptism in the Holy Spirit and a belief that Jesus’ return was soon has historically motivated the Assemblies of God to mission efforts centered on planting indigenous churches.

Alice Luce, an early Assemblies of God missions strategist, summarizes the Pentecostal focal point: “When we go forth to preach the full gospel, are we going to expect an experience like that of denominational missionaries or should we look for signs to follow?”<sup>1</sup>

It is very clear that Pentecostal efforts to reach the world were focused on evangelization that plants churches in the power of the Holy Spirit. The 19th century saw the modern missions movement gain momentum and flourish. However, this great

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missionary effort had grown in the context of colonial empires worldwide. Formal structures like building schools and hospitals were part and parcel of 19<sup>th</sup>-century missionary efforts.

Pentecostals affirmed a “radical strategy” for mission efforts that the Christian century had minimized. The late J. Philip Hogan states the case for indigenous church planning: “The crucible of experience teaches these days that the final and only really successful unit of world evangelism is the church. Squarely on the shoulder of the church rests the commission and responsibility of world evangelization. Any expenditure that does not have as its final objective the building of a witnessing church cannot be God’s best for this hour.”<sup>2</sup>

This statement by Hogan summarizes a position formed not only in the sovereign move of God’s Spirit, but also in the larger framework of American Christianity. The late 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of time when European religious thought penetrated the church in the United States. What has become known

as the “modernist/fundamentalist” debate was waged. Core Christian beliefs like the authority of Scripture, the Virgin Birth, the deity of Christ, vicarious atonement, and the resurrection of Christ were undermined by the influence of European scholarship. As a result of this debate, lines were drawn between those Christians who wanted to focus on winning souls and those who affirmed a social gospel that values social change and reform as the focus of Christian ministry efforts. A huge breach in American Christianity was forming and the breaking point was personified in the Scopes Monkey Trial that took place in Tennessee in 1925. The nation’s attention was riveted on this trial because it personified the nation’s religious allegiances and highlights the evangelism versus social action/gospel bifurcation as a unique American experience. The Scopes Trial solidified the considerable opinion lines within American Christianity, and it wasn’t until 1947 when Carl F.H. Henry wrote “The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism” that Bible-believing Christians were

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challenged to reconsider the broadest implications of the gospel.

## **AN HONEST APPRAISAL**

So what does this brief history lesson mean for the Assemblies of God and the Pentecostal church at large? First, we must acknowledge our mission focus was forged in the middle of a corrective that God sovereignly gives to the Church. The 20<sup>th</sup> century testifies to what historians would certainly acknowledge as the “Pentecostal Century.” In 1900, only 5 percent of the world’s Christians were non-Western. Today over two-thirds of the world’s Christians are non-Western.<sup>3</sup>

We must also acknowledge that our Pentecostal “radical strategy” was forged in the middle of a larger debate waged in American Christianity while Pentecostalism was in its earliest stages. That modernist-fundamentalist debate resulted in the split between strategies of evangelism and social action. Because our doctrinal allegiances were with orthodox Christianity it is understandable that the Assemblies of God would place its emphasis on

priorities of sound doctrine and the salvation of people through Spirit-empowered evangelistic effort as a primary focus.

However, to suggest that those committed to world evangelization have been remiss in their compassion for these persons caught in the tragedies of poverty and injustice would be historically inaccurate. Following the American Civil War a huge shift from a rural to urban society began to occur. Accompanied by massive immigration from Western and Northern Europe, industrialization of the economy and massive immigration produced the grimmest of urban realities. Following the pattern of England’s Salvation Army, evangelistic ministries invaded the slums of American cities and provided relief for the social tragedies that were the realities of that day. Homes to help the alcoholic, the prostitute, and those suffering from tuberculosis were built. Sunday Schools that served the needs of children where parents worked 7 days a week in factories were one of the most stabilizing factors of this era.<sup>4</sup>

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One of the early influences on the Assemblies of God was A.B. Simpson and his Christian and Missionary Alliance. Simpson not only influenced Pentecostals with his message of the Four-Fold Gospel, but also served to highlight the connection between aggressive evangelism, affirmation of divine healing, and the soon return of Jesus Christ. For Simpson, these biblical foundations were necessarily connected to the care for the social needs of the masses he encountered in the large cities of eastern United States. In 1893, Simpson articulated his unique blend of evangelism and “ministries of compassion” when he said,

“There is room not only for the worship of God, the teaching of sacred truth, and the evangelization of the lost, but also for every phase of practical philanthropy and usefulness. These may be, in perfect keeping with the simple ardor and dignity of the church of God, the past aggressive work for the masses and the evident welcome for every class of sinful men; the ministry of healing for the sick and suffering adminis-

tered in the name of Jesus, the most complete provision for charitable relief, workshops for the unemployed, homes for the orphaned, shelters for the helpless, refuges for the inebriates, the father and the helpless. And there is no work that will be more glorifying to God than a church that will embrace just such features and completeness.”<sup>5</sup>

Early Pentecostals also exemplified the priorities of A.B. Simpson in their ministries. Many of the first Pentecostal missionaries were single women called to missions in the fervor of the Holiness movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Lillian Trasher served her entire adult life in Egypt among the widows and orphans of that land. In her nearly 50 years of ministry at the Assiout Orphanage, she was committed to winning the lost and ministering compassionately to thousands. Florence Steidel cared for the lepers in Liberia. Combining evangelism, compassion, and economic empowerment ministries Steidel established one of the most effective ministries of compassion

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in the history of the Assemblies of God. The ministry of George and Carrie Judd Montgomery combined healing ministries with evangelism and service to orphans and a rescue home for girls.<sup>6</sup> The more recent examples of this blending of soul and the body are exemplified in the efforts in Calcutta by Mark and Huldah Buntain and the considerable impact of Latin America ChildCare founded by John and Lois Bueno.

However, questions still remain about where the emphasis of the Assemblies of God should be placed. Our historical commitment to world evangelism has been clearly at the center of our mission and ministry efforts globally. Yet, there are obvious examples of Pentecostals who choose not to get caught in the historic American bifurcation between evangelism and social concern. Such an honest acknowledgment must take into account the huge global challenges that are facing us in just the next decade.

The sovereign Lord of the harvest shaped a powerful corrective to the 19<sup>th</sup>-century missionary

movement by igniting a Pentecostal revival that yielded the growth of Christianity in the 20<sup>th</sup> century that was unprecedented. In the face of famine, the AIDS epidemic, economic methods, war, and violence what might the Lord of the harvest have to say to a Pentecostal church to continue ministry in greater effectiveness?

The empowerment of the baptism in the Holy Spirit is truly the sole source of hope and the possibility of meaningful life to so many in the non-Western world. We should listen carefully to Pentecostal brothers and sisters whose understanding of the empowerment present in the baptism in the Holy Spirit has been refined in the middle of tragedy, poverty, injustice, and life at the margins. An Assemblies of God scholar from Puerto Rico, Eldin Villafañe speaks succinctly: “The baptism in the Spirit is rightfully seen as empowerment for service impacting the believer deeply by giving him/her a tremendous boldness, a heightened sense of personal holiness, and a new sense of self worth and personal power.



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The Pentecostal church has the spiritual resources to face spiritual power encounters of our soul struggles. If the object of the baptism in the Spirit is the ongoing mission of the Messiah, then the challenge which remains for Pentecostals is to catch the broader prophetic and vocational role of the baptism in the Holy Spirit.<sup>7</sup>

A Pentecostal from India speaks from his context where the empowerment of the Holy Spirit must be adequate for that context where huge social problems are the reality of the day. He says, “In the power of the Holy Ghost man becomes confident of building for himself a just society, that is humane, peaceful and righteous. If we want to win India for Christ, we have to girdle ourselves and get ready for the struggle. Let us fight for the marginalized, the ostracized, the untouchable, the prostitute and her customer, the child whose childhood has been robbed. The need of the day is socially active Christians who will accept the challenge of the gauntlet thrown upon us by the forces of the world.”<sup>8</sup>

We can see that Pentecostals

carry varying perspectives on the social dimensions of ministry. Could it be that the insights of these brothers and sisters might be a prophetic voice to us Americans?

## **FOUNDATIONS FOR NAVIGATING 21ST-CENTURY CHALLENGES**

Pentecostals have always looked to the Bible for clear understanding of their spiritual experience and authoritative foundation for ministry efforts. The gospel is eminently personal, because each person must have an encounter with God and choose to accept or reject Him. But when the gospel transforms an individual there are implications that are social. Every human being is part of a social situation, and the Bible makes clear that it is impossible to love God while hating those close by (1 John 4:20,21). A personal transformation due to the gospel has social results because God’s saving grace is extended to humanity in a social situation, not apart from it. To recognize this connectedness within the gospel is not a “social gospel.” It is the power of Jesus Christ to abundantly pardon and save to

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the uttermost (Hebrews 7:25).

There are also some areas where we must be careful to understand more fully our affirmation about the relationship between the biblical theme of the kingdom of God and our understanding of endtime (eschatology). Croatian Pentecostal Peter Kuzmic provides insight into these thematic tensions. Kuzmic notes that evangelicals (including Pentecostals) have an inherent tendency to oversimplify complex issues, including teachings of Jesus on the kingdom of God. Kuzmic cautions us that postponing the significance of the Sermon on the Mount and other segments of the New Testament implications for moral living exerts a cleavage between the fullest power of the gospel and its present usefulness. Quoting Argentine evangelical scholar René Padilla, Kuzmic argues “in the light of the biblical teaching there is no place for our ‘other worldliness’ that does not result in the Christian’s commitment to his neighbor, rooted in the gospel. There is no place for statistics on how many souls die

without Christ every minute, if they do not take into account how many of those who die, die victims of hunger. There is no place for evangelism that, as it goes by the man who was assaulted by thieves on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho, sees in him only a soul that must be saved and ignores the man.”<sup>9</sup>

Our view of the future impacts the way we live in the present. Christ’s kingdom severely critiques our present state of affairs in the world and calls a redeemed people to give a visible glimpse to what the future may look like. Pressing global needs and obvious breakdown in our own society calls us to humbly come before our Lord with a desire to sharpen our efforts. Critical questions form on the horizon. Will attention to social concerns dampen our evangelism? Can evangelism be continually effective without attention to present social dilemmas people are facing? The question of antiquity voiced by Cain is still poignant: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Genesis 4:9). Does Christian prosperity call us to greater Christian

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responsibility for our fellow human beings worldwide? Should/can faith-based organizations stay true to their ministry calling and the guidelines of the government organizations from which they receive funding? Just as our Pentecostal pioneers faced critical questions 100 years ago as to how the Pentecostal dynamic of Spirit baptism, ministry in the power of the Spirit, and the urgency of the hour impacted world evangelization, so we must humbly and critically address our current context with serious theological reflection.

We enter the necessary reevaluation with a notable advantage. The significant growth of the Assemblies of God worldwide has seen a large portion of that increase take place among the most destitute and vulnerable of the two-thirds world. We have truly been a church of the poor, among the poor, and our local churches worldwide have been a massive network of grassroots efforts caring for the needs of people in their local contexts. The Assemblies of God has not shunned responsibility to the poor. The late J. Philip Hogan succinctly stated our position:

“We (have) invested millions of dollars and devoted countless lives to feed starving people, clothe poor people, shelter homeless people, educate children, train disadvantaged adults, and provide medical care for the physically ill of all ages. We have always generously responded to the pleas of foreign nations after natural disasters — hurricanes, floods, and earthquakes. As the director of this Fellowship’s overseas efforts, I want the world to know that the reason we do these things is because Jesus Christ did them. The reason we love people is because Jesus Christ loved them. We have no other motive than that. Our relief efforts are inseparable from our gospel witness.”<sup>10</sup>

As we participate in this time of refinement the sage wisdom of the venerable Melvin Hodges is worth our consideration. Arguably the most celebrated missiologist in Assemblies of God history he is usually associated with the planting and development of indigenous churches. However, Hodges, who lived and worked in the middle of poverty and peas-

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ant revolts in Central America, reflected deeply upon social concerns when he said, “Christians by their very nature love righteousness and hate iniquity. They will therefore, be championing every just cause and endeavoring to show good will to all men.” Hodges was fond of saying, “People are not souls with ears.”

In *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission*, Hodges lays out his guideline rules for social concern. A synopsis of those guidelines would include the following:

1. We must manifest the love of God and help, as we are able, those around us. God expects us to give productive manifestations of the love of God.
2. The local church is the center of all ministry to social concern.
3. Any program of social concern must point people to the central message of redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ.
4. Our ministry to social needs should never arouse unacceptable or legalistic expectations in the people being served.
5. We should be sure our ministry is reaching real needs. We should not enter into wasteful competition with secular agencies.
6. We should minister so as to help people help themselves.
7. We should remember only those things done for the redemption of humanity will stand for eternity.

A succinct declaration by Hodges on social concern was, “It is evident that evangelicals do have concern for the whole man. Nevertheless, the spiritual need of men is given primary importance as this opens the way to all else. Evangelicals consider their task to be communicating the gospel of Jesus Christ both by proclamation and by deed, thus letting their ‘light so shine’ that men see their good works and be drawn to Christ (Matthew 5:16).”<sup>11</sup>

Assemblies of God missiologist Doug Petersen has used his work among the poor in Latin America to write a seminal volume entitled *Not By Might Nor By Power*. He suggests that

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any person who participates in ministry of compassion must have a relationship with Jesus Christ, which is a radically transforming encounter that brings a person under the single-minded focus of God's rule. This radical spiritual overthrow that takes place thrusts a person into the world empowered by the Holy Spirit to take responsible participation on behalf of the poor through a local community of believers. The baptism in the Holy Spirit provides an act of God's grace where a person is equipped to evangelize and introduce righteousness as a consequence of an encounter with God. The social context Pentecostal believers find themselves in does not define the needs to be addressed; it is rather a point of insertion where the transforming power of the gospel is given visibility by a Pentecostal community, by Spirit-empowered witness, and Spirit-empowered action that testifies to the eternal, life-changing gospel of our risen Lord. The heartache of suffering people cannot be avoided. But could it be that we are facing an

open door of opportunity to present to those left by the roadside of life the wonderful transforming message of Jesus Christ? If we will live out the fullest implications of the Kingdom under whose reign we live, in Word — deed and sign — we could continue to see the greatest evangelization this world has ever seen.<sup>12</sup>

*Byron D. Klaus, D.Min., is president of the Assemblies of God Theological Seminary, Springfield, Missouri.*

## ENDNOTES

1. "Missions, Overseas (North America)" in Dictionary of Pentecostal Charismatic Movements, Stan Burgess and Gary McGee, eds. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishers, 1988), 621.
2. Everett Wilson, *Strategy of the Spirit: J. Philip Hogan and the Growth of the Assemblies of God Worldwide: 1960-1990* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1997), 50.
3. See the yearly statistical analysis in the January issue of *International Bulletin for*

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- Missionary Research.
4. See Norris Magnuson, *Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work 1865-1920* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977).
  5. Daniel Ewearitt, *Body and Soul: Evangelism and the Social Concern of A.B. Simpson* (Camp Hill, Penn.: Christian Publications, 1994), 5.
  6. See entries in *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* for “Abrams,” “Trasher,” “Steidel” and “Montgomery.”
  7. Eldin Villafañe, “The Contours of a Pentecostal Social Ethic: A North American Hispanic Perspective,” in *TRANSFORMATION*, Vol. II, No. 1 (January/March 1994), 9.
  8. Gary McGee, “Assemblies of God Missiology by the 1990’s: A Pilgrimage of Change and Continuity since 1914,” 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Society of Pentecostal Studies, Southeastern College, 1991.
  9. Peter Kuzmic, “Eschatology and Ethics: Evangelical Views and Attitudes” in *Mission as Transformation*. Samuel and Sugden, eds. (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1999), 134–165.
  10. Division of Foreign Missions Annual Report, 1986.
  11. Melvin Hodges, *A Theology of the Church and Its Mission* (Springfield, Mo.: Gospel Publishing House, 1977), 103–105.
  12. See Douglas Petersen, *Not By Might Nor By Power: A Pentecostal Theology of Social Concern* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1996). ■
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**Visit the CompassionLink web site for more articles and helpful resources, including numerous related web sites. The URL is <http://www.compassionlink.org>.**

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## SUSTAINABILITY—PRODUCING FRUIT THAT REMAINS

By JoAnn Butrin, Ph.D.

**O**ne day, there was a big storm. The monkey ran up in a tree for shelter. He looked below him and there was a stream. He saw a fish swimming among the rocks. The monkey said to himself, “There is a fish struggling in the water! He needs me to help him!” So he swung down from the tree branch and pulled the fish out of the water, and set the fish on the dry ground away from the stream. The fish was flopping around on the ground. “Look how happy the fish is!” the monkey said. Then the fish stopped flopping and became still and calm. The monkey said, “The fish is comfortable and relaxed now. Maybe he is sleeping. I feel so good that I helped this fish. Maybe I should go look for other fish I can help, too!” The monkey went away, very proud of himself for saving the fish.

Though the above scenario may seem somewhat extreme and

humorous, it does serve as a segue into some thoughts on ways in which those with hearts to help and serve can do so in a manner which will have maximum benefit and “retain the fruit” of the effort put forth.

So often, when we see tremendous need, our hearts are broken with compassion and we wish to respond, feeling we must do something to try to bring assistance and relief.

With all good intention we often begin to try to address what seems to be the most outstanding need. If we observe people that are hungry, we begin a feeding program. If we see orphaned children, we begin an orphanage, if people are sick and do not have reasonable medical care, we may build a clinic or hospital. We offer relief. But in doing these things, like the monkey in the scenario above, we may not have actually brought the most “appropriate” help to those in need.

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Without meaning to, we may instead have begun a process of dependency-building with our assistance, which could ultimately result in a reduction of dignity and self-esteem in the people we are trying to help. The hoped for result may not remain or continue, should outside funding cease or diminish.

In our efforts to help, we may also have side-stepped the national church partners and taken ownership of the project ourselves, keeping the national church from developing its full potential.

And lastly, we may have eliminated an opportunity to build the capacity of the people we serve.

The purpose of this article is to discuss first the difference between relief and development and to look at ways in which we can transform our heartfelt intention of help into something that will not build dependency, but rather will help persons build their own capacity, will strengthen dignity and self-respect, will be truly owned by the church/and or the community and will leave the people in need with

a means of carrying on without outside resources.

## **RELIEF AND DEVELOPMENT**

Before we can adequately look at appropriate help, we need to first understand the difference between relief and development and see how those definitions parallel the indigenous principles which make up the framework for the mode of operation of our AGWM strategy.

Relief is often defined as doing something for people that they cannot do for themselves. It is usually indicated when a cataclysmic event has occurred—a disaster, natural or man-made, that renders persons incapable of taking care of their basic needs. A good example of this is the Tsunami which brought such devastation to the Asia Pacific region. Relief in the form of medicines, clothing, food and shelter were sent in and distributed by our national churches in affected areas. Often, even in these types of disasters, it is helpful for people to begin to help themselves. Programs sometimes employ local people to help with distributions, or establish a work for



food policy. Every effort is made to maintain the dignity of the people affected by the disaster and to hasten their return to self-reliance.

Development, on the other hand, is helping people help themselves. Though people may seem initially grateful for relief; over time, people may feel a loss of dignity, self-respect and a lack of motivation to help themselves. Development means a dynamic process that empowers people to identify root causes of problems, solve them permanently using local resources, and involves long-term strategic planning. Development activities should be done “with”, not “for” the participants. It should thus be concerned with means that are the simplest, most cost-effective and replicable. Even children can and should participate in what affects their lives.

There are countries who understand the value of development versus relief. Bangladesh, for example, a disaster-prone country, will not accept a proposal to offer relief unless it is accompanied by a solid proposal to move the relief effort into development.

## **INDIGENOUS PRINCIPLES AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Melvin Hodges, an Assemblies of God missionary and a renowned missiologist, helped to establish a strategy of church planting which is called “indigenous church principles.” In his book, *The Indigenous Church*, he promotes the idea that churches should be established with the goal in mind that they will be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating. These principles have become foundational to the Assemblies of God missions strategy. Our mode of operation in many countries is to have nationals rather than missionaries pastor churches. It is also why we don’t support pastors of local churches, allowing instead the church to provide that support. This is one of the basic tenets of indigenous principles, and assists in building the capacity of the church to become self-sufficient.

In reality, the indigenous principles which Hodges promoted actually parallel the basic tenets of

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development. Development seeks to avoid dependency, to empower people to help themselves, to build their capacity, to facilitate ownership of the process and outcomes of whatever is being undertaken and to assure sustainability.

Development, whether within the church or without, is always a preferred method to relief. In fact, those involved in relief should begin looking for ways of transitioning relief to development almost immediately. Sustained relief over a period of time is often not possible or desirable for the donor or the recipient.

Just as evangelism will have minimal impact without discipleship, relief without transitioning into development will also have minimal impact.

Sustainability is defined as “the ability of an entity to fulfill its mission effectively and consistently over time by developing, procuring and managing sufficient resources (human capacities, giftings, finances, etc) without creating dependency on external sources.” Hodges referred to a

healthy church as one which is able to support itself. A solid development approach will always include a plan for ways in which the project or program can eventually be able to support itself, without dependency on external funds. This may mean that the program is of a smaller scale than one that would be heavily funded, but it will also mean that the impact of the effort will more likely remain and continue on long after outside resources are gone.

A wonderful example of this is that of a community health program that addresses health issues of a locale by dealing with improving sanitation and water, which is contributing to many of the illnesses present in the population. Rather than building a hospital, which would have been far too costly to be supported by the community, local individuals were trained to facilitate the community in deciding how they might clean up the water supplies and build latrines. Eventually, the cases of diarrhea and other illnesses reduced dramatically as a result of the entire community

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joining the effort. All felt ownership, not only of the program, but also of the reduction of suffering of the population and loss of lives of their children.

Another example is that of Teen Challenge. Men and women who come into these programs are put into work/study situations where life skills are learned. Often while learning is happening, the proceeds of the small business are used to operate the center.

Examples of ways in which development principles might be applied are:

- Instead of starting a feeding program, the root cause of hunger would be sought, possibly providing financial training and a small loan to improve crop production, or to start a small business.
- Instead of establishing a hospital, the root cause of illness would be assessed, and solutions would be sought that would be affordable, practical and sustainable. Preventative health teaching and/or a

community health outreach may well be the most appropriate response.

- Instead of establishing an orphanage for orphaned and vulnerable children, the community would find ways to embrace its own children in families or small group homes that would give the child the most normal life possible under the circumstances.

As Christians wanting to be involved in “best practice” in all that we do and dedicated to the missiology of the Assemblies of God world missions, we are challenged to see beyond the immediate need, to envision the larger situation and to build on the capacity of the people we serve.

John 15 speaks of fruit that will last—and as we apply the principles set forth by Hodges long ago to “all of our efforts” to meet human need, a strong sustainable program of maximum benefit will be launched that will continue to function long after outside resources have come to an end. ■

## REFLECTIONS ON SHORT-TERM MISSIONS TEAMS

By Diane Campbell, Nancy Harris, and HCM Focus Group

**A**n increasing interest in the world and its peoples, advanced communication and information technology, and accessibility of travel have fed a growing interest and involvement in missions. Short-term missions is a reality of the U.S. church; millions of Americans travel abroad each year on short-term missions.

Over the last several decades, discussion has increased as to the merit of short-term missions teams and trips. Issues contributing to the debate can be summed up as the benefit or liability of the mission endeavor to the short-termer, the short-termer's sending church or sphere of influence, the host missionary, the national church, the local community, and the Kingdom of God. Feelings on the subject are very strong, both for and against.

“One of the things that we tend

to do as Americans in order to prove a case is to overstate its impact and its value. So we want to call short-term missions the most important thing that's happening in the world of missions today or, on the other hand, to say it's pointless and we shouldn't do it. I'd say it's somewhere in-between.”<sup>1</sup>

A focus group, consisting of Assemblies of God World Missions missionaries and leaders, discussed the pros and cons of short-term missions within the worldwide AGWM context and in light of “best practice” for the field. The group defines the duration of the short-term missions trip as less than four weeks. The dynamics which impact the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of short-term teams is discussed in this article.

From the perspective of this Pentecostal group, as understood from biblical precedent and teaching, success of any mission endeavor depends upon the lead-

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ing of the Holy Spirit. A successful endeavor is defined as one that focuses on evangelism for the long-term impact, necessitating partnership with field-based missionaries and the national church.

Pentecostals do believe in the biblical “priesthood of all believers”<sup>2</sup>, mobilizing the entire Church to reach the lost. We firmly believe that short-term workers and endeavors will never replace long-term field-based missionaries. However, we recognize that if done correctly and in a manner consistent with the recommendation of this article, the potential benefits can be maximized and the potential harm minimized by short-term ministry volunteers.

Short-term mission teams have been viewed from several perspectives; providing guidelines for appropriate motives for going, effective leadership, team development, and listening to, and learning from, the field.

In 2003, a group of 400 U.S. leaders of short-term mission endeavors developed what they termed, “The U.S. Standards

of Excellence in Short-Term Missions”<sup>3</sup>. They state that a short-term team member is “one who strives to appropriately express God’s redemptive mission throughout His world and to glorify Him,” who recognizes that “short-term mission is not an isolated event—but rather an integrated process over time affecting all participants. This process consists of pre-field, on-field, and post-field stages.”<sup>4</sup>

Effective teams will:

- Be God-centered in purpose, giving God the glory for all that is accomplished. Team members will exemplify godliness and sound doctrine and practice with biblical methods and cultural appropriateness.
- Identify empowering partnerships, characterized as healthy, interdependent, on-going in relationship, and expressed by a primary focus on the intended receptors. Planning will be done together and with an assurance that there will be

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benefit for all parties. There must be mutual trust and accountability.

- Assure that the activities of the team be expressed by on-field methods and aligned to long-term strategies of the partnership.
- Exhibit integrity and truthfulness in promotion, finances and reporting of results. There needs to be appropriate risk management; and quality program delivery and support logistics.
- Have qualified leadership, possessing exemplary character, skills and values.
- Require appropriate training of all participants for the mutually designed outreach, expressed by biblical, appropriate and timely training.
- Have thorough follow-up, expressed by comprehensive debriefing (pre-field, on-field, post-field); on-field re-entry preparation; post-field follow-up and evaluation.
- Assure that spiritual impact

is integrated in and through the local church structure and that spiritual follow-up is planned for and can realistically be accomplished.

If the above components are carried out, long-term positive results from short-term efforts may be possible and multifaceted. The endeavor must be linked with already established goals of the field missionary and national church. The team, individually and collectively, must be properly prepared, both physically and spiritually; this includes appropriate cultural and ministry training to meet the specific need of the field. Selection and preparation of the team's leader is crucial to the success of the team's function and fulfillment of goals.

Preparation is critical to the process and involves all involved:

- Team members—Carefully thought through team composition is required. Training on what is considered appropriate intervention and “best practice” for that particular endeavor

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and spiritual preparedness for appropriate ministry should be given.

- Sending agency—Understands what is needed on the field and takes responsibility for team composition, communication, arranging for pre- and post-field orientation. Sets up logistics in conjunction with the field, etc.
- Hosting agency—Should be the entity who requests the outside team; sets measurable and realistic goals; communicates and discusses mutual expectations; and does comprehensive logistical planning to assure safe travel and adequate accommodations for the team. The national church should be high profile and the outside visiting team low profile.
- Receptors of service—Should receive communication to ensure proper expectations; should be active participants to affirm their

assets and maintain their dignity; should be empowered through appropriate training opportunities.

Short-term teams have often been said to “only benefit the team member” and not really serve the field. Though there is a tremendous benefit to the team member, and many future long-term missionaries receive their burden and call on a short-term team, the statement is not true if adequate preparation is done on the field.

For the team to make a valuable contribution to the field, the field itself needs to do the hard work of finding ways that the team can serve effectively, so that there will be mutual benefit for both the team members and the recipients.

Careful attention needs to be given to avoid paternalistic attitudes of what the team can do *for* the people and focus on what the team can do *with* the people. The only way this can truly work is if the recipients of whatever the team is offering can also have a voice in how they can

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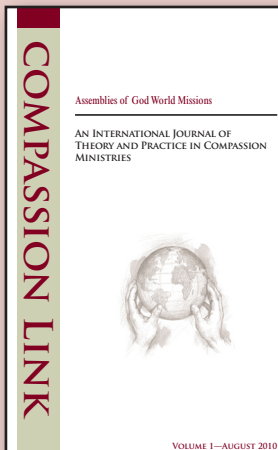
work together with those who are coming. In this way they are more like partners and less like receivers. This also helps the team to begin to understand principles of horizontal relationships and takes them out of the benefactor role.

If a team will listen to the goals of the field and will prepare as servants to work alongside the missionary and national church to together meet those goals, great work can be done and mutual benefit accomplished.

The benefit to the short-termer can be incalculable when the experience on the field is one of learning, working together and

knowing that the impact will be felt long after the team has gone home. Such a positive experience can open the volunteer to the call of God to continue doing such work, but on a long-term basis.

1. Livermore, David, Executive Director of the Global Learning Center at Grand Rapids Theological Seminary; *Serving with Eyes Wide-Open: Doing Short-Term Missions with Cultural Intelligence*.
2. 1 Peter 2:9
3. <http://www.stmstandards.org/standards>
4. [http://www.stmstandards.org/about\\_the\\_SOE](http://www.stmstandards.org/about_the_SOE) ■



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## WHAT IS BEST PRACTICE?

By JoAnn Butrin

**W**ith a bit of color coming into his cheeks, the man made one final statement after the group rejected his idea for taking care of street children. “Well,” he said, “Who determines best practice, anyway? Who’s to say I’m wrong and you are right?”

This is a really good question when you consider the phrase best practice, which is used with increasing frequency and in many circles including missions and ministry. And there are different schools of thought as to what constitutes best practice and who, in fact, should define just what that is.

Best practice, also referred to as “evidence-based practice” in some secular arenas, is sometimes defined as methods that by experience, research and employment by a considerable number of people, have been shown over time to be effective, efficient and result in the desired outcome.

The people who generally decide what constitutes best practice are those who are doing the research or who have been proving the methods by practice over time. They usually communicate their results by means of research articles or some type of public communication; their report would include similar findings by people considered to be doing credible work. The result is a declaration by credible organizations that a particular practice may be deemed “best,” as opposed to good or acceptable or, at the other extreme, negative or detrimental.

An example of this process is “exclusive breast feeding” for infants born to HIV-positive mothers in the developing world. As HIV transmission from mother-to-child via breast milk was observed over time, it was realized that there is about a 30 percent risk of HIV transmission during breastfeeding. However, there is a great risk of death to a bottle-fed child if sanitary conditions and

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clean water cannot be assured. It was also found that by giving only breast milk and not mixing in other food or drink, the intestine remained healthier and able to stave off the HIV transmission. Therefore the rate of transmission dropped to around 10 percent with exclusive breast feeding. As more studies looked at this issue, credible organizations such as the World Health Organization and UNAIDS began to say that the best practice for HIV-positive women is to continue breastfeeding their newborns until they are one year of age, but to do exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. Now exclusive breastfeeding is a common phrase in the HIV/AIDS vocabulary and is known by most as best practice.

Best practices do change over time as new information, new studies and new practices become available. Usually, however, it takes a number of people over a number of years doing the same or similar practices for something to be considered “best” by a broader community.

Questions asked when thinking

about best practice are:

- What practices are most effective?
- For whom?
- Compared to what?
- How are the results measured? (Winton, 2006).

How, then, does this concept fit into missions and the church world? Actually, there are many methods used by the church and missions that very much fit into the definition given above, although the phrase best practice is not applied to them. Perhaps scientific research hasn’t been carried out, but similar practice by a large number of people doing similar things over time has resulted in a group of people saying, “This is a preferred method of doing missions.”

The indigenous church principles practiced by many missions organizations have been widely accepted by many who do the work of missions; these principles stress the importance of local bodies of believers taking responsibility for their own work, in its support, sustainability and

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governance. This methodology includes practices that do not build dependency, but lead to the establishment of strong local and national churches that do not need assistance from outside agencies for their survival and growth. There are various interpretations of what indigenous means, but the general principles of the indigenous church would be considered “best practice” in missions.

What becomes much more debatable and harder to sort out is when best practice is applied to compassion ministries. There are many schools of thought as to what constitutes “best practice” in this arena, and there has been little of what would constitute evidenced-based research in terms of evaluation of effectiveness. Many missions practitioners in this field do “what seems best,” or what others have done, but without the rigors of study, research or even an evaluatory process to measure outcomes or impact. Though there may be elements of research from the secular world that could be useful, they are not

often integrated into the planning and design of whatever intervention is to be undertaken.

So on the one hand, there are compassion practitioners from outside the country and culture, coming in and deciding on interventions to help alleviate a need; because the need is met in some part for some people, this group would consider that they have followed biblical mandates of “taking care of the poor or the hungry,” or whatever the case may be, and would also feel that they have done best practice. On the other hand, the developmentalist comes in and says, “No, you have to involve the people on the ground in solving their own issues; you have to find root causes; it takes time, it has to be sustainable, and you don’t want to cause dependency.” They would definitely feel that their way of doing things is “best practice” and the far better way.

There are also those who think that “outsiders” or missionaries should not be involved in the compassionate or social aspects of human need; instead they should focus on spiritual needs, because

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those other things are temporal. Dealing with eternal issues is where time, effort and finances should be spent.

Who, then, does decide what constitutes best practice when it comes to the meeting of the needs of humankind? Is there a set of guidelines from which to draw? Actually, I believe that there are some sound principles that can set the stage for the most excellent practice in compassionate outreach, and they come from the teachings of Jesus himself.

Jesus makes it clear that His concern is for the “whole” person. His Word speaks of faith without action as being dead (James 2:14). In Luke 4:18-19, He made it clear that He had come to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, to release the oppressed, to give sight to the blind and to declare the year of the Lord’s favor, indicating that debts would be forgiven and land returned to its original owners. Obviously Jesus was concerned about every aspect of a person’s being: physical, emotional, social and spiritual. “If,” He says, “you see your

brother with a need and have not compassion on him, how can the love of God be in you?” (1 John 3:18). He asks us to love in word and deed. That we should be concerned for the whole person is beyond debate if we read the Word of God. But what about the best way to minister to whole person needs?

The word “dignity” sheds light on God’s view of us as His created ones. Jesus loves us so much that He died for us. He wants every part of our lives to be transformed by knowing Him. He wants us to become new, and He says, “I am come that you might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10). He doesn’t force us, however, to accept Him or the new life He offers. He gives everyone a choice. He shows himself in so many ways but allows each person the dignity to come to Him as they will. The woman at the well, though confronted, didn’t lose her dignity in the process. Jesus in all of His greatness still sees us as individuals and knows “the hairs on our head.” This says to us that each person, each family, each

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culture, has value and has something to bring to the table—no matter how poor, how marginalized, how disenfranchised. This gives a template, I believe, for a method of practice that is a best practice model for any practitioner and that is one of value and dignity.

If people are valued, they are included. If people are shown dignity, they are participants in their own solutions. They are not recipients of someone's good intentions, but rather co-laborers in working toward something they desire. Therefore, ministry is not done to them or for them, but with them. Outreach, intervention or good will is not simply outpoured, but rather decided upon together and shared to the extent that each party is able to give. Dependency is avoided and sustainability is built into whatever is going on. Evaluation of efforts by all concerned is happening, and it is hoped that everyone has an authentic voice in whether good is being accomplished. Lupton (2007) says that doing for others what they could

do for themselves is charity at its worst.

In addition to dignity and value, there are the elements of research and evaluation. Somehow those two terms seem unspiritual to some. But establishing what will work is what will truly contribute to the dignity and well-being of those on the receiving end of mission's endeavors. We really must do a better job of building research and evaluation into our efforts.

How do we really know if our seminars on HIV/AIDS awareness at the high school auditoriums are making any difference in students' knowledge and behavior? How do we know if our children's ministry training is turning out effective children's ministers? Are there any follow-up studies? Do we even care as long as we deliver what we are there to give?

Somehow it seems a bit egotistical to not evaluate what we are doing, to make sure that it is accomplishing the stated outcomes of our objectives (if we wrote objectives), and to see if

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there is a long-term impact. The Internet can provide us with so much information that we can read volumes about what others are doing before we even undertake what we plan to do. Find out what has worked and not worked before even getting started.

Best practice can't be best without prayer and reliance on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Following Biblical principles and mandates will give guidance for all that is undertaken in the Christian's decisions, relationships and practices. However, there is more to be done than just prayer. Often people move forward with, "The Lord told me to do it," feeling that with that heavenly mandate there is nothing more needed than simply to move forward and do whatever it is they are intent on doing. I con-

tend that best practice, and what the Lord would expect, should include what God is speaking to one's heart and following the best practice guidelines of dignity, research and evaluation.

As compassion practitioners, documentation of successes and failures are critical. Publishing of research and experience will add to our body of knowledge and assist others and together we can become the credible groups who determine best practice.

Lupton, R. (2007). *Compassion, Justice and the Christian Life: Rethinking Ministry to the Poor*. Ventura, CA: Regal.

Winton, P. (2006). The Evidence-based Practice Movement and Its Effect on Knowledge Utilization. In V. Buisse & P. Wesley (Eds.) ■

## BOOK REVIEW—FROM THE ROOTS UP: A CLOSER LOOK AT COMPASSION AND JUSTICE IN MISSIONS

By John Bueno

**J**ohn D. Rockefeller spent millions of dollars on a study to determine how to give money away without creating dependency. Most of this was done in Venezuela, but it encompassed many other countries where he was helping with various projects. I don't know what the results of that search were for him, but we do know through almost 100 years of missionary work now, that it is essential we get our missiology right before we do anything in the area of compassion ministries.

This book, *From the Roots Up: A Closer Look at Compassion and Justice in Missions*, written by our own Dr. JoAnn Butrin, has the answers to many of these questions. The book closely looks at the scriptural mandate to turn our eyes to the poor and to those who are treated unjustly. The Bible has so much to say about both of

these subjects, and I'm glad that as a Fellowship we can address many of the issues of the world. Of course, our resources aren't enough to cover them all, but we can do our part, and I'm grateful that in so many ways we are now expressing the love of Jesus Christ to our needy world.

Dr. Butrin's book helps us know how to do this correctly. It is useless for us to throw money at every problem and think we're solving the world's needs. It has to be done correctly, with the principles outlined in Scripture that Dr. Butrin has so ably laid out for us.

I believe this book is vital for our day, and I trust it will be a guide for our future activity in this realm. We do need so much to respond to the needs of our world, but we must do it right so we don't create a worse world when it's all over. ■

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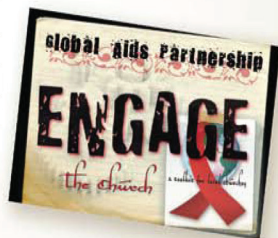
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## WORLD FIRST: HIV VACCINE HELPS IN THAILAND TRIALS

By Dr. Emily John

**F**or the first time ever, research in Thailand has created a vaccine to help in the prevention of HIV infection. “This marks an historic milestone,” said Mitchell Warren, executive director of the AIDS Vaccine Advocacy Coalition, an international group that has worked toward developing a vaccine. The cost of the research trial was \$105 million and spanned a 6-year period.

According to press reports, this new vaccine cut the risk of becoming infected with HIV by more than 31 percent in the world’s largest AIDS vaccine trial involving more than 16,000 volunteers. Although researchers say this is not the end of the road, they admit that they are very surprised and pleased by the results.

A vaccine to prevent infection has long been at the front of research efforts to stem the pandemic of AIDS; however,

the diversity and adaptability of the HI virus has left researchers frustrated and unable to come up with a successful vaccine. There are many reasons, but a basic explanation of the virus’ properties can provide insight into the problem.

There are presently two viruses associated with AIDS. They are HIV-1 and HIV-2. The first one (HIV-1) is found in Central, East and southern Africa, North and South America, Europe and the rest of the world. HIV-2 was discovered in West Africa (Cape Verde Islands, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal) in 1986 and is mostly restricted to West Africa.

These two viruses are very similar in structure, but HIV-2 is less pathogenic [able to cause disease] than HIV-1. The HIV-1 virus progresses much more quickly to disease [2–5 years] and has higher viral counts and higher transmission rates than HIV-2. In addition to the two primary

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viruses, each virus has multiple sub-types: HIV-1 sub-types range from A through K and HIV-2 includes sub-types A through G. The virus is continually mutating. For example, someone with HIV-1(C) can re-infect someone who has HIV-2 (A) and a completely new mutation takes place.

The problem in creating a vaccine is that researchers cannot just target one virus. They have to take into account the two main viruses

and all of their sub-types. This new vaccine shows promise that researchers are on the right track and are making progress with an extremely difficult and multi-faceted problem.

The general information in this article on the virus came from the book entitled “HIV/AIDS Care and Counselling” by Alta van Dyk (4th edition), Pearson Education, 2008, pp. 4, 20-21. ■

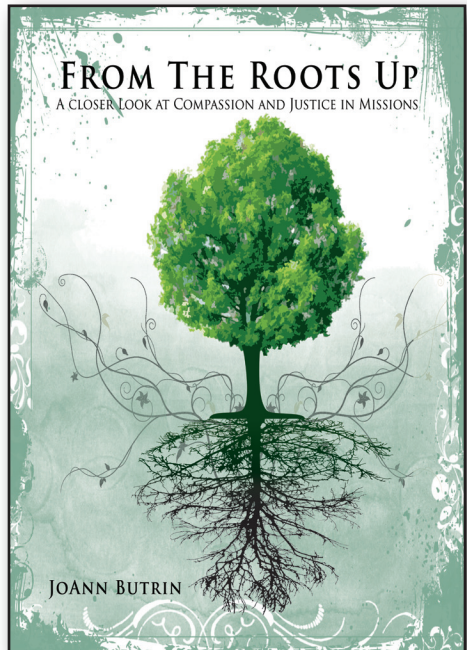
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*From The Roots Up: A Closer Look at Compassion and Justice in Missions*, reviewed in this issue of the journal, can be ordered online—the web site is given below. The cover price is \$15.95 plus shipping, and can be paid for by credit card or Paypal. A Kindle version is also available at Amazon.com. The ISBN is 978-0-7361-0433-3.

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## **JOURNAL REVIEW: “EDUCATING AFRICAN PASTORS ON MOTHER-TO-CHILD TRANSMISSION OF HIV/AIDS”**

By Neil Ruda

**E**ducating African pastors on mother-to-child transmission of HIV/AIDS was originally published in the December 22, 2006 edition of the *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*. The author was Aaron Santmyire. The purpose of the study was to educate AG pastors in Burkina Faso about HIV/AIDS and mother-to-child transmission (MTCT).

The sample included 102 pastors that attended the seminar in January through March of 2005. The program was then implemented in the Bible schools in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. The participants took part in an 18-hour program that consisted of six 3-hour evening sessions and were given pre- and post-test examinations, a picture booklet, and a follow-up evaluation.

Not surprisingly, the pretest results showed very little knowl-

edge of HIV/AIDS by the pastors. The median scores jumped from 16 percent on the pre-test to 92 percent on the post-test. Thirty-four follow-up evaluations were received, and all the pastors recommended testing for expectant mothers, but only 13 pastors discussed MTCT in their churches.

The study clearly shows that the program was effective in increasing HIV/AIDS knowledge among the pastors, especially MTCT. The study is available for download via purchase from Amazon.com.

Aaron (MSN -CFNP) is a Certified Family Nurse Practitioner and is working on his Doctorate in Nursing Practice at West Virginia University. He is presently working in Madagascar in a mobile clinic setting that is used to demonstrate the compassion of Christ through medical outreaches. ■

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## Assemblies of God World Missions

1445 N. Boonville Ave.  
Springfield, MO 65802-1894

Phone: (417) 862-2781  
Email: [info@compassionlink.org](mailto:info@compassionlink.org)  
Web Site: <http://www.compassionlink.org>