

gcm connect>>

Compassion Ministries

Students on the Mission Field *by Rebecca Rodgers*

Campus ministries provide a great opportunity for students to get involved in compassion ministry in their communities at home as well as abroad. Rebecca Rodgers, student at the University of Illinois is involved in Illini Life Christian Fellowship, shares about her experience in ministry

As I have enjoyed a growing relationship with Christ, the Great Commission in Matthew 28 has become my mission wherever I am. In the dorms here at the University of Illinois, on a week-long trip to Mexico, on a plane to Honduras immediately following final exams, and even in the lab as I help my professor study the bacterial ecosystems of sewage in Champaign-Urbana.

This year a team of students and community members, who attend Illini Life Christian Fellowship went on mission to Choluteca, Honduras. One of my favorite projects on this trip was our work with a malnutrition clinic and day camp. Children who are malnourished can come to the clinic where ladies from the church nurse them back to health. They also teach the mothers some ways to better take care of their children.



Rebecca in Choluteca



Another project that is dear to my heart is Casa Hogar Vida, which is a community of houses that the church is building for families who can't afford to buy, rent or get a loan. The families live here and are provided jobs or help in finding a job. Many orphans live there and we built a playground for them while we were there. It was an incredible joy to play with these kids and show them God's love for them. We also brought groceries to the families that we visited in the surrounding communities. Some of the people we visited gave their lives to Christ and for the first time came to an understanding of his sacrifice.

In closing, as we continue to live out the Great Commission, let us not forget John 3:17, "For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him." Let's love God, love people, and seek to be reconciled.

The Rock Community Church – An Urban Outpost

by Mike Hopkins, Co-Pastor at The Rock Community Church



The Hopkins Family

In September, 2002 The Rock Community Church in Cleveland launched its first public worship service. The Lord gave Dave Brunelle and his wife, Carole, a burning desire to plant a church. Just three blocks from the Cleveland border, The Rock has become an integral part of the urban area we know and love. The "lostness" of the hearts of our pre-believing neighbors is evident, but the physical needs are also visible.

We are in an urban setting, unpopular to most, with people who are often forgotten. Within a 2.5 mile radius of our building, the rate of single parent homes is nearly double the U.S average. Nearly 60 percent of the children in our schools receive free or reduced cost breakfast and lunches. (continued on page 5)

HOPE FOR ETHIOPIA

Compassion In Africa

GCM field worker Gabe Beyene was born in Ethiopia and grew up under a Communist dictatorship. He was given an opportunity to study abroad in India, which he took intending never to look back, until fifteen years ago. Gabe and his wife, Connie, travelled back to Ethiopia short-term 1995, then permanently moved in 2003. Gabe shares, "We saw first-hand the devastation, poverty and human misery that the irresponsible military dictatorship left behind. Our love for God and love for humanity motivated us to want to make a difference in Ethiopia."

Gabe and Connie began Hope Community Services which is a non-government organization that assists Ethiopians in a variety of ways. Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world, due to natural and manmade calamities. AIDS has become a pandemic, infecting nearly 5 percent of the 77 million people in Ethiopia, which has caused 800,000 children to be orphaned.



"Our love for God and love for humanity motivated us to want to make a difference in Ethiopia."



Hope Community Services helps those with the most needs in society, including orphans. Gabe and Connie currently run an orphanage located on eight acres of land, which can house up to 75 children. Gabe adds, "The orphanage had 25 children, but nine of them have been adopted by loving Christian families in the United States." Additionally, they help 110 needy children in the community through monthly sponsorship. They hope to open another orphanage for children who are HIV positive and have no chance of ever being adopted.



Gabe also helps in a government run Boarding School for the Blind with Braille resources, musical instruments, swing sets, etc. The Boarding School for the Blind is home to 85 blind children. Among many services, blind children in the community receive Braille literacy lessons, which enable them to eventually attend public school.

Gabe and Connie have truly dedicated their lives to making a difference in Ethiopia. Gabe shares, "This is just a start of a new chapter in our lives and we look forward with great anticipation for the completion of the remaining chapters that will have more eternal significance."



“Filled with Compassion”

by Dave Brunelle, Co-Pastor at The Rock Community Church

Several times in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark we get a glimpse of the heart of Jesus. In two accounts we see Jesus filled with compassion because the masses were “harassed and helpless” and “like sheep without a shepherd” (Mt. 9:36, Mk. 6:34). In others we see Him filled with compassion because the masses had nothing to eat (Mt. 15:32, Mk. 8:2). In still others we see Jesus filled with compassion for the lame, the blind, and the leper (Mt. 14:4, 20:34; Mk. 1:41).

There can be a debate in Christian circles between Gospel proclamation and Gospel demonstration. The life of the Master should silence the debate. Jesus ministered to the whole person. His compassion moved Him to teach, feed, touch, and heal. It was never either/or; it was both/and. His proclamation and demonstration went hand in hand, and so it should with us.



The Brunelle Family

Jesus ministered to the whole person. His compassion moved Him to teach, feed, touch, and heal. It was never either/or; it was both/and.

However, before we can truly minister in the full compassion of Christ, we must realize the fullness of our own need for it. Apart from Him, we look on the inside as the leper does on the outside. Apart from Him we're spiritually blind. We're harassed, helpless, shepherd-less, lame, and unclean. As we receive the fullness of Christ's compassion, we too are filled with compassion for others.

Once this happens, we cannot divorce Gospel proclamation from Gospel demonstration. The grumblings of an empty stomach can drown out a message full of truth. As we tell forth of the King we give a foretaste of His kingdom. Our demonstration of the Gospel (clothing, feeding, touching, and healing of the needy) adorns our presentation of Christ and gives a more complete portrait of the Savior.

Kindness of the Kingdom of God without heralding the King Himself leaves people warm and fed, but still imprisoned to the kingdoms of this world. Compassion without Christ will sooner or later collapse because it gives people a false savior (the agency, relief worker, blanket or sandwich) or no savior at all.

True compassion moves us to foretell, foretaste, forewarn and foreshadow the Kingdom of God. Oh that we as objects of the great compassion of Christ would also be so filled with compassion that it spills out in deed and in word.

Faces from the Field: The Rock Community Church



Dave Brunelle

Dave serves as co-pastor through preaching and leading ministry teams and life groups.



Mike Hopkins

Mike also serves as co-pastor through preaching and leading ministry teams and life groups.



Janel Poskicil

Janel oversees the administrative needs of the church, serving staff and ministry team leaders.

Stepping Out In Faith



TOM MAURIELLO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

- 1 Peter 4:10-11 (ESV)

Many of the missionaries, churches and ministries we work with have taken intentional steps to be salt and light in the communities around them and with marginalized people groups throughout the world. This has truly made the Gospel Good News in the lives of those they touch.

In this Connect we are focusing on a few of the ways GCM Missionaries are making a real difference. We are especially proud of the young men and women, who have stepped out in faith when they hear God's call. Their faith, hope and love is a witness of what God can do in and through each of us when we obey His voice: to go, to love Him and to love our neighbor. When our hearts break with His, our definition of who our neighbor is expands. And when we see people as Jesus sees them, our capacity to love expands.

Your outpouring of love and generosity this holiday season will help in transforming lives literally around the world. Thank you!

In Him,

Tom

Breaking New Ground

by Jay Height and John Smith

Shepherd Community is an inner city ministry working the last 25 years in the east side of Indianapolis. About 12 years ago, Shepherd Community began to focus on children, teens and their families, in order to develop a continuum of care that would begin ministering to an individual from birth to 25 years of age.



In the last five years, Shepherd has experienced tremendous growth of almost 300 percent to where it is today serving almost 5000 people each year. With a budget of almost \$4 million, it has grown to a size that 25 years ago no one could have ever imagined.

Yet, as many ministries have experienced, the economy has forced creative solutions to a growing demand for services. A partnership was developed with GCM to help Shepherd Community better meet the needs of families in the inner city of Indianapolis.

One aspect of this partnership is a new program called Shepherd Community Fellows. Recent college grads apply to this one-year development program to serve in a variety of ministry roles. Fellows serve as pre-school academy teachers, leaders in our after-school program, one-on-one student mentors, and other administrative support roles.



Secondly, through our partnership with GCM, we hope to recruit over 30 college students to come and serve in the Heart of the City Summer Intern Project. This is a full summer mission opportunity for the college students to personally grow and develop as Christ followers and leaders. We are committed to developing young emerging leaders for a lifetime of ministry while they serve here at Shepherd for the summer. The summer interns will engage in significant ministry with urban children to see lives transformed spiritually, physically, emotionally, and academically.

Our partnership with GCM has made the funding component possible for these ministries to be launched and bear much fruit.



Alleviating Poverty *by Alex Berg*

Alex serves in the college ministry at Mars Hill Church in Seattle, WA. In addition to her work with college students, she has helped pioneer Lumana Credit in Ghana, West Africa.

My aim in majoring in business was to use my degree to influence society for the better and to address social issues on a global scale.

In spring 2009, I met Samantha Rayner, a fellow student who introduced me to the concept of microfinance. She had spent the summer in Ghana, West Africa, saw the need for access to capital, and returned to Seattle to recruit a team to launch what is now Lumana Credit. When I heard about this opportunity, I jumped on it.

The concept of microfinance is simple, and the impact is profound. Imagine life with no bank account, no savings, and no opportunity for a loan to go to school or start a



Alex speaking with students in Ghana.

small business. This standard lifestyle in most developing nations comes with high risk and financial instability.

With loans as small as \$50 U.S. dollars, a woman can start her own business tailoring clothes to generate an income she wouldn't have otherwise. We train local leaders in Ghana to teach a 10-day entrepreneurship class and distribute small loans. Unlike a lot of development initiatives, it's not a hand-out. It's an extremely sustainable method of lifting people out of poverty.

My passion for this type of work comes from Jesus' call to love and serve the poorest of people. My life has been radically transformed by the knowledge that Jesus lived and died to give me life. I'm compelled by grace to follow Him and His example by serving the poor. I've had numerous exposures to immense poverty and know that I've been blessed by simply being born in America with access to resources that many will never (continued on page 6)

The Rock Community Church - An Urban Outpost continued

Just fewer than 38 percent of the homes have an income of less than \$25,000 per year, which is well below poverty level. The type of outreach the Lord has led us to do include things like free bread programs, a food pantry, and assertive work in small groups with elementary, middle and high school-aged kids. Small groups are essential to the development of men and women in Christ as we strive for our church family to know, love, live, and share Christ.

My wife Kristen and I are so blessed to be a part of

the original plant team. As a deacon for many years, the Lord called me to pursue becoming a pastor here at The Rock Community Church in 2006. In 2009, I was ordained. As an owner of a business for over 13 years, the Lord called my family to become missionaries to this area. The words of my 13 year-old son resound in my heart; "How can you be a missionary to Africa if you don't live in Africa?" We sold the business, the home in the suburbs and moved into the city to be shoulder to shoulder with our friends on a full-time basis.

The desire of our heart is for our neighbors to be changed by the Bread of Life, the one who is the Living Water. In partnership with other kingdom-minded churches in the community, our desire is to see every man, woman and child have a repeated opportunity to hear the life-giving truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.



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Alleviating Poverty continued

have. My passion for microfinance goes beyond just being able to improve the lives of hurting people, but to actually impact communities in a way that leaves a lasting legacy through increased education, resources, and financial stability.

In summer 2009, I had the opportunity to be in Ghana to help build the initial operations of Lumana. I participated in our first round of entrepreneurship classes by assisting with the interview process to select loan recipients and capturing media to communicate the stories of changed lives.

Although I work diligently to serve with the time and resources I have during my time on this earth, I have hope in Revelation 21, acknowledging that we can only do so much, and ultimately Jesus is the only one who will save. Amidst the pain and suffering of sickness and poverty, all who believe will be redeemed. "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." www.lumana.org



WAYS TO GET INVOLVED!

GCM is committed to mobilizing missionaries to take the good news of Christ's love to the ends of the earth. Would you consider giving to one or more of these life-changing ministries? It is your ongoing partnership, which makes the work of GCM possible.

THE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH

Your gift will help The Rock Community Church continue their ministry to meet the physical and spiritual needs of the urban community near Cleveland.

ETHIOPIA ORPHANAGE

Your gift will help cover the on-going costs of the Manger-Weill House Orphanage, including the cost of a child's food, clothing, medical and other daily needs.

SHEPHERD COMMUNITY CENTER

Please help Shepherd Community Center continue to minister to inner city Indianapolis families

ILLINI LIFE MINISTRY

Help support Illini Life's thriving ministry, including international compassion projects. Your gift will help students like Rebecca discover new ways to serve others.