

**MISSIONAL CHURCH
INITIATIVE**

TRANSFORMATIONAL

**Resources for
Compassionate Ministries**

Eurasia Region

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RHEMA: THE CHURCH'S FAITH IN ACTION

RESOURCES FOR COMPASSIONATE MINISTRIES AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

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THIS BOOK IS A COMPILATION OF TRAINING SESSIONS AND WRITINGS ON COMPASSIONATE MINISTRIES BY GUSTAVO CROCKER IN LATIN AMERICA IN 1992-1996.

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CHAPTER I

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF COMPASSION

The practice of compassion in the local church has often been a topic of discussion in the life of the Church. Is Compassion part of the mission of the Church? When considering the needs of others, does the responsibility lie with the Church or government?

The history of the early Church as narrated in the book of Acts, shows us that compassion was a normal activity in the life of Christians, a natural evidence of a Christian witness. The holistic life of the first century Christians produced visible results inside and out of the Church. These Christians had everything in common; no one lacked anything. The ones who had possessions would bring the product to the apostles to be passed out among the needy. The results were amazing: The Church grew and even outsiders were converted as they got to know the God who produced such dramatic changes in the lives of people.

Of course it was not all easy. There were also problems, complaints like “how come the widows of this group don’t get the same attention that the widows from the other group get?” (Acts 6). In other cases, the problems were even more serious, as some “believers” tried to fool, not the apostles, but God, as they brought offerings that were not sincere (Acts 5). This shows us that the human heart has to be changed completely by God to be genuinely engaged in the mission of love to others.

When the Nazarene church was born, at the beginning of the 1900’s, the vision for holistic ministry was part of the practice of the Christian life in the church. The church organized different acts of compassion, according to the needs of the era. Attention to orphans and widows, and especially to the poor, was a priority. The preparation of Christians to serve human needs has been taken seriously in the Nazarene church since its foundation. Practical forms of ministry took the form of Nursing schools founded for the preparation of missionary nurses and homes to care for single and abused mothers.

When the Church of the Nazarene started to send missionaries to different parts of the world, they took the needs of the communities into consideration. This resulted in practical ministries such as founding

clinics and schools to fulfill the educational and health needs of the communities that were being reached. Along with this community engagement, missionaries actively worked on the translation of the Bible into the native dialects of the newly converted.

As time went by, and for different reasons in the life of the mission of the church, these practices were being lost and were no longer important in the life of the church in general. It wasn't until the 1980's when the importance of love and service towards our neighbor again became an institutionally accepted responsibility for Nazarene believers. That is when Nazarene Compassionate Ministries (NCM) began, to remind us that loving God also implies loving our neighbor.

Today it is very important for us to understand and to respond, as did the leaders of the early church, to the social, physical, and economic needs of the members of the church and community. The apostles delegated the responsibility of responding to those in need to a group of people who were gifted to serve, men full of the Holy Spirit, of good witness and wisdom. Full of the Holy Spirit to show love and compassion for the people; full of wisdom to collect and distribute the resources; and also as a good witnesses, honorable believers, so that the people can believe in the Lord who sent them to serve.

What is the current situation in the church today? Even though most Believers think that "compassion is a good thing," we can identify at least seven different philosophical positions that leaders and members of the church espouse when addressing the issue of compassion or holistic ministry:

1. COMPASSION AS AN OBSTACLE:

For those who espouse this view, compassion is considered as a burden for evangelism. In this view, the only legitimate ministry of the church is to win souls for eternity, saving them from eternal condemnation. Compassionate activities take time, energy, and money, and distract the church from its main objective of winning souls.

2. COMPASSION IN DISGUISE:

For those who take this approach, compassion is a “means to an end.” In this case, people feel that the compassionate ministries activities are important because the compassionate acts can attract people to Christ. Compassionate activities are acceptable as long as they can show real results, that is, new converts.

3. REDEMPTIVE COMPASSION:

Supporters of this approach believe that redemption is a natural outcome of compassionate ministries. Our compassionate acts let people see the love of God demonstrated to them and that exposes them to Christ and Christianity. Through this exposure they can find the way and be saved. In this view, redemption and compassion go hand in hand and become a strategic integration of Compassion-Evangelism. The fruit of compassion in the early church was the growth of the church and the change in individuals.

4. COMPASSION AS A LIFESTYLE:

In this case compassion is a way of life for every member of the church. It is not a sporadic activity. Believers don't wait for special occasions, and they don't wait to have great projects. Compassion arises from every member of the church, at all times, whenever there is a need. Believers who espouse “lifestyle compassion” are convinced that loving others and serving them is part of the DNA of a Christian and, while their duty is to serve and care for the needs of others, God will add to the church those who will be saved.

5. SENSITIVE COMPASSION:

For some, compassion responds to the needs of the believers and of the community in the moment of a crisis. Great catastrophes, disasters and sharp needs awaken the compassion of the church, particularly the ones who are ready to help those in distress. For example, as a result of being sensitive to the need, the Church of the Nazarene began the fund for Hunger and Disaster in the world, the foundation for Nazarene Compassionate Ministries. In many parts of the world, Christians

are normally ignorant of the needs around them and around the world. However, their “compassionate senses” get activated when they are exposed to crisis around them, and respond with gladness.

6. COMPASSION WITHOUT WITNESS:

For some Christians, compassion is used instead of evangelism. They believe that their acts of compassion are evangelism and they even shy away from proclaiming the Gospel because they believe that to be proselytizing. In this case, the church no longer has evangelism programs and its presence in projects of aid to their neighbors is believed to cover the Christian commitment to the world.

7. POLITICAL COMPASSION:

There are people who believe that compassion as social action can be used as a way for political change in society. The kingdom of God is seen as a political program that wants to change the structures of society. For proponents of this position, evangelism is not necessary and it diverts resources away from changing the political structures or society.

The perspectives above present widely varying views on the role of compassion in the life of the church. Some of these views exclude compassion because they consider it to be a drag on the church's ability to win souls. The other extreme excludes evangelism because they consider it to be a limitation on the church's ability to enact political change. The reality, however, is that the church cannot afford to be caught by either of these extremes. Biblically, the church is to balance its ministry by reaching to the spiritual and physical needs of the communities around it.

To help find this balance, Evangelical Christians have explored the concept of “Integral Mission.”

Integral Mission is the proclamation and demonstration of the gospel. It is not simply that evangelism and social involvement are to be done alongside each other. Rather, in integral mission our proclamation has social consequences as we call people to love and repentance in all areas of life.

And our social involvement has evangelistic consequences as we bear witness to the transforming grace of Jesus Christ. If we ignore the world we betray the word of God, which sends us out to serve the world. If we ignore the word of God we have nothing to bring to the world. Justice and justification by faith, worship and political action, the spiritual and the material, personal change and structural change belong together. As in the life of Jesus, being, doing and saying are at the heart of our integral task.¹

THE WAY TO COMPASSION

Communities and social groups respond differently to human problems. Such answers and positions depend on many doctrinal, theological, ideological and individual factors. But these answers also depend on the level of sensitivity and perception that the social groups have about a certain crisis situation. Other than the attitude of IGNORING the problems of humanity (which does not seem to be human or Christian), people generally react in three different ways when confronted with others' difficult situations. Such attitudes are part of a progression of the level of human sensitivity: Philanthropy, social action and compassion.

PHILANTHROPY:

This is the most common answer of human beings when confronted by needs of others. People normally give from what is left over or out of their abundance. In other words, philanthropy requires a) that the person who gives has resources, and b) that there is a perceived need which may or may not be real. All that people need to do is to request the resources and the donors give. However, this action is motivated by an impulse or reaction towards a situation that was heard of or that was observed.

The element that drives philanthropy is instinct. People give as a result of what touches their senses. When a person sees, smells, tastes or

¹ The above is an extract from the Micah Declaration on Integral Mission developed by those present at the Micah Network consultation on Integral Mission held in Oxford during September 2001.

touches something that is going bad, that person reacts. For the philanthropist these reactions always have to do with the existence or lack of resources at hand. That is why the majority of philanthropic actions are fulfilled by individuals and organizations that have resources or access to them.

The practice of philanthropy does not require a direct contract with those that will benefit from this action. Many people are motivated just by watching a commercial on TV, news, publications or just by listening to conversations about a difficulty here or there. But the level of sensitivity required to exercise philanthropy is temporary and circumstantial.

SOCIAL ACTION:

This is the type of answer that has won wide acceptance among contemporary Christian groups. The main tenet of social action is that certain marginalized segments of the population need to be organized with the objective of laying out their demands in a proper way. This way they can obtain the resources to a better level of life.

Since social action is based on planned change, this kind of answer requires certain level of critical consciousness and an understanding of the social dynamics involved in the problems that our neighbors encounter. In this sense the social action is motivated by mental logic.

When people develop a clear understanding of the situation, then they are motivated to resolve the difficulties in a rational way, that is planned and inclusively global. Even in situations in which social activists don't have access to resources, their level of understanding of the situation permits them to mobilize groups, communities and resources with the objective of obtaining the change that was planned.

To be able to have such a level of understanding of the situation leaders should have a good level of sensitivity or social consciousness. This level of sensitivity is gained by knowing the problems and by studying or living in similar situations such as the ones that are trying to be resolved. The practice of social action requires a closer contact with the community. Generally, social activists are leaders of the community, even though many leaders often are not part of the daily life of the

community. These leaders mobilize groups and resources. They also make plans for others to implement. It is important to mention that such plans are put together by the most creative or most studied person in the group, or by “intellectuals” that come from outside to help the marginalized groups.

COMPASSION:

This type of answer to the needs of communities is probably the deepest and hardest to fulfill. Compassion is more than just a simple reaction before a perceived difficulty. As a matter of fact, it goes even further than a clear understanding and critical analysis of the situations that affect our neighbors. Compassion consists of “incarnating” the difficulties of others in our own existence. In other words, compassion is to feel and live what others feel. This is the only method that allows us to respond in a way that others might respond in situations of crisis, difficulty and even joy.

When people are able to suffer with those who suffer, then they have attained the compassionate lifestyle that Jesus preached. Jesus is the best example of a compassionate life. He saw and understood the suffering of humanity (requirements for both philanthropy and social action). However, He did not stop there. Jesus was incarnated as man and He bore the pain of His creation. His attitude towards the misery of His people was not just moved by pity. His ministry was not a ministry of social action. His incarnation to those who suffered was and is an act of compassion.

The main ingredient for compassion is love. It is impossible to live a lifestyle of compassion if there is no love in us. Paul wrote to the Corinthians (a very active community) and emphasized that: “...If I give all I possess to the poor (philanthropy), and surrender my body to the flames (social action), but have not love (compassion), I gain nothing” (1 Cor 13:3 – additions mine).

Compassion requires the agents of compassion to be completely immersed and identified with those who want to experience the fullness of life. Jesus had compassion for the lost, the ill, the destitute and the needy. That is why He went into the cities to preach the Gospel of sal-

vation; healing and teaching. Better yet, He lived with those in need. Yet, even when He lived with them and was a part of them, He did not act like them. With His example He taught a new and real lifestyle.

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. At what level are you as an individual?
2. At what level is your local church as a body?
3. At what level is the group you represent now?

CHAPTER II

HOLISTIC MINISTRY IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

The key ingredient for holistic ministry in the church is mobilization. Holistic ministry is a task for all Christians, not just for the pastor or the leaders (and especially, not just for the committee on compassion). Many times in the church we put more emphasis on either activities or people. Mobilization implies a balance where there is space for ministry for all activities and all believers. This ministry integration helps us to see the church as a whole and where the diversity of ministries help the church to develop.

Even though the idea of holistic ministry is both biblical and practical for the life and growth of a church, some skeptics think that this concept is somewhat idealistic for small churches, and especially for those that minister in poor areas. However, integral (holistic) ministry is something that is possible (and commanded) even for new converts. Our job is to make disciples that are capable of doing what the Lord has taught us to do.

Here are some principles that can help churches become holistic and transformational from their inception:

- 1. Disciple new believers in the theology and practice of ministry to others from the very beginning of their discipleship.** Remember that ministering to spiritual and physical needs is not something exclusively for mature Christians.
- 2. Base your discipleship strategy on the biblical passages that layout the truth about our love to our neighbor.**
- 3. As a discipler you need to lead a balanced life and integral ministry.** Your balanced life will teach the members of your church and community that you also take time to minister to the social and physical needs of others.
- 4. Understand that the lifestyle of the members of the church should be consistent with the total ministry of the local church.** The programs of the local church need to reflect what the individuals and families practice in their daily lives. If the members of the church get involved in the integral ministries only when the church is putting together a program, their lifestyles at home will not be

changed for the better. Their participation in isolated programs will give them an excuse not to live a holistic lifestyle all the time.

5. **Find the vision that God has for the community.** Pray, read, and discuss the implications of an integral ministry from a biblical perspective. Investigate the needs of the community. Ask yourself, "If Jesus were the leader of this community how should it be?" "What changes would He make in the spiritual, social, physical, emotional and moral areas?" Note that when this vision arises it will be dynamic. As the church identifies with the vision God's intentions will be clearer.
6. **Give witness that the work that involves helping our neighbor represents God's intentions to restore His people as a whole.** First of all, every time that an initiative takes place to help the needy, communicate the reason for such an event: "God wants to restore the needy." Second, pray diligently while you plan, execute, evaluate and especially while you celebrate the final activity. In the measure that the spectators see how the believers ask God for His direction and provision, they (the spectators) will see that the church believes and conducts as if God were leading the project. Third, the church should give both public and private credit to God as the main character for all the work. If not, the church runs the risk that the honor is turned towards the missionary, pastor, or leader who executed the project or the agency that the Lord used to provide the resources.
7. **Use your local resources, those that the Lord has provided, before you look to external agencies.** God does not make exceptions. The poor should also give, as the commandments say, to share what He has given them. God rejoices when He can use those insignificant resources that have been put before Him that are given from the heart. God shows His power and desire to bless and honor those who honor Him with obedience. Be aware of those that come to your church or community with resources to spend and donate. Many times these groups or individuals act as if the needy are so poor that they don't have anything (not even responsibility), to help each other. Without knowing it, they steal the joy of seeing how God can bless their obedience from the people—maybe by sharing the only gift they have. (Matthew 25:14-28)

8. **You should get experience in small integral ministry activities, in which local resources are involved before beginning any large projects that will require external aid.** If you bring large amounts of resources from elsewhere before the church begins to depend on God with the little they have, you may run some risks: 1) The church might think that the provision for the physical and social ministries have to come exclusively from the outside; 2) The church may get used to establishing aid programs that depend on outside resources; 3) The church will never learn to initiate programs of integral ministry based just on its own resources.
9. **Contact other brethren or churches to get to know about new strategies and resources to enable your church to minister to its community in an integral way.** Before starting a program with your church see how other groups are dealing with similar problems or needs. Find out how they obtained their resources. Find different answers, and then decide with your leadership the best solution within the context of your local church.
10. **Develop the attitude of a servant, not of a controller.** The local church should be beacon of light; a positive influence in the community instead of a center of operations for a political-religious agency. The church can participate and lead some projects that seek the well being of the community, but the church should not try to monopolize the control of all the process.

In Mark 6:34-44 we find some principles that Jesus used to address the needs of a community:

- There was a great multitude that day. The Bible only gives us the number of men who were there (5,000) but we assume that there were also women, youth, and children.
- They had a great need: they were hungry.
- The disciples wanted to turn them away. The disciples were also hungry and had little or no resources.
- A boy had some bread and some fish.
- Jesus organized them and the miracle happened.

The following principles can be drawn as the church organizes a work plan for the community:

1. Identify the needs

The Bible tells us that the community had three principal needs that were identified by Jesus and His disciples.

- a. Lack of organization in the community (they were like sheep without a shepherd (v.34).
- b. Hunger (v.36).
- c. Lack of real estate (Luke 9:12).

Once a list of potential needs is identified it has to be decided which is the most important one. You need to determine which need:

- a. Requires immediate attention?
- b. Requires less immediate attention?
- c. Could wait to be taken care of later?

2. Make a list of alternative solutions

It is important to study the possible solutions for a problem. This has to be carefully done, because sometimes instead of solving a problem, we can cause a lot of damage. In different parts of the world you can talk about topics such as solution-versus-dependence.

In this biblical passage we can find two alternatives:

- First: Make people return (promote disorganization, v.37), or
 Second: Feed them (promote organization, v.37)

In looking at alternative solutions, churches need to understand that there are different types of leaders and perspectives towards the needs of others (as outlined in Chapter I). In v.37 we find two types of leadership:

- a. **Leaders who say, "It is not our problem"** tell people to go find their own solution. They believe that they cannot do anything to resolve it. They are members of the community but they are not interested in the community problems unless they affect them personally. We need to be careful when we choose the solutions, but we also have to follow the advice to

observe and listen (Exodus 3:7). The most important need in this biblical passage was the lack of food (v.36).

b. **Leaders who say, “Let’s feed them”** believe that they are there to solve problems. They are part of the community and, even if the problems do not affect them personally, the problems of the community are theirs. As leaders of compassionate ministries we have to know what kind of leaders we are and what kind of leaders we want on our team.

3. Identify the resources

It is amazing to listen to the answers that people give when they are asked to identify the resources they have. Like the disciples, the most common answer we hear is, “We don’t have anything, only 200 silver coins, we are poor, we need help.” In verse 38, Jesus asks His disciples: “How many loaves do you have? . . . Go and see.” This phrase is an order that means you need to open your eyes and see what you have around you. Many leaders of the church lose their time crying about their poor and miserable living because they don’t want to see beyond their noses. Let’s remember the story of the horse, whose owner discovered a way to keep him running by attaching a stick with a hanging carrot to his neck. As the horse followed the carrot, he could not see the green pastures that were on the side of the road. Unfortunately, many of us concentrate more on the carrot (small external resources) and we forget about all the resources we have around us. The best way to know the resources is to “Go and see”.

GO AND SEE!

a. How many human resources do you have? Make a list: women, doctors, men, carpenter, youth, teachers, builders, nurses, farmers, etc.

b. What material resources do you have? Make a list: Water, animals, properties, wood, stone, plants, etc.

INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING IN PLANNING YOUR INITIATIVE

a. Necessary resources: What resources do you need? In Jesus’ example the food was the resource needed to feed the community.

b Local resources: We need to know how many and which resources we have in the community. Go and see!

c. External resources: How many resources do we need from the outside to complete the response? Generally there could be a donor who may provide in the future.

ORGANIZE AND CONSIDER THE RESOURCES

In most cases, local resources are available where the ministry will be implemented. Sometimes they have to be sought for in or out of the community. To facilitate the work, all the resources should be found and stored close to where the ministry will take place (Matthew 18:8). We also have to understand that all the resources belong to God. So before using the resources and asking others for help we need to consecrate them to God by praying for:

- His blessing over the local resources that are available,
- His blessing over the needed resources, and
- For Him to multiply the resources that will be needed.

4. Design a work plan

This is the most important part in ministry initiative. A project without a work plan is destined to fail. A work plan helps the church organize itself so that it is easy to recognize all the phases and resources to be utilized, until the goals and objectives are reached. A plan also helps the church make better use of its resources. The plan should include as many steps as are needed, according to the objectives for its development. In the example in Mark there are 4 phases (read Mark 6:39-43) which are:

1. Community organization (v.39-40),
2. Distribution (v.41),
3. Oversight and evaluation of needs met (v.42-43), and
4. Workers' reward (v.43).

5. Organize the community

Why is it so important to organize the community for a project? There are many reasons, some of which are:

- a. To have better control over the situation,
- b. To distribute the resources better,
- c. To avoid poor use of limited resources,
- d. To avoid critics and gossip,
- e. To maximize the capacity of the leaders,

- f. To get to know the different levels of needs,
- g. To get to know and coordinate with all the necessary people, and
- h. To understand the abilities and capabilities of the people.

6. Define the objectives of the program or project

Defining the objectives will help us imagine how much we want to accomplish with the project and how to do it. Suppose that we live in a small town. One morning you wake up and you tell your wife, “My dear, tomorrow I need to go into the city and visit 5 clients. I will return home by nighttime.” This simple example tells us clearly that this man’s objectives were: 1. Go into town in the morning, 2. visit 5 clients during the day, and 3. return home by night. In this case, he summarized for his wife the objectives for the project, including the numbers, dates and all the information needed. In Mark 6:42 we find that the desired objective was accomplished: Everyone ate, and it was enough. The plan should include as many steps as needed, according to the objectives that it will have.

7. Evaluate

How do you know if the initiative is going where it was designed to go? How do you know if it will need any changes to correct any missing pieces, to most effectively accomplish the goals and objectives? Sound evaluation will let you see the progress that has been made and to know what needs to improve. The objective of the evaluation is to find out where we are at and what results we have achieved with the project. We don’t have any doubt about the power of Jesus, He knows everything; still the disciples (especially Mark, who probably witnessed the event), knew that everyone had eaten because they made an evaluation. (Mark 6:42)

8. Follow up

Many ministry projects fail because there is no follow-up. Follow-up is important because it helps leaders to verify if people actually learned something and if their lives have changed. To help people learn, and practice what they have learned, we need to have constant follow-up.

Cholera, for example, is an illness that constantly kills people around the world. Some simple hygienic measures help to avoid this illness. But

churches need to train people so that they can practice these measures time and again until they learn to do it themselves. Constant training and follow-up are known for helping communities prevent and respond to such a killing disease. Follow-up continues after the actual ministry implementation.

CHAPTER III

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY TRANSFORMATION

What difference are we making as Christians in the community where we minister? Have we been agents of change in the community? These are the questions that we address when we speak about church-based community transformation. How can we as Christians make a difference around the world that surrounds the Church? What are the problems that the community around us has? How can we solve them?

The Church today is surrounded by numerous problems: Poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, youth violence, unemployment, HIV/AIDS and other illnesses, lack of clean water, immigration, corruption, child labor, human trafficking, poor agricultural production, lack of education for work, and countless others that affect our communities. Can we do anything about these as a Church? Let's look at some of our options.

THE PROGRESSION OF CHRISTIAN ANSWERS TO THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE

Under normal circumstances, people who have not been trained, disciplined, and exposed to holistic ministry, find it difficult to engage in community transformation through balanced proclamation and demonstration. Our experience has been that Christians need to make progress in their responses to human need. The process is not completely linear because, as Christians, we believe in God's sovereignty that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can move anyone to be an ambassador of the whole Gospel to the whole person. However, normally most Christians progress in the path to integral ministry as follows:

1. Prayer
2. Emergency relief
3. Institutionalized social assistance
4. Community development
5. Integral ministry

As with any evidence of revival in the Church, holistic ministries also start with prayer. Prayer is the engine that turns people's sensitivity towards the needs of others. A church that prays for the needs of oth-

ers develops not only an intercessory character, but also an active spirit that mobilizes believers to do something on behalf of those who suffer.

Cloud was a layman in a church on the American West Coast and was watching the news of the devastating earthquake that had destroyed a large portion of Guatemala in 1976. He had often heard stories of the growth of the church in that country and so he started to pray. For many nights he called his pastor and church friends to pray for the victims of the earthquake in Guatemala. Prayer and intercession pushed Bob to do something. Several months later, Cloud was part of a work team that traveled to Guatemala to rebuild homes in some of the affected areas of the country.

Thanks to the relief work in Guatemala, Cloud came in contact with local leaders who were working with widows and orphans who were victims of the ongoing civil war in the country. He saw their suffering and, with the collaboration of many of his church friends in America, he started supporting an institutional response to orphans in the center of Guatemala. The “Hogar del Niño” was started and children were placed under the care of national leaders in a campus designed for the specific purpose of caring for vulnerable orphans of the war.

The work of the orphanage, however, evidenced many other social ills that children and their families faced in that part of the country. The orphanage director, a medical doctor, realized that institutional care, while the symbol of Christian care and witness, did not address the most acute needs of the communities where those children would eventually return and live. So, with the participation of the churches in the surrounding communities, several community development initiatives were started. These initiatives, led by the national church, continued to be supported by believers who, like Cloud, believed in the importance of church-based social transformation and community development.

Today, the church in the Verapaz area of the country is a model of integral ministry. Churches are growing, communities are transformed, and the name of Christ is lifted high. Not as the head of a religion, but as the transforming power that changes individuals, communities, and societies for today and for eternity.

THE PROCESS OF INTEGRAL MINISTRY THROUGH CHURCH-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

BASIC CONCEPTS

Community Service Agencies often call themselves “Development Agencies.” However, there are few service institutions that truly apply the development concept in its wide interpretation. This misleading interpretation of the concept of development is due to the lack of clarity concerning the objectives and areas of action in which the different types of community service take place. That is why it is important to clearly define the differences in such forms of community service. The forms of service that often are confused are related to relief, social assistance and development. These three dimensions are defined as follows:

EMERGENCY RELIEF

The first dimension for community service comes in the form of emergency relief. This has the following characteristics:

- a. **MAIN OBJECTIVE:** Respond to a felt need or an emergency through actions that tend to relieve the problem momentarily.
- b. **SERVICE MECHANISIMS:** Timely aid, search and rescue, gifts-in-kind, relief supplies.
- c. **NATURE OF THE PROJECTS:** Incremental projects, short-term responses, and short-duration aid. The projects are directed to a determined group at a determined moment and generally with just one type of aid.
- d. **EXAMPLES OF AID ACTION:** The most common are clothing distribution, financial donations, and food and materials, in response to a natural disaster or social and political unrest. In this group you can also find the sporadic medical brigades as well as short-term reconstruction teams.
- e. **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION:** In these cases the community develops a passive attitude as the receivers of aid. As a result, the communities tend to become irresponsible towards their own needs.

f. **DONOR PARTICIPATION:** Donors and agency workers, the social technicians, assume a paternalist attitude so they distribute the aid by lists, or even worse through governmental instances.

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

Social assistance projects are differentiated from the aid actions in duration and levels of continuity. The main characteristics of the social assistance projects are as follows:

a. **MAIN OBJECTIVE:** Care for those who suffer through social service institutions that isolate the needy from their social, political and economical context.

b. **MECHANISIMS OF THE SERVICE:** Social assistance takes place through projects designed specifically by experts without consulting with the community.

c. **NATURE OF THE PROJECTS:** On a great scale, costly and complex. They require external personnel for their design and implementation. Projects are generally localized prototypes of other similar ones.

d. **EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS:** The most common are clinics, nursing homes, hospitals, orphanages, special schools, refugee centers, etc.

e. **COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION:** As in the aid actions, the community is given a passive position of receiving help. Also, in many cases, social assistance projects neglect the masses of the community-at-large because they are dedicated to specific need groups within the community.

f. **DONOR PARTICIPATION:** Even though there is more contact in the social assistance projects between donors and beneficiaries, the relationship is still paternalistic. Even so, donor agencies and local staff tend to take over the financial resources and the distribution of services.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

The third type of community service takes place through church-based community development initiatives. Community development can be defined as follows:

a. PRIMARY GOAL OF DEVELOPMENT: To create conditions of integral progress for the entire community with the active participation of the community and with the maximum initiative of the community.

b. SERVICE MECHANISIMS: Programs originated by the community and whose series of projects are implemented at the short and medium terms, with the goal of accomplishing the long-term transformational objectives of the community.

c. NATURE OF THE PROJECTS: Development projects are characterized because, in their creation, the most important element is community participation in deciding and defining their problems. The projects, because they are part of a development program, are short, manageable, less costly, more flexible and definitely participative.

d. EXAMPLES OF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS: The most successful development programs fall into the five main development categories: food security, integral education, health promotion, income generation, and infrastructural development.

e. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION: Since the development projects are for the community and made with the community “not on behalf of the community”, there is active participation at all stages: Leadership, decision-making, planning, and implementation. The church is the monitor of such interaction and it becomes the center of community transformation.

f. DONOR PARTICIPATION: In the development programs the donors and their technicians assume the role of facilitators. They become the community technical and financial advisors.

THE INTEGRATED MINISTRY PROCESS THROUGH CHURCH-BASED DEVELOPMENT

How is your church responding to the needs of its members? Based on the previous concepts, we can see that the process of development is not necessarily a process of elaboration of projects. The development process consists of having the community search for instances that can help solve their needs, as the community has perceived them. In this regard, the process of development starts through participatory identi-

fication of the local needs by the community itself. Central to this process is the role that the church plays in a) representing the community, b) listening to the community, and c) mobilizing the community.

Once the members of the community have identified their needs (limitations) and their resources (achievements), then their perspective will be clearer than at the beginning. That is because the process allows them to own and prioritize their needs. When the needs and resources have been identified, the next step is to prioritize them.

Prioritizing needs and resources requires identifying those problems that need to be taken care of in a sequential form. The problems that should be tended to immediately with existing or external resources need to be addressed first, and then the community will be able to address those issues that need a long-term solution.

Once the community has prioritized their needs and resources, the residents, with the help of the development facilitators, determine whether or not there is a need to implement a project that involves local or external resources. This has been the favorite phase of most "development marketers" because for many service agencies (and not development), the projects constitute the means of their existence, instead of the ways to satisfy the needs detected by the community and with the community. Not so with the local church. When the community has identified the needs and resources and then prioritized them, the course of action, facilitated by the local church, results in plans that church and community members can implement for the sake of the community itself.

In those cases where the community generates a project, the project proposal does not imply the end of the development process. On the contrary, the elaboration of the project is just halfway to the participative development process. The implementation requires assistance from the community, the technical advisers, the facilitators and administrative assistants of the project. In each step of the execution of the project, participants need to incorporate the appropriate mechanisms for evaluation, follow-up, and monitoring. This last phase is continual and permanent. It does not limit itself to the traditional financial and quality control.

In addition to the necessary controls mentioned above, churches and communities should establish the means through which they will continuously evaluate the impact of the development efforts in the overall community (culture, economy, values, organization, etc.). Even when the project has been conceived as non-failing and perfect for the needs of the community, it should be evaluated continually to determine its continuity, cancellation, modification or repetition.

Of utmost importance is to evaluate the spiritual impact of the initiative in the life of the community. It does not help to take people out of their misery if, at the end of the day, we are not able to take the misery out of the people. In other words, the abundant life in Christ is not primarily material. Abundant life starts with eternity in mind, continues with eternity in mind, and ends with eternity in mind. In the process, the church is responsible, not only for the economic and social prosperity of the community, but also (and essentially) for the spiritual welfare and shalom of the community as a whole.

This concept of integral transformation is recorded in God's mandate to His people while living in exile in Babylon:

This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: "Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper" (Jeremiah 29:4-7).

1. What is the response of your church to the needs of the community?
2. Discuss with the group some ideas to mobilize your church in direction of the next level.
3. What are the main obstacles that you find to move to the next level?

CHAPTER IV

HOLISTIC CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Why are children important in the life of the church?

There are several reasons for children to be the priority in church and the community.

- Children represent the future of the church and the communities.
- Failure to invest in a child will negatively impact the capacity of a society's development.
- Children have an enormous potential for development.
- The parents, the community, the church, the government and non-governmental organizations can fill many development demands for the children.
- Like a precious stone, engaging in the different stages of a child's development will ensure a responsible, fulfilled, active Christian adult.
- Families, society and the church should understand that developing the child's potential is vital.
- Children have physical, spiritual, social, emotional and intellectual needs that are different from the ones adults have.
- When the church promotes the development of children, it is expressing its commitment to children's lives.
- A child's development is a process of change that can reach the spiritual, physical, mental, emotional and social potential that God has given them.
- The development of all of these dimensions must be provided simultaneously and should be seen as a continuous and perpetual process.

A few current realities:

- Children under 15 years of age represent 40% of the total population of the developing countries.
- 35,000 children under the age of 5 die daily as a consequence of hunger or malnutrition.
- Millions of children live on the streets.
- 10 million children in the world practice forced prostitution.

- Between 100-200 million children are currently forced to work at the expense of their education and personal development.
- 15% of street children have tried drugs.
- 2 million children die every year because of lack of immunization vaccines.
- Every year 500, 000 children go blind for lack of vitamin A.
- There are 4 million children handicapped because of wars.

These situations should bring us to reflect on the social reality of the children in the countries where we minister. Since children are some of the most vulnerable groups in society, and since the biblical mandate of a true religion is “to look after orphans in their distress,” children must be a clear priority for the ministries of every local church.

Emphases that can be considered in a program for children:

- Educational help and didactic guides.
 - Seek progress in children’s education.
- Health and Nutrition.
 - Promote children’s health.
 - Have good existing conditions wherever the children are cared for: Appropriate and clean floors, clean water, bathrooms, etc.
- Education for health care and skill development.
- Social improvements.
 - Encourage the children to solve their problems and achieve their goals together.
 - Maintain opportunities so the children remain in contact with other children, at camps, retreats, special days, camping trips, recreation and others.
- Emotional enrichment.
 - Encourage the children to express their feelings through art, music, drawing, drama and other activities.
 - Listen to the children and value what they have to say.
- Formation of spiritual values.
 - Incorporate the message of the Gospel in each program and activity in a cultural and appropriate way.
- Responsible paternity.
 - Promote the parents’ responsibility towards the care of the children, care for their development and create a

friendly community towards children.

- Proverbs 22:6 teaches parents about responsibility to create a desire for spiritual things in young people.
- Ephesians 6:1-4 encourages parents to teach their children in the discipline and knowledge of the Lord.
- Colossians 3:21 teaches parents to not exasperate their children or they will be discouraged.
- Children in their context.
 - Consider the social, political and historical context of their community.
 - Children should not be seen separately from their social context. Any effort to have a better life should be based on this.
- Children as intercessors.
 - Intercede with or in the name of the children and their families at the local, national or international levels.

CHAPTER V

FUNDRAISING FOR COMPASSIONATE MINISTRIES

BY TRINO JARA²

Before thinking of any activity to raise funds within the church, we need to know what the Bible says about the need for Christians to practice and share Christian love. This is the kind of love that propels us to give. The Bible teaches in John 4:8 that God is love. He showed His eternal love as He gave His only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to die for us. Therefore, if the local church wants to implement activities to raise funds and develop programs for compassionate ministries, they must ensure that the church is involved in these four basic practices:

1. **Practice genuine love:** Luke 9:1-2; Matthew 10:5-8, 25:34-40; Acts 4:32; I Thes. 4:9-12; James 2:15-17; I John 3:14-18; I Peter 3:8; I Tim. 5:8
2. **Practice sharing with one another in love:** Acts 11:27-30; Romans 15:26-27; 16:1-2; II Cor. 8:16-23
3. **Practice supporting your pastors and local believers:** I Cor. 16:1-4; II Cor. 9:15; Philemon 2:25; 4:18; III John 1:5-8; I Cor. 9:13-14; Philemon 4:10-17; I Tim. 5:17-18; II Cor. 8:1-15.
4. **Practice compassion as a lifestyle:** John 13:35; Acts 5:12-26; III John 12.

IDEAS TO RAISE FUNDS IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

If your local church practices love as a lifestyle, it will be easy to develop activities to raise funds. As you move forward, always remember this proverb: “drop by drop the river fills up.” Start with small efforts to raise money and resources.

a) Normal offerings for compassionate ministries:

To give offerings is a normal practice in the church. Some churches promote special offerings regularly every three to six months. The pastor and the local committee of Compassionate Ministries of the church have the responsibility of estimating the amount of offerings that is ex-

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pected. Another idea is to put a small wooden box in a visible place in the church where people can put their offerings for Compassionate Ministries. In this case, the committee should remind the members of the church on the function of the box. You can also put a carton box at a corner of the church and invite members of the church to fill it with perishables, clothes and other items that are useful to help people in need in the church and the community. This box also needs constant promoting by the Compassionate Ministries Committee.

b) Sports tournaments:

Another way of obtaining financial resources is the organization of soccer, basketball, volleyball, tennis, marathon, handball, musical choirs, or Bible quizzing, tournaments. The organization is simple:

- Organize a responsible committee for the tournament.
- Define the competition or tournament and the different categories that will be included.
- Decide when and where the competition will take place. The tournament can take one or more days.
- Define the rules and conditions of the competition. For a biblical competition you should choose a book that will be included as part of the competition beforehand.
- Decide and announce the prizes and what places (positions) will be prized. The prizes can be awards that can be found in your community. How can you obtain awards from your community? These are some steps to follow:
 - Make a list of possible award donors from the community. This list can include all the businesspeople and so on. Sometimes it is good that the competition is dedicated to an important person from the community. This motivates people to get involved and help to give one or more awards.
 - Visit the possible donors and explain the details of the tournament and encourage them to give prizes for the competition. Invite the award donors so that they can be at the finals, and be a part of passing out the prizes to the winners.

c) Church Lunch:

An idea that some churches have put into practice is holding a church lunch. The Compassionate Ministries committee can organize a lunch gathering after the worship service. These are some steps to follow:

- Organize the menu. There are two options; first to have the committee prepare the food and involve the members of the church to support the activity by bringing the ingredients; second is to invite the members of the church to bring prepared food.
- Start by announcing the lunch three or four weeks in advance; invite people to participate.
- The committee can visit the church families to invite them to participate and support the special lunch by bringing ingredients or a prepared dish.
- Determine the price and prepare tickets for the lunch. The treasurer will have the responsibility of selling tickets for the lunch.
- Organize a team of volunteers to help in the preparation and to serve the lunch to the attending group.
- Put together all the materials and ingredients needed to prepare the lunch. Some churches have their own kitchen, plates, spoons, cups, and pots, which can be used. If they don't have what is needed, some of the members of the church can lend what is needed to them. In some places, especially in the rural areas, food is served on a banana leaf or some other type of leaves. This presentation makes the meal pleasurable to eat.
- If you have chosen the option of having the members of the church help with the ingredients, the preparation of food could be made on Saturday afternoon.
- Thank the people that participated and the following Sunday share with them the sum of money that was raised through this activity. To know that they have contributed will encourage them to be involved in other projects.

d) Yard sales:

This is a great opportunity to raise funds for a project. People donate clothes and many other things that they might not need any more in their

homes, but they can be useful for someone else. If you have clothes or other items in good condition that you don't need or don't find use for it, organize a yard sale to finance your project.

- Select all the clothes and items that are in good condition to sell and take them to the Compassionate Ministries storage place.
- Announce a few weeks in advance that there will be some good deals.
- Organize a team of volunteers that can help the Compassionate Ministries committee to select clothes and other articles, and to price them using sticky tags.
- Promote the sales with posters written by hand or printed out. Put them in strategic places like neighborhood stores. You can also make personal invitations.
- Make sure you have the place ready for the yard sale. A day before, if possible, show all the items priced and labeled. Make sure that the day of the yard sale you and your teams of volunteers are there at a good time and have everything ready.
- The treasurer will have to write all the incoming sales down from the yard sale.
- Some other recommendations that can be considered are:
 - *In some places Saturday morning is the best day for a yard sale.
 - *If the church is close to an important business, organize the event when it is payday.
 - *Let people purchase items and give them receipts; establish the necessary conditions. Don't forget to make some special discounts.
 - *Having a place to sell coffee, tea, cookies and cakes is also another source of income.

Remember: The success of the yard sale depends on how much the local Compassionate Ministries team promotes the event in the community.

Sales: Invite the congregation to support the event by bringing things that they do not use and including them in the items to be sold.

e) Bakery:

This is another idea to raise funds and start a self-sustaining project. The option of starting a bakery was developed by a group of ten ladies from the Nazarene Church in San Pedro, Upala, Costa Rica. Initially they had the problem of lacking funds to buy ingredients. They made a list of what they needed to bake a cake and agreed that each one of them would bring an ingredient. The following week they got together again and each one brought what they had offered. That day they baked a delicious cake, and decided not to eat it, but to sell it in small portions. With the earnings they were able to buy more ingredients to bake not only one but three cakes, which also sold. Immediately, when the cakes were sold they got together again and this time they baked ten cakes and started to sell them. Now those ladies have a very prosperous bakery and have enough earnings to even help support their own homes. The ladies from this church have built a sand and mud oven where they bake cookies and cakes that are sold to the community and they use the earnings to help pay the pastor's salary. The Compassionate Ministries local committee can follow this example and start a small project like baking cookies and selling them with coffee or tea after the services at the church.

f) Cafeteria:

In Latin America many evangelical churches have a service on Sunday night and other services during the week and Saturday for youth. A church in Costa Rica discovered that after every service many members of the church would stay around for fellowship; leaders decided to take advantage of the opportunity and started a cafeteria project. In a small room across from the church, they set up tables and chairs. They invested some funds to purchase a grill and coffee maker and they began their project. Now, after every service, the church members stay in the cafeteria to talk and share. It's a good time for fellowship. The cafeteria was a blessing from the beginning. One day the government decided to build a medical clinic right next to the church. The church saw this as a great opportunity to witness and also help obtain some earnings. Currently, the church has a cafeteria that gives service to people that come to the clinic and adds to the great fellowship of the church members.

g) Child care:

This is an attractive opportunity to have a productive project that develops a ministry to solve serious problems. Without a doubt, many churches have the necessary resources to start this project. My church is a beautiful church; the members of a work and witness team built it. Immediately after that the local church began their own challenge to build a multi-use room with an atmosphere for Sunday School. Little by little the church reached every one of these objectives. The multi-use room is now finished. After this was built the leaders of the church were worried about other important things, they said: "We have a beautiful church and a new building that the Lord has given us, but we are giving it such little use every week. How can we benefit more from these properties and use them better to help our community?" The answer became evident when they discovered that several women from the community were single mothers and they couldn't work because they did not have a safe place to leave their children. The children of those working mom's were frequently in the streets without any supervision. The church began to evaluate if a childcare center would benefit the community and church.

They discovered that investing in such a project would help the community and so they organized the childcare center and asked every mom to pay a small amount weekly and to bring something to eat, as well as clothes for the children. The schedule to care for the children was from 6am to 7pm. Two young ladies from the church were in charge of the finances. Many from the church volunteered to help.

Now the church not only cares for children, but it has also begun counseling sessions for the mothers. This is a beautiful opportunity to develop a useful ministry. If the church has Sunday School rooms and the people are called to minister to children, this can be a golden opportunity to help solve serious needs for the community. There are very few places where working moms can safely leave their children.

To help solve this problem you will need to do the following:

- Pass out a form to determine if the project is necessary. Evaluate if a childcare center will provide enough funds to cover expenses such as salaries and maintenance.
- Obtain the necessary authorization of the governmental offices.
- Obtain the basic equipment like mattresses, kitchen equipment, toys, first aid kit, etc.
- Find a team of workers. Your size will depend on the number of children. Depending on government regulations, one person can take care of 10-12 children. Their salaries will come out of the payments that the mothers of the children will make.
- Establish responsibilities for the staff, who need to be called “mothers”, the list must include responsibilities related to weekly payments for mothers that take advantage of the childcare center and pick up their children after the scheduled pick up time.
- Organize a team of volunteers, especially those involved in Sunday School. They can help play with the children and tell Bible stories.
- This is also a good opportunity to begin a ministry between women. Some of them suffer from sexual or physical abuse, while others have been abandoned by their drunk or drug addicted husbands. Some women are stressed because they are working out of the home double shifts. These mothers do not have time to enjoy life; as a matter of fact there are studies that demonstrate that the person that most abuses a child is the mother, especially one that is tired or stressed because of work.

h) Farming:

This is a good way to generate resources in rural areas. There are several options for this, two of which are: Animal and agricultural farms.

A. Animal Farm:

A group bought some chickens, fed them and sold them; making a good profit. For the subsequent project they bought a pair of pigs and they did the same.

B. Agricultural Farm:

- The group evaluates how much will need to be invested to plant some seeds.
- Once the evaluation has been made, the group can invite the church members to participate with the material resources or by volunteering to work on the farm.
- The group has to develop a working plan.

