

GIVING
DEBTORS TO EVERY PERSON
THAT
Transforms

HOWARD GULBERTSON



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INTRODUCTION

Let's Talk About Money

Let's be clear. This book is going to be about giving money for world evangelism. At the same time, it needs to be clear that, by itself, money will not complete the Great Commission. Money does not bring people into the Kingdom. To complete Christ's command in Matthew 28:19-20 requires that sanctified, missional people with the Holy Spirit working through them get involved.

Even so, we cannot get around the fact that deploying missionaries and guiding young national churches to full partnership takes some money. Barbara and I knew that, because we were Nazarene missionaries for fifteen years. Faithful giving to missions supported us when we were in Italy and Haiti, making it possible for us to mentor rising leaders and help them in evangelism and discipleship ministries. Missions money made it possible to feed hungry children, provide medical care for sick people, and to preach the Good News to the poor (Luke 7:22).

Therefore, while money alone will not get the job done, it must be said that the job cannot be done without money. That is the reason giving for world evangelism is one core value—or objective—of Nazarene Missions International (NMI); the other core objectives being praying, discipling future mission leaders, and providing education.

To be sure, people sometimes say that money is a touchy thing to talk about. Maybe it is, but Jesus talked a lot about money. He mentioned it more than once in the Sermon on the Mount. He had a conversation with Zacchaeus about money. As Jesus was sending out the Twelve, he gave them instructions regarding money. He talked about it in His parables. He compared a widow's temple offering to what the well-to-do were giving. He discussed money with a rich young ruler. Jesus even answered a question about paying taxes. So, if we want to faithfully pass our Lord's teachings on to others, aren't we obliged to talk about money?

Being asked to give of our financial resources should not surprise us. Genesis 1:27 declares that we are made in God's image. I take that to mean that we should reflect Him. The Bible uses "give" in relation to God at least 160 times. If we truly reflect Him, won't we be known as generous givers? Indeed,

2 Corinthians 9:7 (CEV) declares: "God loves people who love to give." By the way, Paul wrote those words as he concluded an appeal to Corinthian Christians to give to a compassionate ministry offering.

The "perfect love" that is so central to God's will for His people motivates giving to meet spiritual, emotional, and physical needs and to seek justice and to care for the marginalized. We are a missional people, and because of scripture's call to proclaim the Good News to the whole world, we freely donate for world evangelism. We could, of course, dream up some scenarios in which Gospel proclamation could be done without any human involvement. That was essentially what some British pastors said to William Carey in the late 1700s. As they tried to discourage Carey from becoming a missionary, they told him, "When God chooses to save the heathen, He will do so without your help or ours."

Those pastors were wrong. God chose to use human instruments to make Christlike disciples in the nations, which is another way of saying "go and save the heathen." Calling on believers to support those doing missionary work follows a pattern set by the apostle Paul. As he wrote to believers in Rome, Paul said, "When I go to Spain, I hope to visit you . . . and

to have you assist me on my journey there” (Romans 15:24).

Paul knew how to make tents, and he used that trade to support some of his missionary work (Acts 18:3, 1 Corinthians 9:6, 12). Because of that, missionaries today who earn their living from secular employment are called “tentmakers.” Still, in whatever measure Paul supplied his monetary needs through tentmaking, his words “to have you assist me on my journey” were clearly a request for financial support. That request makes scholars say that the Book of Romans can be considered a first-century missionary fund-raising letter.

“Resources follow vision,” veteran missionary Bill Porter said one day as a guest speaker in a Southern Nazarene University missions class. His words echoed what Christian Rath, who helped direct Assembly of God earthquake relief in Haiti, wrote to me recently: “Money should chase ministry; ministry should *never* chase money.” The point that Bill and Christian both make is that money should not be what drives global outreach decisions. What should determine our priorities and govern our decision-making is the vision of a “great multitude. . . from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing

before the throne and before the Lamb" (Revelation 7:9).

We must never give the impression that collecting money *is* the mission. It is just a resource for accomplishing the mission.

Bill Porter's years of missionary service validate his statement about resources following vision. He helped lead Puerto Rican Nazarene churches to Phase 3 (or regular) district status. Among other accomplishments, Bill's leadership helped that district achieve financial self-sufficiency. Then, after serving in New Zealand, Bill and Juanita went to Venezuela to pioneer Nazarene work in that South American country. Not long before the Porters retired, I spent three weeks in Venezuela and saw firsthand several of the churches planted in the first decade of Nazarene presence. The work the Porters began has continued with Nazarene churches in Venezuela growing by fifteen percent in 2010 and 2011.

Some financial resources aiding the Porters' work came from a seventy-fifth anniversary denomination-wide offering. World Mission Broadcast funds paid for radio broadcasts that provided initial contacts. The World Evangelism Fund supported the Porters and other missionaries, and Work & Witness teams built numerous church buildings and a campground

in Venezuela. However, even with resources flowing from several sources, it was not money that spawned flourishing holiness evangelism in Venezuela. Vision came first. Resources simply followed that vision.

If Bill Porter were here today, he would insist that using a strategy in which "resources follow vision" is valid for more than just one South American country; it is the way missional people called Nazarenes should function around the world.

one

BECAUSE YOU GIVE

After preaching one Sunday morning in a mountain church in central Haiti, I enjoyed a meal at the parsonage and then pointed my red, four-wheel-drive vehicle in the direction of Port-au-Prince. The first leg of the trip was down a dirt trail masquerading as a road, so my mind was completely occupied with driving.

Finally, the road widened and leveled out in a valley floor. I disengaged the four-wheel drive, picked up a little speed, and relaxed a bit. My thoughts began to wander, and I found myself thinking about Christ's command to "go into all the world and preach the Good News to everyone" (Mark 16:15, NLT). I knew there were many places around the world where the Gospel had not yet been preached. I also knew that missionaries and national evangelists were working to reach those places, but on that day

progress seemed excruciatingly slow. Two thousand years had gone by and 1.6 billion people still knew little or nothing about Jesus of Nazareth.

I was thinking about that when I noticed someone ahead of me coming down the mountainside. The path that person was on crossed the road and went up the other side of the valley. As I neared that crossing point, I realized it was Pastor Merzilus, so I stopped. He looked up, and through the glare of the sun and dust I had stirred up, he saw who it was. Breaking into a smile, he hurried over to my vehicle.

“What are you doing here?” I asked after we said hello. I was curious, because I thought he was supposed to be planting a church in a neighboring valley rather than in the one where we were.

“Well,” he said, pointing up the trail he was on, “there is a village up there that has never had a church. We have just started weekly services there, and I’m going up to preach for them tonight.”

That he was serving in such a way did not surprise me. Pastor Merzilus was a tireless evangelist and pastor. His leadership had brought excitement and spiritual life back to some declining congregations. Also, along the way, he had found time to plant three or four new churches.

I had met Pastor Merzilus in a pastoral training program through which he completed ordination requirements. Up to that point he had been largely self-taught. After his conversion, Merzilus had felt a call to preach, and although he had little formal education, he became a pastor. By the time the Haiti Nazarene Bible College started its extension training program, Pastor Merzilus had years of pastoral experience. Nevertheless, he applied to be in the first group of extension students. He was accepted, and for the next four years he spent two weekends a month in classes that took him through the ministerial course of study. On more than one occasion I heard him scold younger pastors who seemed less than serious about their course work.

When we met that Sunday afternoon, Pastor Merzilus was carrying a battered leather satchel that I had seen him carrying before, so I knew it held his Bible and hymnal. I guessed it also contained some first-aid supplies. While Pastor Merzilus was not a doctor or nurse, I knew he was a principal health-care provider in that mountain valley. Over time he had picked up some first-aid skills; he even knew a few things about helping women during childbirth. That Sunday afternoon, Pastor Merzilus was on his

way up a mountain trail to save some souls and to heal some hurting bodies.

There by the side of the road we chatted about the church he and his wife were planting in the other valley and about the building his congregation had just constructed. We talked about the elementary school he had started and his hope for it to have a hot-lunch program. He asked about the possibility of Mission Specials money, which is money collected through designated world evangelism giving opportunities, to add to what his church members had already collected to buy materials to make pews for their rustic building.

After talking for a while, we said good-bye, and I drove on toward Port-au-Prince. My mind reverted to those earlier thoughts about the progress of getting the Good News "to everyone in the world" (Mark 16:15, CEV). I thought about Pastor Merzilus and his wife. They took the Great Commission seriously. Thus, while planting a church in one valley, they also began holding services at an outreach point in another valley. I began to think that, with enough leaders like them, Jesus' followers would fulfill His command to get to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8) and make disciples among all peoples (Matthew 28:19-20).

I thought about the sixty years of Nazarene investment in Haiti. Pastor Merzilus and his wife and their ministry were fruit of those investments. That does not mean they were paid with Nazarene World Mission money. This fact reflects Nazarene global mission strategy that says pastors of churches must be supported locally.

For the pastoral training classes, where I first met him, Pastor Merzilus bought his own books and paid a small portion of the program's expenses. To make the cost affordable for subsistence farmers like him, the program was subsidized by the World Evangelism Fund. Because Nazarenes gave, Pastor Merzilus's ministry was enriched, and he was finally ordained.

Pastor Merzilus had acquired his first-aid skills when volunteering in the clinic on the Nazarene Bible College campus near Port-au-Prince. Some of that clinic's operating costs are borne by Nazarene Compassionate Ministries giving. When Pastor Merzilus' wife began experiencing some blindness, the World Evangelism Fund helped with medical expenses. Alabaster money helped buy the land on which Pastor Merzilus's new congregation built their building. Clearly, Pastor Merzilus's ministry in those mountain villages was enhanced by Nazarene giving for world evangelism.

Because Nazarenes are giving to a vision, villages in Haiti, as well as in nearly 160 other world areas, are hearing the Gospel and passing it on. This does not mean we are almost finished. While some countries, such as Brazil and Mozambique, each report more than 100,000 Nazarenes, others, such as Egypt and Hungary, report less than 100. So there is still a lot of work to do. Pastor Merzilus and his wife give me hope that we will do it.

“We seek . . . the preaching of the gospel to every creature” was the bold announcement of the first Nazarene *Manual*. That was not unrealistic day-dreaming. When three holiness church associations signed a uniting charter in 1908 to form the Church of the Nazarene, the new denomination was present in eight countries: Canada, Cape Verde, Cuba, Guatemala, India, Japan, Mexico, and the United States. I’m not sure any other denomination has come into existence with work already going on in that many countries. With a global vision and active world evangelism efforts from day one, the DNA of the embryonic Church of the Nazarene clearly included global outreach.

Because a world missions ethos still permeates Nazaredom, many Nazarenes know the number of world areas in which the denomination is at work;

the tally stood at 159 in early 2012. That running tally in our heads testifies to our embrace of founder Phineas F. Bresee's declaration: "We are debtors to every man to give him the gospel in the same measure in which we have received it."

"Because You Give" was used as a slogan to promote the 2010 Easter Offering for World Evangelism. That phrase was more than good advertising. Because Nazarenes have cooperated with God's mission by giving generously for world evangelism, they have seen amazing global advance. In 2010, for example, Nazarenes worldwide started 1,900 new churches.

Barbara and I experienced a wonderful "Because You Give" vignette in Ecuador. We arrived there for a sabbatical semester in 2009 just as a Work & Witness team from a Missouri church was finishing its two-week trip. We joined that team for its final evening in Ecuador, and that is when we first encountered Luis, a Quichua Indian pastor.

Ecuador is a fascinating country. It is diverse in the ethnicity of its population, as well as in its climate, geography, and plant and animal life. In addition to people of European and African descent, Ecuador is home to several indigenous tribes. The largest of those are the groups of Quichuas, an An-

dean people descended from the Incas. Quichuan women wear colorful clothing and bowler-style hats. Quichuan mothers carry their babies on their backs.

Pastor Luis's congregation is near Otavalo, a city famous for its craft market. Like many Quichuas, Luis earns his living making and selling handcrafted goods. When Nazarene Work & Witness teams arrive in Ecuador, Pastor Luis will often fill an oversized duffel bag with tablecloths, wall hangings, clothing, and other craft items and make the two-hour bus trip from Otavalo to Quito to meet them. As the evening we spent with the Missouri team began, Pastor Luis arrived with a huge duffel bag and two young children in tow.

After team members finished their meals in the Work & Witness Center, tables were cleared, and Pastor Luis opened his duffel bag and spread out what he had brought. Admiring the colorful things, the people from the States purchased some of them, and then went to a nearby missionary home for their final devotion time.

Barbara and I were left in the eating area with Pastor Luis and his two young children. Our transportation back to our apartment on the campus of the seminary eventually showed up, but for a time, there we were—just the five of us. The pastor and his

two children didn't know English, and at that time, Barbara and I didn't know much Spanish. We certainly did not know any Quichua.

After repacking his duffel bag, Pastor Luis picked up a guitar someone had left in the room. Sitting down by his two children, he began to play. Smiling and nodding at us, he sang a Quichuan song or two. Then, he pulled out his Quichuan Bible and coaxed Barbara into reading John 3:16 aloud. Because Quichua is written phonetically, she was able to stumble through it. The forty-five minutes we spent alone with Pastor Luis and his two children were unforgettable. Christ's love transcended language and culture, and our hearts came together.

Pastor Luis and his Quichuan congregation are fruit of Nazarene missions giving. Because of a vision and the resources that followed it, descendants of the fearsome Incas have come to faith in Jesus and are partners in a global holiness church.

To be sure, the global church that includes Pastor Luis and other Quichuas began as a North American and British denomination with some overseas mission work. By the time the first "foreigners" attended a Nazarene General Assembly, the denomination was forty years old. In 1948, two men—Samuel Bhujabal from India and Alfredo del Rosso from Italy—were

the first of what eventually became a tide of General Assembly participants from around the world. The presence of those two men presaged that the long process of internationalization was going to speed up.

Bill Porter was right in saying, "Resources follow vision." Faithful local church giving for world evangelism has given birth to some strong national churches. Most of the more than 400 Nazarene districts worldwide are led by indigenous district superintendents. The emergence of national leaders has permitted the redeployment of missionaries and resources to new areas. The eight world areas with a Nazarene presence in 1908 have multiplied almost twenty times, and at the same time the missionary force itself has become very international.

That realized vision is reflected even in denominational leadership. Most regional directors are not Westerners. Not long ago we elected our first non-Western general superintendent, Eugenio Duarte from Cape Verde. At the same event, we also elected the first non-U.S. global NMI president, Jennifer Brown from Jamaica.

I have spent part of three summers in Venezuela helping train leaders for Haitian immigrant churches. On one trip, I was part of a Sunday morning conversation that would have sounded strange to any-

one listening. That conversation took place as Gail Zickefoose, Alfredo Mulieri, and I were driving from Caracas to visit a Haitian congregation in Maracay. While Gail and I spoke English, Alfredo did not. Those two Nazarene missionaries, Gail and Alfredo, spoke Spanish, but I did not. Alfredo was Argentine, but his ancestral roots are in Italy, so he could speak some Italian, a language I speak because of our years in Italy as missionaries. Thus, Alfredo and I spoke to each other in Italian while Gail and I conversed in English and he and Gail communicated in Spanish.

Conversation never faltered as we flipped back and forth between three languages. A fourth language was added when we pulled up in front of the Maracay Haitian church and people greeted us in Haitian Creole. Both Gail and I had served in Haiti, so we could understand them, and that morning I preached in Haitian Creole. Our Sunday morning multilingual experience demonstrated the amazing results of resources following a vision. Guided by a vision of making Christlike disciples in the nations, Nazarenes have given generously, and very good fruit is ripening.

two
WEF
Mission Critical Funding

The earliest Nazarene missionaries went out as "faith missionaries," raising their individual support before leaving their homelands and then praying it in while on the field. General Superintendent H. F. Reynolds was the first Nazarene world missions administrator. One day, he heard Roger Winans testify that he had a missionary call to South America. While the General Church had no money to send Winans, Reynolds was wise enough to say, "Brother Winans, we cannot send you to South America, but if God has called you, you need to go or you will backslide." Winans did go, and he successfully planted churches in a previously unreached area of Peru.

The system for supporting Nazarene world evangelism has been an evolving one. At its core now is the World Evangelism Fund (WEF), a fund to which Nazarene churches contribute worldwide, thus sup-

porting a missionary force from different countries. Supplementing the WEF, as it is often called, are numerous designated giving opportunities called Mission Specials. Giving to the WEF and all Mission Specials counts toward a ten percent benchmark for missions that local churches are encouraged to reach.

Through contributions to WEF, every Nazarene church—large and small—is involved in the work of hundreds of global missionaries. These include missionaries who receive full support from the World Evangelism Fund and Mission Corps volunteers who raise their support individually along with tens of thousands of national workers. The Church of the Nazarene is not a specialized mission agency working only in certain areas or doing only specific kinds of ministries. Our vision is holistic ministry everywhere. As a result, Nazarenes have planted churches in the upper floors of Asian skyscrapers as well as along tributaries of the Amazon. I've been in Nazarene churches on the equator, and I've been in a Church of the Nazarene at the edge of the Arctic (Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada). World Evangelism Fund money flowing from every local Nazarene church supports evangelism, church planting, leadership training, education, health care,

economic projects, and child development programs all over the globe.

Each local church's World Evangelism Fund share is 5.5 percent of what that congregation receives in tithes and offerings. Because WEF shares are calculated as percentages, they have been likened to the tithe principle. Like tithing, WEF share calculations fulfill the biblical precept: "From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded" (Luke 12:48*b*).

Using a unified fund to fuel world evangelism parallels how churches operate locally. I have never been in a church that came up with the pastor's salary through one offering appeal and the monthly electric bill in another and funds for janitorial supplies in still another. It is just not done that way. Instead, churches ask people to give to a unified local fund that cares for all those things. To be sure, congregations may take special offerings for mission projects, such as a new sign or projection equipment or a church van. However, most ongoing local ministry is funded out of a unified budget. That use of a comprehensive funding strategy is exactly the principle behind the World Evangelism Fund.

When what is now the WEF was established, each church's share was a percentage of money it had

spent the previous year. That seemed simple. Then calculations became increasingly complex with exceptions and deductions trying to account for numerous special situations. Eventually pastors and global leaders petitioned denominational leaders to (1) simplify the WEF calculation, and (2) lower the amount being asked. Both requests were honored by moving to 5.5 percent of current income.

The genius about using the World Evangelism Fund as foundational funding is its often unrecognized behind-the-scenes support role. I saw clearly how that works during a trip I made to Bulgaria to visit eleven Mission Corps volunteers who were there with the hope of starting a church-planting movement. By the time I arrived, they had finished a month-long intensive language course and were ready to launch into ministry.

How and where to begin? At that time, Dr. Nancy Hardison, a Point Loma Nazarene University business professor, was on sabbatical in nearby Albania. Hermann Gschwandtner, Eastern European coordinator, invited her to Bulgaria to lead an organizational retreat for the group of volunteers.

I was able to join them for that event. We got up early, took a trolley to Sofia's central train station, and boarded a commuter train to Bankya, a resort

town west of Sofia. The September air was crisp and cool. The leaves were showing off their fall colors and some were beginning to drop. I remember kicking at piles of them as we walked from Bankya's train depot to the guesthouse where we were staying.

That first morning, Nancy divided the volunteers into groups according to individual interests. Then she asked each small group to brainstorm a plan of action for its area. By the end of the two-day retreat, the volunteers had a game plan for relationship-building ministry in five categories:

- English language instruction
- Small business entrepreneur mentorship
- Medical support
- Agriculture
- Humanitarian aid

Nancy asked the volunteers to decide what they thought could be accomplished during their eleven remaining months in Bulgaria. In the last session, she asked increasingly pointed questions:

- What, under the Lord's leadership, would you like to do this year?
- What would you like to get done this first month?
- What will you do on Monday when we are back in Sofia?

Not all the dreams of those first volunteers came to fruition. However, what those volunteers—along with others who followed them—did was opened doors, built relationships, and drew people to Jesus. Almost twenty years later, there are two dozen Nazarene congregations in that country known for the fabled Orient Express train that ran from Paris to Istanbul.

A casual observer might think the money given by friends and family to support enthusiastic Mission Corps volunteers was what started the now-flourishing movement in Bulgaria. That would be incorrect. As important as those funds were, the real key was World Evangelism Fund money.

Long before the volunteers arrived in Bulgaria, missionary Hermann Gschwandtner had been there evaluating what seemed to be an open door. As he prayerfully followed up on contacts, Hermann concluded it was time to enter Bulgaria. He settled on a plan to use a volunteer group of recent college graduates, a plan embraced by World Mission leaders and then by Southern Nazarene University, which provided the bulk of the early volunteers. To demonstrate that Nazarenes were not a spurious cult trying to brainwash people, Hermann envisioned beginning low-key with compassionate ministry activity. To

give the volunteers some official footing, he put together a humanitarian-aid foundation and registered it with the government.

As productive as the volunteers were, what created the vision, shaped the project, and kept things on track was World Evangelism Fund support. The WEF funded Dr. Gschwandtner's ministry. The German churches supporting humanitarian-aid efforts were fruit of the World Evangelism Fund. WEF underwrote the supervisory ministry of the general superintendents and of the Eurasia Regional Office. It subsidized leadership training given by European Nazarene College. It supported the Global Treasury Services pipeline through which donations from family and friends were sent to volunteers. Without the elements provided by the World Evangelism Fund, the Church of the Nazarene might not be in Bulgaria today.

Strategic planning consultants often ask organizational leaders to name the things they consider "mission critical." By that they mean the things that would result in crippling an organization or perhaps result in the organization's demise if they failed. For an online business, for example, electrical power and Internet access are mission critical. For a food pantry ministry, a dependable supply of food is mission criti-

cal. For the International Church of the Nazarene, the World Evangelism Fund is mission critical. Most other Nazarene missions offerings are earmarked for specific things; World Evangelism Fund money is not. That pool of unrestricted money allows denominational leaders to pursue a comprehensive strategy in which they allocate resources based on a plan rather than simply doing ministries that attract donors.

Vic Diffee, longtime Nazarene and automobile dealer in central Oklahoma, and I were talking one day about religion classes at Southern Nazarene University. He urged us to “keep the main thing the main thing.” That phrase wasn’t original with Vic, but it was superb advice. Keeping the main thing the main thing is something the World Evangelism Fund does for the Church of the Nazarene. It keeps strategy from being determined by flavor-of-the-day emphases. The WEF keeps us on track to do all we need to do to make Christlike disciples in the nations.

To be sure, there are still designated missions offerings to which Nazarenes can give. While we’ll look at some of those in this book, Nazarene world outreach could survive without many of them, although their disappearance would hurt. On the other hand, if mission critical WEF giving were to falter, the fallout would be disastrous.

Items funded by designated offerings are enhancements for the fabric woven by the World Evangelism Fund. Take, for example, the marvelously successful JESUS Film ministry. Local Nazarene teams worldwide have shown the JESUS Film to more than 62.5 million people. Millions of those viewers have responded to the invitation given at the end of the film. God's forgiveness has been received. Hope has replaced despair. Destructive habits have been broken. Relationships have been repaired. Thousands of churches have been planted and nurtured.

Someone figured out that for every three U.S. dollars given to JESUS Film Harvest Partners, one person has come to faith in Christ. For a business analyst, that is an impressive ROI (return on investment). Of course, there's more to the story.

If we step back and look at the larger context, we'll see that World Evangelism Fund money is critical to the JESUS Film's effectiveness. Such things as the organizational structure pulling together and supervising the teams showing the film, the cooperating churches from which team members come, the equipping and mentoring of new pastors, and the churches worldwide supporting the effort with prayer—all are fruit of the World Evangelism Fund. So, as impressive as "\$3 per convert" sounds, it is

only possible because of the fabric being woven by the World Evangelism Fund. What is true about the ministry of the JESUS Film's dependence on WEF is true of everything else funded by Approved Mission Specials offerings.

While in middle school I learned to do taxidermy. Today my friends find that strange, but I did learn the craft, and I made some money doing it. I haven't used my taxidermy skills in decades, but I remember that one critical thing is the mount or form over which the skin goes. If the mount is not right, the finished product will never look right. Even worse, without a mount the skin with the fur or feathers will harden into a shriveled mess. For Nazarene global outreach, the World Evangelism Fund is the form, or mount, that provides the shape. From time to time people find things funded by designated offerings more appealing than the WEF, and they are tempted to give *only* to those offerings. Frankly, the World Evangelism Fund is so foundational to everything that without the overall shape it provides all the other things would be lumpy and shriveled messes.

Nazarenes have embraced this cooperative fund concept so well that churches and even entire districts frequently overpay their WEF share. Sharon Thornhill, Philadelphia District NMI president, says, "The

elation that a district experiences when this happens is a great morale booster." To be sure, occasionally someone will talk about the World Evangelism Fund as though it were a crippling tax. That is a sloppy and inaccurate comparison. To begin with, no one intentionally and joyfully overpays their taxes. Furthermore, those WEF overpayments do not simply make up for budget shortfalls created when some congregations fail to pay their complete WEF share. Since 1992, WEF overpayments have been used to open and sustain outreach in new world areas. Amazingly, those overpayments have enabled the Church of the Nazarene to enter sixty new world areas, including nine Creative Access Areas. On that impressive list of sixty new areas are:

- Croatia and Hungary on the Eurasia Region
- East Timor and Vanuatu on the Asia-Pacific Region
- Madagascar and Benin on the Africa Region
- St. Martin and Aruba on the Mesoamerica Region

Passion and Urgency

Not long ago the world was mesmerized by the plight of thirty-three miners trapped underground in Chile. People around the world were glued to television coverage of the rescue efforts. Specialized equipment was brought in, and for two months emotions were on edge until the miners were finally rescued. Recently, Christy Dick, a missions student from Pennsylvania, wrote to her online classmates: "Why is the church not more concerned with those now dying who will be forever lost? Would I stay up late at night to watch their rescue—or salvation—like I did watching the Chilean miners?"

During the Great Depression of the 1930s, General Superintendent J. G. Morrison untiringly exhorted people to give to the World Evangelism Fund. Nazarenes of that era became familiar with his plea, "Can't you do just a little bit more?" Occasionally individuals and local churches today feel they have so many other commitments that they are tempted to forego doing anything for world evangelism. With the World Evangelism Fund being so mission critical, Morrison's passionate plea to stretch, to give a little bit more, needs to be heard again and heard clearly. As NMI leaders have challenged people to understand the reason for supporting world evangelism ef-

forts, they have sometimes said, "There are souls in those goals." An estimated 55,000 unreached people die every day without ever hearing the Good News about Jesus. If we are truly missional, shouldn't we be mobilizing resources to reach those people with the same passion and urgency with which we prayed for thirty-three miners in Chile to be rescued?

Three

THREE KEY PLAYERS

WMB, Missionary Care/LINKS, and Alabaster

A young man listening to a radio in a country closed to evangelistic work hears an Arabic program broadcast by the Church of the Nazarene. He becomes a regular listener and eventually opens his heart to the Lord Jesus.

A lady in South America watches *Mujer Valiosa*, a Spanish-language television program produced by the Church of the Nazarene. That program starts her on a life-transforming journey. Stories like these are heard often by those working in Nazarene radio and television ministries. Indeed, Brian Utter's NMI missions book, *Nothing Stands in Our Way*, was full of such stories. Airtime and recording equipment for these broadcast ministries are paid for by money from an annual Mission Specials offering called World Mission Broadcast

(WMB). The role of radio and television ministries in evangelistic outreach makes that offering a key player in Nazarene global outreach. Indeed, it might even be called a “star player.”

Let’s think for a moment about how star players function on a team. I’m not much of an athlete, but I know that a star athlete can only be a star if teammates do what is expected of them. Occasionally, one player may seem to have single-handedly won a game. Having a winning season, however, requires that the entire team be involved. Isn’t there a parallel to this in Nazarene missions funding? We have some designated Missions Specials offerings that could be called star players. As happens with star athletes, people know the names and accomplishments of these offerings: Alabaster, World Mission Broadcast, Missionary Health Care and LINKS. Those giving opportunities, which all count toward the Ten Percent Giving benchmark, have star player power because WEF money is present, caring for all kinds of things—just like the teammates of a star player on a sports team. Offerings, such as Alabaster and World Missions Broadcast, would not accomplish what they do now in the same way that one basketball player could not be a star if there were not four other players on the court playing alongside him or her.

World Mission Broadcast

The decade immediately following World War II saw significant advances for Nazarene world outreach. For one thing, when Alfredo del Rosso's independent Italian work merged with the Church of the Nazarene, we entered the European continent for the first time. We also began asking churches to promote two new missions offerings: Alabaster and World Mission Broadcast.

At an average cost of \$4 per minute for airtime, World Mission Broadcast is a very economical evangelist. It began with a Spanish radio program broadcast across Latin America with funding from an annual, designated offering. That offering, traditionally received in June, now finances the production and airing of programs broadcast in three dozen languages to more than seventy countries. In many cases, those programs are aired on secular stations. Amazingly, Arabic MTV has carried Nazarene television broadcasts produced in the Middle East! Sometimes, the broadcasting is done by Christian organizations, such as TransWorld Radio and Far Eastern Broadcasting Company (FEBC).

Radio is an excellent way to get the Gospel into restricted or closed countries. It can also prepare the way for planting churches in new areas. Radio was a

key, for instance, to starting Nazarene work in Venezuela. As Bill and Juanita Porter went to Venezuela, they had contact information on 500 Venezuelan listeners who had written to *La Hora Nazarena*, a Nazarene radio program. Many of those 500 people did not turn out to be prospects, but some did. Today scores of churches across Venezuela testify to the door-opening role of radio broadcasts.

In terms of what is needed for Nazarene global radio and television broadcasting, this annual denomination-wide offering (WMB) is the major funding source. In addition, quite a few individuals passionate about radio and television ministries give to World Mission Broadcast needs throughout the year. Ann Baldwin, communication coordinator in the Global NMI office, tells of a long-time Canadian donor who has purchased microphones, recording equipment, software, and computers for Nazarene media centers worldwide. This retired postal employee may be WMB's all-time largest individual donor.

Ann notes, "He says giving equipment to broadcast ministry is his way of passing out tracts. He can't go to remote parts of the world and share Christ. Instead, he gives quality equipment so listeners can hear clearly the Good News."

To carry on his electronic-tract ministry, this retired postman is, in essence, partnering with Nazarenes around the world. He buys equipment, and through the WMB offering other people pay for air-time while WEF contributions finance all-important listener follow-up—something that can be challenging in Creative Access and 10/40 Window countries. (The 10/40 Window refers to a rectangular area from ten degrees to forty degrees north of the equator that stretches from North Africa to South Asia.)

Missionary Care

Missionary Health Care and LINKS are separate giving opportunities with different objectives. If we use the star player analogy for them, we need to think of them as two different players. However, they are here under the same heading because both are about caring for missionaries.

For my two children, "LINKS" evokes memories of a packet of greeting cards they received in Italy. The packet of cards came from children in a Pennsylvania church. I doubt anyone in that church remembers sending those cards, but over the years Matthew and Rachele have remembered receiving them. In their minds those cards meant that people in a LINKS church cared about them.

Some people could tell you that LINKS is an acronym for the phrase "Loving, Interested Nazarenes, Knowing and Sharing." More people, however, simply know that their church is "linked" to specific Nazarene missionaries. LINKS helps local churches put a face on world evangelism. Indeed, the idea of being linked together was the impetus for starting the program. It began in Southern California as a "box work" initiative. The idea was to send packages of clothing and personal items overseas to missionaries. It grew out of a desire to personally connect with missionaries, and it follows somewhat the pattern of parents sending boxes of goodies to college students. While those small packages from home do not pay college tuition, they symbolize a relationship bond and are thus enormously supportive for students.

When LINKS works as it is intended, it begins with a local church and a missionary or missionary family assigned to that church getting acquainted. The missionaries send biographies and photos. Churches begin receiving newsletters from their adopted missionaries and begin following their blogs. They exchange letters, e-mails, and even Skype and phone calls.

Persons in the adoptive churches nurture the relationship by sending birthday, wedding anniver-

sary, Christmas, and other greeting cards to the missionaries. In return, missionaries send to their adoptive churches small personal wants, and the adoptive churches try to meet some of them. The churches send Christmas gifts, often cash. From time to time, arrangements will be made for LINKS missionaries on home assignment to visit their adoptive churches.

Except in the case of retired missionaries, the actual sending of items has almost disappeared. Soaring shipping costs and customs duties make it financially impractical to send packages to many locations. The opportunity to lovingly make something by hand or pick it out, buy it, and send it to a missionary is becoming rare. Most LINKS churches now send money to their adopted missionary so things can be purchased on the field or acquired during a home assignment time.

To be sure, in terms of money needed to support missionaries, LINKS does not raise all that much. However, in no way does that mean LINKS is an insignificant support component. The relationships created and the ensuing emotional support are significant for the missionary on the field as well as for people in the adoptive church.

Not long after we arrived in Italy, we began receiving birthday, Christmas, and anniversary cards

from an individual in one of our LINKS churches. As time went by, we found out that a lady named Wilma Browning was doing more than sending cards. She had unequivocally “adopted” us and was praying for our family every day. Through all our years of service in Italy and Haiti, Wilma Browning was our most faithful prayer partner. It would be difficult to calculate the value of what that LINKS-fostered relationship did for us.

The fraternal twin of LINKS is Missionary Health Care, an emphasis encouraging people to give for missionary health-care needs. Some of those funds are raised in interesting ways. For instance, a few years ago when I stepped down after serving for a decade as Northwest Oklahoma District NMI president, I was presented a Distinguished Service Award (DSA). When I look at that framed certificate, I get “warm fuzzies” thinking about the memories associated with it. Just as importantly, I know that the DSA presentation meant the council had given money toward missionary medical expenses. After my dad passed away, the Southwest Oklahoma District NMI council gave me a Memorial Roll certificate bearing his name. I knew the cost for that certificate also went to meet the medical needs of missionaries.

Funds from Distinguished Service Awards and Memorial Roll certificates join Gifts from the Heart certificates to form a “basket” of giving opportunities. The least known offering in the basket is probably Gifts from the Heart. High traffic areas of Nazarene church buildings sometimes have a rack of two kinds of Gifts from the Heart cards—“In Memory” cards and “In Honor” cards provide ways for individuals to remember or honor someone by making a donation for the health-care costs of missionaries.

Alabaster

The Alabaster Offering is likely our most well-known designated Mission Special. It’s an offering that could be called Nazarene global building fund. Usually received twice a year, Alabaster funds are used on all six regions, including U.S.A./Canada, to annually fund between two hundred and three hundred projects.

Across the years, Alabaster-financed projects have been in the landscapes of my life. The first Nazarene building Barbara and I saw after arriving in Italy as rookie missionaries was the Alabaster-built church/parsonage in Sarzana. Missionary homes in Haiti had been built with Alabaster money. We now live in Oklahoma City and worship in a renovated

World-War-II-era warehouse in an economically distressed neighborhood. Purchased with the help of Alabaster funds, the building now houses Reaching Our City (ROC) compassionate ministry and the ROC Church of the Nazarene. At Alabaster time our pastor reminds us that we are paying it forward—repaying a good deed by doing something for someone else instead of for the person who did the original good deed. Rev. Dick Sowder, Oklahoma District NMI president, says he's heard the same pay-it-forward speech in Dededo, Guam, where a parsonage was built with Alabaster funds.

The Alabaster Offering began because Global NMI council member Elizabeth Vennum agreed to dream up some way to raise money for purchasing property and constructing buildings. While traveling from Kansas City to her Florida home, Elizabeth's thoughts were drawn to the woman who bathed Jesus' feet with perfume from an alabaster container (Luke 7:36-50).

Elizabeth envisioned a global building fund to which people would give money they had planned to spend on something special for themselves. As she promoted the new offering, she challenged women to delay purchasing a new dress or to put off buying

another bottle of perfume. "Give up a want to meet a need," she urged them.

What Elizabeth challenged people to do was different from what they were doing in prayer and fasting. At that time lots of Nazarenes fasted one meal a week—often the Friday noon meal—and gave the cost of that meal for world evangelism. Because prayer and fasting involves a meal or something else that satisfies a basic need, it is a sacrificial offering.

Elizabeth's idea was for something different. For the Alabaster Offering, she asked people to give up something "extra," and like the woman in the New Testament, to pour out on Jesus the money destined for that luxury item. To give visibility to the new offering, Elizabeth designed and used her own money to print small, rectangular, cardboard boxes to hold people's donations until time to "pour it out" (Genesis 35:14).

In places where Work & Witness teams do a lot of needed construction, Alabaster is still used occasionally for property purchases, particularly in the cities where land can be expensive. In at least one case in Haiti, that meant the purchase of a vacant church building and parsonage.

The Nazarene congregation in Limbe, Haiti, had outgrown the building they were renting. In addition,

they had a rocky relationship with their landlord who on occasion threatened to cancel their lease. A couple of times he even boarded up the building, forcing the district superintendent to make emergency trips to negotiate solutions.

The congregation looked for land on which to build. What they found was poorly located and overpriced. Then an independent pastor decided to close his church and sell its property. The facilities, which included a parsonage, seemed perfect for the Limbe Nazarene congregation. There was even educational space for their elementary school.

The problem was how to purchase it. Haitian banks do not lend money to churches, and the district did not have the resources to complete the purchase. Because this seemed too good an opportunity to let pass, the district superintendent applied for an Alabaster grant. Today, because Nazarenes—young and old and poor and well off—gave up a want to meet a need, the Church of the Nazarene in Limbe is doing ministry in a wonderful building situated on Haiti's main north-south road.

four
WORK & WITNESS
It's Not About Money

The Alabaster Offering, emptied out of iconic little cardboard boxes, funds two hundred to three hundred projects each year. That is, however, only half of what we might call the Nazarene Global Construction Company. The other half is Work & Witness, a grassroots enterprise annually fielding about seven hundred Nazarene short-term mission teams. While a few of those teams do medical ministry and some focus on evangelism or education, most are construction groups.

The first denomination-sanctioned Work & Witness construction project happened in 1966 when I went with nineteen other Southern Nazarene University students to northeastern Mexico. When we arrived in the small city of Muzquiz on the first Saturday of spring break, we saw only a freshly poured concrete slab that would be the floor of the new

building. However, we were an extreme-makeover team, so a week later on Easter Sunday morning the Muzquiz congregation dedicated a new concrete block building complete with metal roof, windows, doors, pews, and pulpit. A local sign painter even made a sign that we installed Saturday afternoon.

That trip was an adventure denominational leaders were not sure would succeed. But it did. I was back in Muzquiz recently. During an outdoor service I was leaning against a palm tree in the church yard. A 35-year-old man standing nearby stepped over and asked if I were one of those who had built that building years before.

“Yes, I was,” I said.

“Well,” he said, “because of what you guys did, today I know Jesus.”

Work & Witness is a unique combination of people’s time and money. The first teams were from the U.S.A., and then Work & Witness went global. For example, the churches in Mexico, which receive a lot of teams, have sent out Work & Witness teams of their own, notably to Cuba. In 2011, churches in Africa sent out forty-seven Work & Witness teams.

In our fifteen years as missionaries, Barbara and I were on the receiving end of Work & Witness teams. During the two decades I’ve been at Southern Naza-

rene University, I have been on both the sending and going ends. I've watched a lot of Work & Witness participants give up vacation time, pay their own travel expenses, and even dig into their own pockets to buy cement, lumber, paint, nails, and other supplies.

This short-term mission "industry" keeps travel agents busy. It's good business for hotels and restaurants and construction supply companies. It's good business for airlines and bus and van rental companies. But the amount of money involved with every single Work & Witness project has caused some people to question the wisdom of this expenditure. The critics say that the money spent on travel, food, and lodging might be better invested if the people stayed home and the money used to hire local people to construct the buildings.

After hearing these kinds of comments several times, I decided to get an answer from my Haitian friends. After all, a lot of Work & Witness teams go to Haiti. I wondered if Haitian leaders might be drawn to the thought of having several thousand dollars more per project—along with not having to put up with a bunch of "strange" foreigners. However, when I posed that question to a Haitian pastor, an anguished look crossed his face.

“This is not just about constructing buildings,” he said. “A group of Nazarenes from another country spending ten days here confirms that we are not alone. It assures us that we are part of a global church. There is also the fact that those people return to their homes knowing how to pray for us. And the Holy Spirit also uses their giving of themselves to inspire us to reach out and help others.”

Thinking of Work & Witness as merely a way to construct buildings ignores much of its value. The real objective in Work & Witness is not *construction*; it is reaching people for Christ and building up His Body. While buildings get built, the most beneficial Kingdom thing that happens are the interactions that occur while a team is on-site as well as the ministry and worship that will be done in those new or renovated facilities.

Most of us involved with short-term mission teams have mused that most successful Work & Witness projects are really excuses to build relationships. As “go-ers” and receivers work beside each other, cultural exchanges happen. People hear each other’s stories, and even when there are enormous cultural and language differences, go-ers and receivers sense a bond in Jesus Christ.

It would be difficult, of course, for Work & Witness to function effectively apart from the fabric woven by the World Evangelism Fund. The local churches and related ministries needing new or expanded facilities are fruit in some way of the World Evangelism Fund. WEF also supports those in the Global Ministry Center and at the regional level who supervise the deployment of teams and who oversee details such as insurance coverage. WEF supports field coordinators who match up teams with projects. WEF provides the pipeline through which project money gets to the field to prepare job sites and to set up housing and transportation. Countries that receive multiple teams each year, such as Haiti and Mexico, have WEF-supported missionaries assigned full-time to Work & Witness.

There are, of course, pitfalls associated with Work & Witness. One danger is that Work & Witness participants will start thinking that construction is the most important thing to do in fulfilling the Great Commission. There is, as well, the opposite danger of teams being careless and shoddy in their workmanship because it's *just* the mission field. Another hazard is that go-ers may become a disincentive force by treating receiving churches as feeble, helpless, satellite congregations unable to do much for themselves.

There is the danger of projects being done without much local buy-in or ownership. That menace is illustrated by a story told in Glenn Schwartz's book *When Charity Destroys Dignity*. In that story, a group went from the U.S. to Guyana to build a church building. Two years went by and the receiving congregation in Guyana sent a letter to the U.S. team saying, "The roof on your church is leaking. Please come and fix it." Both sides made mistakes that allowed that dependency attitude to take root.

To nip unhealthy dependency in the bud, a fifty-percent guideline was promoted early in the history of Work & Witness. To foster a sense of local ownership, receiving congregations are encouraged to supply at least half of what is needed for their construction projects. This one-for-one match need not be in cash. To reach that fifty-percent threshold, church members in developing countries frequently carry in all the sand, gravel, and water needed for their construction project. Often that means carrying needed supplies in buckets on their heads. Furthermore, in countries such as Haiti, villages are not always located on a road. In such cases, cement, steel, and other supplies must be hand-carried to the construction site from wherever a truck has to leave them.

The late missionary Charles Morrow told about going to Haitian churches and soliciting pledges from members to carry in materials. Sometimes those churches would be an hour or two walk up mountain trails from the nearest road. Charles would ask church members to commit to carrying—or having a donkey carry—a specific number of sacks of cement or pieces of steel. While such “contributions” are not in cash, they foster local ownership and count toward the fifty-percent threshold.

On the other hand, when Scott Hannay was Work & Witness coordinator in Haiti, he decided to ask churches requesting Work & Witness help to come up with \$1,000. In a country like Haiti where \$1 can be a full day’s wage, \$1,000 is equivalent to the combined annual wages of three working adults. Nonetheless, Scott says he always had a waiting list of churches with the \$1,000 in hand.

So back to the question of whether it would be better to just send money.

The answer is a definite no. Short-term mission trips are as much about creating relationships as they are about brick and mortar. Nazarene Bible College student Larry Chambers has said it well, “Putting boots on the ground will accomplish so much more than simply sending cash.”

Also, aren't we more likely to give when we feel ownership in something? For each of the past twenty years Southern Nazarene University has organized a trip to Mexico over the New Year's holiday. In a recent year that trip's 110 participants paid about \$600 each. I've tried to imagine how many of those people would have forked over \$600 if I had suggested they not go on the trip and instead just give \$600 to the project. I don't think very many of them would agree to give that much money without personally being on the trip. They might give \$10 or even \$20. But not \$600. And probably not even \$200. Apart from the loss of other benefits of a mission trip, would promoting a just-send-the-money option produce enough construction funds? I don't think so.

There's also the fact that family and friends who may not be Nazarene—and are sometimes not even believers—are among those helping team members with their expenses. That money would not be given to Nazarene missions if we adopted a just-send-the-money approach.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, attitudes about world evangelism are often transformed by mission trip participation. People who didn't place a high priority on global outreach before going on a Work & Witness trip sometimes become ardent mis-

sions supporters after the trip. Indeed, studies have indicated that the greatest benefit of mission trips is what happens to the go-ers. If we want to calculate how much bang for the buck we're getting from Work & Witness, we must factor in the life transformations of the participants—life transformations that result in increased missions giving for years to come.

Work & Witness is not a cookie-cutter undertaking. There is no one-size-fits-all team size or gender ratio or project cost or time on the field. Indeed, some very small W&W teams make significant contributions for world evangelism. These are people who pay their way to a mission field for ten days or two weeks to give specialized expertise. One building I was involved with in Haiti was erected that way. A prefabricated steel structure imported to Haiti from Canada by another denomination had been given to the Church of the Nazarene. The problem for us was that it was in pieces—lots of pieces. We were excited about having that building, but there it was, lying on the ground looking like a giant erector set.

David Hayse, former missionary and longtime global Work & Witness director, put me in touch with Abby Culp from Canton, Ohio. Abby was retired and had already been to Ecuador and the Bahamas to put together similar steel structures. When

I called Abby, he agreed to come help us. Then, I timidly mentioned that we did not have a crane.

“No problem,” he chuckled. “Can you get me a winch and a telephone pole?”

“I think so,” I said. I knew that we had a pick-up truck with a winch on its bumper. Since Haitian electric lines were strung on wooden poles, I thought we could find a used pole somewhere. We did, and with some Haitian helpers, Abby got that steel frame up and its roofing installed. It’s a sturdy building that survived Haiti’s 2010 earthquake with not one crack! Abby’s expertise and ingenuity were worth several thousand dollars.

Another Work & Witness variation with which I have been involved is the Nazarene International Language Institute (NILI) that is part of the Seminario Teologico Nazareno Sudamericano in Quito, Ecuador. On the surface, NILI, as it is usually called, is a semester-abroad program for college students and professionals wanting to learn or improve their Spanish (Go to www.gonili.com.)

While NILI is a wonderful educational opportunity for participants, it also provides significant financial resources for the seminary as well as labor and finances for church-building projects in Ecuador. It’s a marvelous blending of an educational experience

and Work & Witness. Each NILI group spends a week functioning as a Work & Witness team. The materials for that project are purchased from what students have paid for their semester-abroad program. While in Ecuador in the spring of 2009, Barbara and I participated with nine U.S. college students in a NILI building project in Riobamba. We had a lot of fun working with a congregation painting their building and getting their sanctuary floor ready for ceramic tile—and all the while we were practicing our Spanish!

Like more typical Work & Witness projects, NILI's focus is on relationships rather than money. The bottom line is changed lives. And that's a great result for any construction project associated with Kingdom work!

five **A POTPOURRI OF GIVING OPPORTUNITIES**

As we rejoice that the World Evangelism Fund provides mission-critical underpinning for outreach in almost 160 world areas, we also recognize that people enjoy giving to specific things. Indeed, don't we all take great pleasure in giving gifts on special occasions? For that reason, there are a variety of designated-giving opportunities in addition to the WEF.

Potpourri might be a good word for all those designated-giving opportunities we call Mission Specials. *Potpourri* is a French word used in English for an assortment or collection of things. In the U.S.A., *potpourri* often refers to a mix of fragrant plant material that adds a pleasant scent to a dresser drawer or even to a room. Would it be too much of a stretch to use the idea of a scent-laden *potpourri* to imagine the collection of Nazarene Mission Specials as somewhat

like the offerings described by the Old Testament as having an “aroma pleasing to the Lord” (Leviticus 1:17 and Numbers 15:3)? Certainly, having an aroma pleasing to God is what our annual potpourri of \$25 million of Mission Specials offerings tries to do.

Actually, the WEF itself, which funds global missionaries and multiple global church ministries, began as a collection of special appeals. Then the 1923 General Assembly voted to switch from funding everything through specific appeals to using a unified budget for core essentials. At first that switch looked like a mistake because giving to Nazarene world missions plummeted. Indeed, at the end of the unified budget system’s first year, reports were so dismal that Treasurer J. G. Morrison called it “the saddest year that the foreign missionary cause of the Church of the Nazarene has known.”

In time, Nazarenes embraced the idea of giving to what is now called the World Evangelism Fund, and Nazarene global outreach recovered and flourished. That experience did, however, remind leaders that even when people are giving to a general fund they still want opportunities to give for specific items. Actually, that concept is standard advice given to non-profit organizations by professional fund-raisers.

Approved Mission Specials (Ten Percent Projects)

Not long ago I stood in the hallway of the Cleo Springs, Oklahoma, Church of the Nazarene looking at several World Evangelism Church of Excellence and Stewardship Honor Roll certificates hanging there. Those certificates meant the Nazarene church in Cleo Springs had reached the Ten Percent Giving for missions benchmark on numerous occasions. That day I breathed a prayer of thanks for faithful congregations, such as Cleo Springs, who are financing the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Indeed, though WEF shares are fixed at 5.5 percent, Nazarene churches are challenged to set their sights higher and aim at giving ten percent of their income for various world evangelism offerings. That ten percent level is the Stewardship Honor Roll benchmark.

The Luke 9:24 principle—"For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it"—is true for congregations as well as for individuals. Generous churches, like generous people, will flourish. Conversely, a church that feels it has only enough money to care for local needs will usually struggle. Churches like Cleo Springs that reach that Ten Percent Giving benchmark do so by giving their WEF share and then generously donating

to a variety of Mission Specials, including the “star players” of Alabaster, WMB, and Missionary Care.

A Mission Special called Buddy Plan assists people from outside the U.S.A./Canada in attending our quadrennial Global NMI Convention. During a dinner hour at last General Assembly and Conventions time, I went to a Golden Corral restaurant with some Haitian pastors and district superintendents. As we ate and reminisced, we laughed and cried. Back at the convention center, I breathed a prayer of thanks for districts in the U.S.A. and Canada that gave to make it possible for our Haitian brothers and sisters to be there. For them—and many others from around the world—airfare and hotel/restaurant costs would be more than they could earn in an entire year. Buddy Plan funds ensure that seats at the Nazarene “family table” do not sit empty.

Another Approved Mission Special is the JESUS Film Harvest Partners. As an evangelistic tool, the JESUS Film is reaping a bountiful harvest of new believers worldwide. In a side note, Harmon Schmelzenbach III said he thought we ought to consider JESUS Film showings as having first happened in Swazi kraals a hundred years ago. His missionary grandfather told Bible stories using the intense light from acetylene gas to show “lantern slides.”

Offerings to global missionaries speaking in deputation services are an Approved Mission Special. When global missionaries on home assignment visit local churches, they are not there to raise their basic support. Instead they are promoting the World Evangelism Fund, which provides their support and that of a few hundred other Nazarene missionaries. Offerings received for them during deputation services go for travel expenses and for meeting special personal needs or projects in their ministry.

Then, many mission fields annually submit wish-lists of projects to be approved and put in a Mission Specials catalog. Some of those Approved Mission Specials are large projects, such as buildings and vehicles. Some are small expense items, such as kerosene lanterns, books for pastors, and iPods for underground evangelism. The requests often include horses and motorcycles for pastors, plus sound equipment, pews, and office equipment.

Sometimes Approved Mission Specials money is used as a matching fund in which only part of the cost of something is covered by missions money while the balance is cared for locally. For instance, there is no electricity in much of rural Haiti. So, I've helped Haitian churches acquire kerosene lanterns by having them pay part of the cost with the remainder coming

from Mission Specials. The idea was to help churches buy lanterns rather than simply giving them away.

Mission Specials projects may be funded by one church or by a group within a congregation, such as a Sunday School class or a children's church. They may also be given by individuals, sometimes to honor a departed loved one. The Raleigh Fitkin Memorial Hospital in Africa is an example of such a memorial gift. It was built by Abram and Susan Fitkin in memory of their son Raleigh. When he was six, Raleigh started saying he was called to be a missionary. Then at age 10, Raleigh died shortly after being thrown from a car in an accident. The Fitkins gave a large gift to build the Swaziland hospital in his memory.

On occasion, buildings like that hospital bear the name of the person memorialized. Or there may simply be a small plaque inside a building to indicate in whose memory funds were given. I've seen a couple of such plaques in Haiti, and while on Southern Nazarene University's Commission Unto Mexico, I saw one in Juarez, Mexico, First Church.

Support for Mission Corps Volunteers

Occasionally I meet people who wonder if the WEF system is broken because they have encountered Mission Corps volunteers trying to raise sup-

port. Truth be told, there rarely has been enough WEF money to deploy all the Nazarenes feeling a call to missionary service. That fact is a testimony to how well local and district NMI groups are challenging people to listen for God's call to missionary service.

Mission Corps gives us a way for everyone who feels called to find a place of service. Indeed, there are now many more volunteer opportunities open than we have people stepping forward to fill them. We do need to "Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Luke 10:2b). Then we need to be willing to support those workers.

The Mission Corps setup echoes the way Harmon Schmelzenbach, Roger Winans, and others went to the mission field. Today, volunteers who provide a significant part of their own support or raise it from family, friends, and home churches play key roles on the Nazarene missionary team. Many will continue on Mission Corps status throughout their missionary career. However, Mission Corps is also today how most global missionaries start their overseas careers.

Roberta Bustin, who serves in Romania, and Carl and Barbara Summer, who served in Trinidad, are examples of retirees providing their own support. On the other hand, younger Mission Corps volun-

teers usually need to raise that support from other people. Jessica Morris, Nazarene missionary in Bulgaria, spent three years as a Mission Corps volunteer before going on global missionary contract. Friends and family in Arkansas supported Jessica for those three years. Friends, family, and the home church of Scot Riggins supported him as a Mission Corps volunteer during the years he served in Bulgaria, Portugal, and Israel. He and his wife, Jill, are now Nazarene global missionaries in Africa. Those who faithfully support these young Mission Corps volunteers are investing not only in their current ministry but also in the eventual long-term ministry they will render. Donations to Mission Corps volunteers count as Ten Percent Giving for the donor churches.

Sometimes people and even churches have wondered if they could choose between two options: giving to World Evangelism Fund or giving to the support of a specific Mission Corps volunteer. Pitting the support of Mission Corps volunteers against giving to the World Evangelism Fund is misguided. It would be like a person designating all of their local giving to specific causes and never giving to support the core ministry of the congregation. Rather than an "either/or" option, giving to Mission Corps volunteers needs to be done as "both/and," thereby insuring that the

system works and that all those truly called by God can effectively fulfill that call. Doing one *instead* of the other would be like filling the oil reservoir in an automobile engine without putting gasoline in the tank and still expecting the engine to run. It won't. The engine needs *both* gasoline and oil.

Compassionate Ministries Projects

One day I watched children splashing around in mud and water by a well at a rural Haitian church. They were pumping water into plastic jugs and buckets for their families, and their occasional spills created puddles. During previous dry seasons, the village suffered from lack of water. I smiled at the laughter of the children and was glad to see that the village now had enough water for its children to play in. I also knew that well water was pure and wouldn't pose the health risks that drinking from a polluted stream would.

When General Superintendent Eugenio Duarte recently wrote, "Compassion is essential to making Christlike disciples in the nations," he was not trying to get Nazarenes to do something different from what we've always done. From the denomination's beginning days, Nazarenes have engaged in compassionate ministry projects such as the well I saw in Haiti. In-

deed, Los Angeles First Church of the Nazarene was founded in 1895 from a desire to minister holistically by combining evangelism and social action.

Not long after that point in history, many North American Christians began to fight over whether top billing should go to leading people to a saving knowledge of Christ or to meeting their physical needs as a demonstration of Christ's great compassion. Some church leaders began feeling as if they were facing an either/or choice, and they called on people to take sides as to whether the church should be winning souls or be involved in social gospel ministry.

As those arguments raged, Harmon Schmelzenbach and other early Nazarene missionaries followed in the steps of John Wesley by seamlessly combining the two aspects of ministry—much as Jesus did. In Swaziland the Schmelzenbachs followed a simple motto: "Preaching, Teaching, and Healing."

Today Nazarene compassionate ministry work worldwide still dovetails with evangelism and church planting. Indeed, in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, reports immediately surfaced of new Nazarene churches being started in the tent cities where earthquake survivors were living.

While many Nazarene missionaries doing compassionate ministry are supported by the World Evan-

gelism Fund, their projects are funded by Approved Mission Special giving. Through Nazarene Compassionate Ministries (NCM), people support hospitals and clinics, HIV/AIDS education and prevention, latrine building, and other community health projects, including water wells such as the one where I saw children playing.

Natural disasters bring lots of donations into the coffers of missions organizations. The devastation wrought by an earthquake in Haiti, by hurricanes along the U.S. Gulf Coast, and by a famine in East Africa tug at people's heartstrings. Seeking trustworthy channels for their giving, donors turn to religious organizations. Because of the World Evangelism Fund, organizational structures are in place within the Church of the Nazarene to handle emergency aid when disasters strike. Thus, more of what a person gives gets to the need.

Funds solicited by Nazarene Compassionate Ministries finance famine relief and the long-term care of refugees displaced by civil strife. There are NCM projects caring for persecuted Christians and projects that provide care for abandoned or neglected senior citizens. Frankly, if there's a human need somewhere on the planet, there's a good chance the Church of the Nazarene is involved in doing some-

thing about it. Our local, district, and regional infrastructures, which are fruit of the WEF, ensure that designated giving for such needs goes further than it would if sent to organizations that do not have a network like ours already in place. Indeed, relief organizations, including the United Nations, have often used the Church of the Nazarene as a disaster-relief distribution network rather than trying to set up their own.

There are numerous Nazarene Compassionate Ministry giving opportunities for projects serving vulnerable children. Those include ministries to street children as well as traditional child-sponsorship programs. Giving to NCM supports the Child Development Centers that Hermann Gschwandtner says are key contributors to explosive church planting in Bangladesh where 310 new Nazarene churches were started in 2011.

Do these projects make a long-term difference in lives? Yes, they do. Barbara and I have a friend in Ecuador who is a poster child for Compassionate Ministries. At age five Lucy Olivo, the daughter of a single mother, began attending a Nazarene church with her brother. She was selected by Compassion International for the sponsorship program involving that church. That sponsorship enabled Lucy to go to

elementary and high school. Then she was admitted to a university where she graduated with a degree in business. She went to work in secular business, but soon felt God speaking to her about being involved in ministry. She's now an ordained minister and administrator of the NILI semester-abroad program at the seminary in Quito. When I told Lucy's story to Darryl Stanton, Nazarene missionary in Africa, he noted that she represents hundreds of Nazarene leaders worldwide whose education was provided through a child-sponsorship program.

In terms of how much of a donor's money gets to the child, the Nazarene ministries are the most efficient I have seen. That's because the program operates within a denominational fabric where the World Evangelism Fund covers part of the overhead.

Partnerships

Research by David Wesley, professor of missiology at Nazarene Theological Seminary, indicates that half the North American Nazarene churches with more than 500 members have entered into some kind of mission-field partnership agreement. One example is Bethany First Church which, together with Southern Nazarene University, is investing time, finances, and people in the Swaziland Partnership.

These larger churches are giving their WEF share, often overpaying it, plus participating in other Mission Specials, such as Alabaster and World Mission Broadcast, and then ministering directly with a specific mission field in a partnership.

A Great System

If we had to start all over again, I'm not sure the best fund-raising consultant in the world could come up with a better system for funding world evangelism than the system we have. That system includes a pleasant-smelling potpourri of ways to respond to God's call for us to be generous givers.

six

HOW THE MONEY GETS RAISED AND DISBURSED

To give to the World Evangelism Fund, some churches simply take 5.5 percent directly from weekly tithes and offerings. Others raise that money by encouraging people to give specifically for world evangelism in two annual offerings: Easter and Thanksgiving (Harvest). Even in churches using the Faith Promise method, Easter and Thanksgiving offerings are often promoted so people who have not made Faith Promise commitments can be challenged to give to world evangelism. Churches sometimes have a lot of fun in these special offerings.

Indeed, shouldn't giving for world evangelism be exciting? *The Message*, 2 Corinthians 9:7b, says, "God loves it when the giver delights in the giving." Youth pastor Matt Ciaramitaro recently acknowledged that we have too often ignored that point. Matt wrote to his online Nazarene Bible College classmates: "I don't think I've ever considered making offering fun."

One Sunday morning in rural Haiti I saw a wonderful example of a congregation making it a delight for people to give. The church I visited that day turned raising its World Evangelism Fund money into a contest between the men and women. That morning they took a WEF offering in two separate baskets, one for the men and another one for the women. They passed the baskets, counted what was given, and announced the total. The women had won and they cheered. The men laughingly clamored to have the baskets passed again. They did, counted the money, and the men surged ahead. The women asked that the plates be passed once more, and they again took the lead. After the sixth or seventh time of passing the plates and counting offerings, the men threw in the towel, conceding to the women. Doesn't that seem a far more biblical way of raising money than using guilt trips or gut-wrenching photos of starving kids? Certainly, our emotions are stirred by human need, but shouldn't our giving be in celebration of the Good News of the Kingdom?

To raise World Evangelism Fund money, many churches use a Faith Promise system in which people are encouraged to regularly give something for world evangelism over and above their tithe. Churches usually launch their Faith Promise each year with a

promotional weekend. At the end of a service that often features a missions speaker, people commit in writing what they will give for world evangelism in the coming year. They are urged to prayerfully make what will truly be for them a "faith" promise.

Often the individual promises will be added up and that total announced before the service ends. Sometimes as the counting is going on, the congregation will be updated with a ribbon thermometer or computer graphics or even a huge glass jar filling up with wheat, such as I saw recently in the Muskogee, Oklahoma, church. The main goal is caring for the World Evangelism Fund.

However, most churches using Faith Promise raise more for missions than just their WEF share. Thus, many Faith Promise goals include amounts for Alabaster, World Mission Broadcast, LINKS, Missionary Health Care, and even Work & Witness trips. Although in such cases those special offerings will usually still be promoted so that everyone has a chance to participate in them.

People generally fulfill Faith Promise commitments weekly or monthly. Veteran pastor Marvin McDaniel told me of times when systematic Faith Promise giving to missions helped people become regular tithers. Marvin said new people who were

not tithers were often attracted by the excitement of a Faith Promise event. After experiencing the joy of fulfilling a year-long commitment to missions, many were ready to begin tithing.

Of course, people don't usually have extra money lying around that they can give for world evangelism. When confronted with an appeal to give to a cause, people often respond that they can't afford it. Nazarene Bible College student Amber Olsen says that asking *Can I afford to give?* is the wrong way of thinking about giving for world evangelism. "We don't have a problem 'affording' missionary work," she says. "We have a problem prioritizing it."

Sometimes a Faith Promise event has led families to rearrange their financial priorities and begin contributing significantly to world evangelism. I remember being in Indianapolis, Indiana, with a family that five years earlier was about to buy new window coverings. Then Faith Promise Sunday arrived in their church. A desire to be involved in world evangelism led that family to delay buying new drapes until the following year. They enjoyed giving for world evangelism so much that when I met them five years had passed, and they still had not purchased those new drapes! My friend Christian Rath would say that particular family had made the wonderful discovery

that finding contentment could be far more rewarding than searching for happiness.

People sometimes wind up giving more through Faith Promise than they had thought possible. During a home assignment from Italy, I met an Iowa pastor with an unusual Faith Promise commitment. He had promised that any extra money coming his way that year would go for world evangelism. Amazingly, he had wound up with extra income almost equal to half of his annual salary. True to his promise, he gave it all to missions. In that same vein, I've known people who consistently put pay increases into Faith Promise. That way they gradually increase their giving for world evangelism without much pain.

Of course, giving with less pain has drawbacks. During a Faith Promise weekend I spent with Rev. Michael Hancock, he broached that issue. He rejoiced at how much his family was giving for world evangelism through a monthly Faith Promise commitment. Still, said Michael, he missed the feeling of sacrifice he felt as a child when his family gave for world evangelism.

As Michael was growing up, his parents regularly gave an entire week's income in both the Thanksgiving and Easter offerings. Michael noted that at those missions offering times they couldn't eat out or buy

more groceries because family income for an entire week had all gone for world evangelism. Meals were lean as they cleaned out the refrigerator and food pantry. Michael said that he and his family felt profoundly satisfied at having gone without some things in order to give to Great Commission causes.

Collecting It

So how is the money for world evangelism actually collected? Well, a lot of Nazarene missions money—whether Faith Promise commitments, Easter, Thanksgiving (Harvest) offerings, or special offerings—is received during the regular offering time of church services. People will specify what they are giving for the particular missions offering, sometimes even putting it in special envelopes. Another option churches have used is to announce that anything given in that service “not specifically marked” as tithes or other offerings will go to the missions offering.

Dedicated offering times are also used in which everything received goes to the specific missions offering. To do this, offering containers are usually passed a second time during the service. Or clever things like a march offering may be used in which people walk to the front of the sanctuary and drop their missions offering into a container. Churches

frequently do march offerings at Alabaster Offering time with people bringing their little cardboard boxes and emptying them. In many Haitian churches, compassionate ministries offerings are received as march offerings. Another variation on this is to place a large glass or clear plastic container in a prominent location and ask people over more than one Sunday to fill it with coins and/or paper currency.

Increasingly, local churches as well as the Global Ministry Center are offering the possibility of online giving. Missions offerings as well as tithe can be given that way, and some people set up automatic payments from their credit card or bank account. People wanting to give to the WEF, to an Approved Mission Special, or to support Mission Corps volunteers and Youth in Mission participants can do so at <http://web.nazarene.org/site/PageServer?pagename=DonationSplash>.

Southern Nazarene University has used online giving to raise project money for Work & Witness trips to Haiti and to Mexico. Oklahoma City First Church member John Martin tells me he gives his tithe and missions offerings during Sunday School by aiming his cell phone camera at the little square QR (Quick Response) barcode printed on the Sunday worship folder. That takes him to the church's online

giving site. He enters some numbers, clicks a couple of times, and it's done.

Online giving is used in crowd-sourced funding, which is the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter to publicize a giving campaign where the emphasis is on small gifts from a large number of people. The principle behind crowd-sourced funding is simple. Rather than raising \$50,000 from one donor, \$50,000 is raised by getting \$10 apiece from five thousand people. In the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, I set out to find 2,000 friends who would each give \$10 to the project fund for a Work & Witness trip to Haiti. Although we raised about \$24,000 through crowd-sourced funding, I did discover that you have to pester *a lot* of people to find two thousand willing to give \$10 each.

Children, often in a contest format, give missions offerings in VBS, in Caravans, or through the Sunday School. Sunday School birthday offerings have long been used with the money going for world evangelism. Some adult Sunday School classes or Bible study groups sponsor a child through an offering box passed around each Sunday morning. Missi Hastings Schmelzenbach says the children in her church's Caravan program recently raised enough money to

cover the plane ticket to Africa for a mission-trip participant from their congregation.

JESUS Film Harvest Partners organizes dinners and other special events to ask for financial support. Various mission field partnerships, such as the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) Field Partnership, the India Field Partnership, and the North Andean Field (South America) Partnership, use this method to raise funds. Offerings for the ministry of individual missionaries are also sometimes raised this way. People will be invited to someone's home for an evening with the clear understanding that a missionary on home assignment will be there and that those attending will be asked to contribute to that missionary's ministry.

People raising money for mission trips will sometimes plan sponsored events in which friends and family are asked to give an amount of money per mile walked or hours spent in a rocking chair or whatever. Recently a group of men doing their "bucket list" rode motorcycles from the southern tip of South America to Bethany, Oklahoma. They asked friends and family to contribute so much per each mile they rode. Half of the money raised by the "Miles with a Mission" riders went to scholarships at the new Brazilian Nazarene College with the other half going

to their alma mater, Southern Nazarene University. Teens will sometimes do a "free" car wash or other fund-raising event in which donations to a mission trip fund are encouraged.

People wanting to give to a compassionate ministry center in their area, such as Love Link Ministries in Oklahoma City or even to a New Start church that is an approved Ten Percent Project, can do so directly to that ministry in "point to point" giving. With this method the donors' local churches receive credit for Mission Specials giving. Through a last will and testament or some type of trust, people can make an estate gift that goes for world evangelism after their deaths. Nazarenes in the U.S. solicited at their workplace to give to United Way can designate their gifts for Nazarene Compassionate Ministries, Inc., by writing "NCM, Inc." and the mailing address on donation cards. If U.S. military personnel and government employees specify number 11735 for their Combined Federal Campaign, their donations will go to Nazarene Compassionate Ministries.

Another way of giving resources for world evangelism is through in-kind donations. This includes putting together Crisis Care Kits that are modern-day care packages sent to disaster sites. Through our School Pal-Pak program, people send supplies to

Nazarene schools around the world. We have 25,000 children in Nazarene elementary schools in Haiti alone. Through the years people have given me over 150 used accordions that I've shipped to Haiti for use by churches there.

Disbursing It

People doing philanthropic fund-raising say donors (a) want their gifts to count, (b) don't want their money to be wasted, and (c) want the cause to which they are giving to make a difference. All three conditions are being met for world evangelism through the giving that is done within the Church of the Nazarene.

The system of World Evangelism Fund money supplemented by Approved Special gifts means that every church's contribution counts. Indeed, every single coin or "mite" counts! Lots of gifts, even small ones, put together can accomplish big things. Harmon Schmelzenbach recognized the potential of such a system decades ago. As the unified budget system was put in place, that pioneer missionary wrote from Swaziland, "Individually, we accomplish limited returns. Collectively, we move mountains."

Such working together not only involves hundreds of thousands of Nazarenes pooling their money, it also involves partnering with other orga-

nizations around the world. Those partnerships multiply the money given through Nazarene churches, making those gifts go a very long way. Examples of this would include Compassion International, an organization pouring child sponsorship money into Nazarene schools. We partner with World Vision on health projects in Haiti and elsewhere. We partner with the Mennonites in flood relief and well-drilling projects and with the Veritas Foundation (Romania) to minister to battered women. One year in Haiti we partnered with a Bible society to distribute 25,000 New Testaments.

Donors to Nazarene world evangelism can also rest assured their money will not be wasted. As has already been noted, the fabric woven by the WEF eliminates the dissipation of designated funds by unnecessary overhead costs. Regular audits at all levels give full accountability for every cent. Global missionaries like Scot Riggins and Mission Corps volunteers like Julie Sides Torres train people to transparently handle and keep track of funds. That training is building capacity, because it enables national leaders to be better decision-makers. With grassroots leaders participating with regional office and Global Ministry Center leaders, decisions are often made close to the action, further assuring that money is spent care-

fully and frugally. The use of appropriate technology is another way of avoiding waste in Nazarene world evangelism strategy efforts. This means, for example, that church buildings in Haiti do not have air-conditioning; rather, those buildings are constructed in ways that maximize tropical breezes.

Finally, donors can be assured that their gifts are going to make a difference. Fulfilling the Great Commission and calling believers to a life of holiness is not really about how much money can be collected and spent; it's about how that money will be used. Quite frankly, not all help is helpful. It's been said that foreign funds can either nourish or choke a garden.

"Infinitely reproducible" is a phrase that Paul Orjala, pioneer missionary to Haiti and professor of missiology, repeated often. He used that phrase to urge the use of resources in ways that foster sustainability and self-sufficiency. This includes putting a priority on raising up national leadership, thereby accomplishing that classic goal of missionaries "working themselves out of a job." "Infinitely reproducible" means avoiding programs, institutions, and buildings that would require continual infusions of foreign funds. Nazarene world evangelism efforts follow the principle expressed by the ancient Chinese maxim: "Give a man a fish and he'll eat for a day; teach a man

to fish and he'll eat for a lifetime." Thus, rather than simply subsidizing a pastor's salary, we will attempt to help that pastor learn a trade or start a microbusiness of some kind.

For a long time, Nazarene mission money subsidized pastors' salaries in Haiti. In that period these pastors received a monthly envelope with money from what is now the World Evangelism Fund. The well-intentioned hope was that when their churches grew and prospered, those subsidies would cease to be necessary. It just never happened that way.

Then a decision was made to quit subsidizing Haitian pastors' salaries and instead help them in far more "infinitely reproducible" ways. Dire predictions were made as to how many pastors would forsake the Church of the Nazarene when the subsidies stopped. The day came and went and, as far as could be ascertained, not a single Nazarene pastor quit because salary subsidies ended. One reason is that the missionaries and district leaders spent a lot of time preparing for that change and helping pastors develop alternative sources of income. Interestingly enough, the greatest years of growth in the Haitian church have come after those salary subsidies ended. Similar stories are told across Africa. Ending those subsidies does not mean the global church backed away from

helping the Haitian and African churches. It's just that the funds are being used more strategically and productively.

In the Church of the Nazarene, funds for world evangelism are raised properly and are being well spent—meaning that they are spent efficiently and with integrity as well as in ways that build capacity and promote sustainability and self-sufficiency.

CALL TO ACTION

Where Is Your Treasure?

Jesus said, "Your treasure and your heart are wrapped up together." At least that is how Clarence Jordan rendered Luke 12:34 in his Cotton Patch Version. J. B. Phillips' translation uses more traditional wording, "For wherever your treasure is, you may be certain that your heart will be there too." Those words of Jesus remind me of an encounter I had with Judi Duey when our family returned to the U.S. for a home assignment. Judi saw me at a district assembly service in Bethany, Oklahoma, and she came hurrying over to ask, "Do you remember that Faith Promise convention you held in Mountain Grove?"

I did. It had been ten years earlier during another home assignment. I was the missionary speaker for that southern Missouri church's first-ever Faith Promise convention. Because I had known Judi and her husband, Carl, in college, I was delighted to see them at that church.

During that Friday through Sunday event, Carl and Judi expressed reservations to me about participating in Faith Promise. They were starting their family and had a house under construction. Making a financial commitment on top of their tithe seemed beyond what they could imagine being able to handle. Nonetheless, I encouraged them not to shrink back if they felt the Lord tugging at them to make a commitment.

On a long-ago Monday morning I left Mountain Grove not knowing what my friends had decided regarding Faith Promise. I assumed they were going to forego giving for world evangelism until the arrival of a more financially rosy future. Ten years went by and there, standing in front of me, was Judi Duey.

"Of course, I remember that weekend in Mountain Grove," I told her, and we reminisced a bit about it.

"Well," she finally said, smiling, "that first year the Lord got our money. The second year He got our lives."

That weekend I was in Mountain Grove, unknown to me, Carl and Judi did make a Faith Promise commitment. As they began giving for world evangelism, they prayed that God would take their gifts and multiply them. As they prayed, their hearts be-

came burdened with global concerns, as Luke 12:34 regarding our treasures and our hearts indicates will happen.

In their second year of Faith Promise giving, Carl and Judi decided to offer to take a year off from their jobs and go overseas as Mission Corps volunteers. They went to Swaziland for a year and wound up staying for two years. Later, they spent another two years in Malawi starting a vocational school. Regular giving for world evangelism revolutionized the life of that family.

Nazarenes are known as generous people. Because we want to make Christlike disciples in the nations, most Nazarenes find great joy in giving for world evangelism. Sadly, however, too many Christians live as though the Great Commission has been fulfilled and a peace treaty has been signed with satanic forces. They feel free to lavish—perhaps selfishly—on themselves everything God puts in their hands. It's far too common today for believers to acquire the biggest home and the most expensive car they can borrow money for. Those believers' finances get tied up in mortgage payments, car payments, and every other kind of payment, resulting in them not seeing how they can give much for world evangelism.

When we allow that to happen, aren't we missing what God is trying to do through us? Maybe He's been trying to use us as irrigation ditches to get the Water of Life out to a dry and parched world. We have misunderstood and have built dams and created ponds, keeping for ourselves almost all of what He is showering on us. As a friend of mine once said, we acquired speed boats and are driving them around in our ponds. Don't we need to ask ourselves how much of the resources God has placed in our hands we really should be channeling into fulfilling the Great Commission?

Scripture (Matthew 6:19-20) calls us to break the pattern of laying up treasures for ourselves. Could we accept a challenge of putting a cap on how much of our income we use for ourselves and give every dollar we earn above that cap to Kingdom purposes? In his book *The Great Omission*, Steve Saint, son of missionary martyr Nate Saint, says some of the "heaviest crowns in heaven" will be worn by hard-working men and women who deny themselves what society says they "deserve" to help finance Great Commission work.

Some time ago a friend sent me a news story about a family who had sold their dream home and downsized into a manufactured home—what we

Okies used to call a trailer house. They downsized so they could channel more money to world evangelism causes. That seems radical, but wasn't Christ radical? The downsizing-to-give-to-missions idea seemed so novel to a reporter in the secular media that he wrote a story about what that family had done.

That family's spirit of sacrificial giving could be the standard for us all. Following that model might mean moving to less expensive housing. For some, it might mean downsizing automobiles. It could mean spending less on pets or eating out less. It could mean taking less expensive vacations. It could mean cutting down on the number of expensive coffees. It could mean not buying the latest electronic gadget. It could mean watching a sporting event on television rather than buying tickets to the event. It could mean giving up cable television and watching broadcast channels instead. You get the idea. If we're going to do what God has called us to do, we need to intentionally give up wants to meet needs.

The vision is there. Will we let our resources follow it? Will we seek contentment rather than happiness? Will we live more simply in order to channel God's resources to His work?

Remember those three questions Nancy Hardison posed to young volunteers planting the Church

of the Nazarene in Bulgaria? Couldn't they be slightly reworded and then asked of all of us?

- What, under the Lord's leadership, will you give for world evangelism this year?
- For that to happen, what will you need to start doing this month?
- What will you do this week?