# FROM the FREE STREET

*Fall 2023* | *Cornerstone Church* 

Volume 003



"Jesus came near and said to them, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." MATTHEW 28:18-20

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#### A Letter From Cornerstone Global

We are very excited to share this issue of *From the Field*. For the last couple of years, *From the Field* has been filled with stories and photos of the movement of our global God through His people and His world. What an encouragement it has been for us to gather stories from missionaries, church members, and IFC participants, along with ideas for different ways to get involved personally in what God is doing. We pray these gleanings will be an encouragement to you as well.

We decided to organize this year's issue around the four main priorities of Cornerstone's global vision:

- $\rightarrow$  Sending to the nations (short-term and long-term)
- $\rightarrow$  International Friendship Connection (IFC), our ministry to internationals who have come to our city
- $\rightarrow$  Indigenous and Near-Culture Partnerships that are raising up and sending out laborers
- $\rightarrow$  Mercy, Compassion, Justice ministry around the world

We hope this year's *From the Field* magazine will clarify your understanding of Cornerstone Global and warm your hearts to the incredible movement of God through His church, through His people, and maybe even through you!

- Eric Warren

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#### HOW TO CONNECT:

- ⊠ global@cornerstonelife.com
- cornerstonelife.com/global

#### SENDING

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#### INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP CONNECTION

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### How Do We Engage In Global Missions?

#### INDIGENOUS/ NEAR-CULTURE PARTNERSHIPS

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ALL TRUE

MERCY, COMPASSION, JUSTICE

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## Short-Term

The following stories spotlight how much God works through The Salt Company summer trips and our various community member short-term mission trips. As a sending church, Cornerstone sends members of all ages, on all types of trips, all throughout the year. Every summer, we send students from The Salt Company on evangelism trips to global locations to reach college students who have little or no access to the gospel. We also send Cornerstone community members on one- or two-week trips.



#### EXPERIENCING AUTHENTIC JOY AT RESTORING HOPE VILLAGE

Written by Karley Crouse | Cornerstone Member

O n November 8th, 2022, I was asked if I had interest in going on a short-term community mission trip to South Africa. By November 10th, I said yes and ordered my passport. This was the best yes of my life to date!

I had never been overseas before, and going to South Africa, specifically, has been something that has been on my bucket list for nearly six years! I had looked into multiple trips, but the doors never fully opened for me to go. So, you can imagine my excitement when, over the course of two days, the Lord very obviously opened the doors and said it was time to go!

On February 1st, 2023, my teammate, Alayna, and I embarked on our twenty-hour journey to Welkom, South Africa. Brian and Lois Niehoff, the missionaries who started the children's home, Restoring Hope Village, picked us up from the airport. We would be spending the next week with them at the Village.

This trip was filled with such amazing experiences, but my biggest joy of all was the authentic fellowship we shared with

Welkom, South Africa

so many people. Every evening, we got the honor of eating dinner with different missionary families who lived at the Village. During this nightly meal, we got to hear where each couple came from and learn about the work they were doing. The Lord sent some really great people to serve the kiddos that are living at Restoring Hope!

There are currently thirty-two kids living at the Village, ranging in age from 2 to 20. Our task every day was to help the kids with their homework when they returned from school. This was a really neat experience as we got to observe the school system in a foreign country. Helping with schoolwork provided us with a unique opportunity to sit with the kids, and it also allowed us to take part in those interesting little side conversations that helped us to learn more about them.

After homework was finished, we got to play outside with the kids. They LOVE to talk, jump on the trampoline, and generally show off their athletic abilities! My favorite moment, that I will forever cherish, was during our last night at Restoring Hope. Alayna and I ate dinner at the village girls' house. After we finished a meal of chicken hearts and gizzards, one of the sweetest girls I had met learned that I enjoy singing. She insisted that we sing some songs together. So, that's what we did! In a small room with about ten of us present, she played her guitar, and we all sang different gospel songs together. My heart has never felt so happy in my entire life! It is a memory that I never want to forget.

I am so grateful to be at a church that values missions. Because of this trip, which was a pivotal experience in my walk with Christ, I was able to experience being "the hands and feet of Jesus," and I learned what a privilege that is. I am so happy I took part in the trip to Restoring Hope Village!







STRONG GOD > STRONG MAN Written by Josiah Kallio | Salt Company Student Leader Seangkok, Thailand

efore going to Thailand this summer, I didn't know how God was going to use me. On our third day of ministry we were looking for approachable people. We met a guy named Pongpol, who looked like he had come from the gym. We invited him to eat with us, and while we were eating I asked if he lifted weights. He said he did, and we agreed to meet to do a workout together. By the end of the two-hour workout on the following day, my ministry partner, Jon, and I were pretty tired. When we inquired about eating dinner with him, he said he wasn't finished with his routine, so we waited another two hours. While we were walking to get food, I asked if he was going to go to the gym tomorrow. He said that the gym was closed because it was a Buddhist holiday. His response presented me with a great segway into a spiritual conversation. "Are you a Buddhist?" I questioned. "I am," he answered, "but I don't want to be." He said he wanted to be a Christian, then he added, "How do I become a Christian?" I told him we could meet with him the next day and read the Bible.

When he arrived, we read some passages, shared the gospel with him, and directed him to John 14:6 and Romans 10:9. He then expressed that he wanted to put his trust in Jesus. So, Jon wrote out a prayer (that we translated into Thai), and he read it and prayed to accept Jesus! The rest of that week we met together and we read the entire book of John. We took him to a Thai church the following Sunday, and after the service he went straight to the pastor to talk with him. The pastor told me how encouraged he was by Pongpol's story and by his faith. Pongpol told me later that he didn't need to trust in other gods anymore but will only trust in Jesus because Jesus can protect him from everything. I spent hours reading through different stories with Pongpol, and he was so amazed by Jesus' power to heal and save. He even went home for a week and started reading the book of Genesis with his mom. He started facing some persecution from his grandma and others, but he said, "I don't care what they think, they don't understand. God will protect me from them." Getting the opportunity to teach and guide Pongpol was amazing, and watching his faith grow was inspiring and truly unforgettable.



#### • Paris, France



#### PLANTING GOSPEL SEEDS IN PARIS Written by Maddie Patton | Salt Company Student Leader

his past summer, God called me to be on mission through The Salt Company to France. At first, I found it interesting that evangelism was needed there. However, the longer I was there the more I realized how lost Paris and the rest of Europe is. Christianity has come and gone in Paris. As a result, French people find they have freedom *from* religion; Americans have freedom *of* religion.

The first couple weeks in Paris robbed me of much joy; one can feel the spiritual darkness there. I learned to find encouragement in community: through our team's breakfast and devotional every morning, through our attendance at an all French church service, and through our relationship with the missionaries there.

While our team never saw anyone take that next step of faith, God definitely used us to plant gospel seeds. During our time there, my ministry partner and I made friends of many nationalities, but only one was French since they are more closed off to new friendships. This young French woman seemed lonely and was anxious to hang out with us, but told us she was an atheist. We were able to share our stories and give her a clearer picture of the gospel (she had only gotten to Genesis in the Bible). I am so thankful that the story didn't end there; we were able to connect her to one of our long-term missionary friends.

There are other stories that my team could tell, but I am so thankful for my time in Paris. God taught me of his sovereignty and showed me that even though he was using our team to share the gospel with his wayward children, their salvation was not dependent on us; it is God who changes hearts.

France is lost. Please pray that the nation will come to know their Creator.







# Long-Term

Three of the primary organizations with whom we partner in sending are the International Mission Board (IMB), Campus2Campus (C2C), and Global Harvest Collective (GHC). In response to our church's daily 10:02 prayers, God is sending out laborers into the harvest field! During Cornerstone's history, laborers have been sent all over the world and are doing many types of mission work to make the name of Jesus known in every place. Here are some stories from workers who have been sent out from Cornerstone under each of these partner organizations.

RELYING ON GOD TO REVEAL HIS TRUTH

Written by Hudson

he Lord has been teaching me a lot about dependency and reliance on Him through the book of John, chapter 15. This scripture passage says that apart from Him we cannot bear good fruit (vs. 4-5).

Last summer, Salt students from Cornerstone met and introduced us to a guy, code-named Eg. The Lord blessed us with friendship with Eg from the very first time we met. Eg desires to read the Bible with us and has told us many times that he needs to understand the truth found within its pages. God is working some big things in his life, and Eg wants to do nothing more than just open the Bible with us! We recently had a great Bible study with him where we learned about the deity of Christ and the three-in-one nature of God, something that the local religion struggles to understand. He still has many questions, but the Word was piercing his heart as we read in the books of Mark, John, and Daniel and learned about who Jesus really is and what he came to earth to do.

Without God's leading, my ministry partner and I couldn't have met or read with Eg by ourselves, but God has blessed us with this opportunity to talk about truth in his local language. The Holy Spirit has stirred Eg's heart to seek the one true God!



Southeast Asia



#### **RECEIVING LIFE THROUGH READING THE WORD** *Written by Dan O*

• Central Asia

T hrough online and social media outreach, my wife Tammie and I follow-up with people in my city who have received a free Bible.

Last week I met with an Iranian man, who I'll call Ralph. Early in the conversation, Ralph told me he wanted to become a Christian. Experience has taught me that many people in our part of the world think becoming a Christian will make getting a visa to Europe or America easier.

However, after I asked Ralph why he wanted to become a Christian, he said that when he reads the Bible he feels like it's giving him life; and when he reads about Jesus, he feels Jesus is calling him to follow him and his ways. I explained the gospel, along with the cost of surrendering ourselves to the Lordship of Christ, to Ralph. He said that he still wanted to follow Jesus, but was afraid that if he did, his wife would take his young daughter and leave him.

I introduced Ralph to a trusted Iranian believer who talked with him in his native language for a couple of hours and brought him to an Iranian church in our city. After church, Ralph asked my friend many questions and trusted in Christ as his Lord and Savior! Ralph is asking for prayer for his wife and daughter to accept his new-found faith.

#### ♥ Kaohsiung, Taiwan



**ONLY ONE GOD** Written by Jamie Schmidt

**F** orty people stood on a beach in Kaohsiung and cheered and celebrated as Iris, a new Taiwanese believer in Christ, was baptized in the salty waters of the Taiwan Strait. Her walk with Christ and the real story of her life was just beginning, and it was full of joy. But it almost didn't happen.

Earlier that morning, I had invited the three new believers over to our house to talk about what would take place later that day, but Iris was quick to say that she still had some reservations. She wanted to talk about them, but also wondered if I could invite a Taiwanese believer as well so that she could talk to them about their experience. Very quickly we came to the problem: Iris was quick to confess that Jesus was good and true and the Way, but she still believed the gods she had grown up praying to were real and didn't know how to resolve these two worldviews. Jennice (the Taiwanese believer) and I quickly opened our Bibles and started pointing out Scriptures

that showed how our God viewed the gods of this world. Exodus 20:3-5, Isaiah 44:6, 1 Corinthians 8:4-6 and many more. And while all of these made sense to her, she still had questions. But then, Jennice pointed to one more, Psalm 115:4-8, and this verse resonated with her. The statues that she had grown up bowing before that had seemed cold and distant were really just that, lifeless figurines carved by human hands. Though they had eyes, they could not see and had mouths, but could not speak. As I was getting ready to continue explaining and looking through the Bible with her, she stopped me and said, "It's okay, I'm ready. I understand now." I asked, "You mean you do want to get baptized today?" "I'm ready to get baptized," she replied.

Praise God that he worked through two of his servants to help Iris see the one true God. She is now set on a path to one day see this King face to face.

LEARN HOW TO CARE FOR LONG-TERM LABORERS













# International Friendship Connection



God is not only sending his people as laborers out into the world's harvest field, he is also bringing people from the nations right into our city. Iowa State University welcomes thousands of international students from over one hundred countries. The International Friendship Connection (IFC), a ministry of The Salt Company, endeavors to welcome internationals with gospel love and friendship while proclaiming the Good News. Here are two stories illustrating the impact of IFC upon our leaders and our international friends.



#### **BELIEF + EVIDENCE = TRUST IN JESUS**

Written by Marvin | IFC Member From China

y new life just began this spring. I am so glad to have this chance to tell you about it!

It happened in autumn 2014 while I was walking by the library. I was curious about a big group of people on the lawn with an orator in the middle. A student named Jessica told me they were talking about God and the gospel. She invited me to a gathering called *family group* held weekly by the IFC through Cornerstone Church. That's where my journey started.

The Warren's family group was the one that I attended. I was amazed that they welcomed me, even though I was an atheist at the time. I never felt pushed to believe in God. I also didn't think anybody was able to shake my long-held beliefs. Initially, I kept attending because it was really a good place to make friends and to practice my English. Most importantly, I wanted to understand American society by learning about its history, culture, and its Christian roots. As time passed, surprisingly, I found a bigger world.

Normally, in family group we would share a meal, sing songs praising God, have a Bible discussion, pray together, and, finally, play some games. We had so many deep and meaningful talks there. We talked about the relationship between science and God, equality in marital relationships, floating morality standards, and so on. Meanwhile, I began to feel closer to Jesus since I naturally agreed with his values deep from my heart. He is full of love and humility. I desired to learn from him and behave like him even though I was not technically a believer. But, I struggled because I always thought religion contradicted science. I was aware that nothing could be fully proven to be absolute truth. Everything was uncertain and just a theory. One must always add some belief onto some evidence to fully trust. I wanted more evidence to compensate for my weak belief in Jesus.

The community I had gained from IFC made me happy, and time flew by. But some terrible things happened to me from the fall of 2021; I was eventually diagnosed with severe anxiety and major depressive disorder in 2022. I remembered I had been advised to pray at any time and wait for God to respond. I did this and was hoping to gather more evidence for a belief in Jesus. I remembered the verse "Don't worry about anything; .... His peace will guard your hearts and your minds as you live in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6-7) Then, unexpectedly, in spring of 2023, I gradually walked out of the mess I was in as the trouble I encountered had been solved! That was the evidence I needed! I decided it was time to start a new life now - a life with Christ Jesus. My heart and my mind were peaceful and in agreement. I remembered that I could add my belief in Jesus onto the evidence I had gained from him. I could fully trust him!

Now my plan is to attend a church and continue growing in my new faith; I want to be baptized this fall. Moreover, I desire to tell my story to more people so they can be encouraged to explore more, experience more, think more, and finally understand who Jesus really is!

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!" 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17



GOSPEL FRIENDSHIPS POINT TO GOD Written by Dillon Belzer | IFC Student Leader

have seen God move in IFC through my friend, P. He is a sophomore from India, and I got connected to him by becoming his English conversation partner. I invited him to a bowling night with my family group, and he was able to bowl for the first time ever! Over the next month, he consistently came to family group, and we were able to get lunch a few times. As the semester progressed, we became very close friends.

We spent Thanksgiving together. And as we were going around the table and sharing what we were thankful for, P said he was grateful for me. This blew me away. I had no idea of the impact that simple friendship had on international students. From that point on, he would reach out to me if he needed anything and would check in with me weekly. His loyal heart and desire to make people feel

cared for was evident in his actions. During second semester last year, I was able to invite him to the Good Friday service. He was fascinated by the size of the church and the details of the service.

Currently, P and I still keep in close contact. Although he has continued to attend family group, he has yet to become a Christ-follower. I believe that God is working in his heart though. Seeds have been sown through the messages of church, family group, and other spiritual conversations. P says he is Christian but, in actuality, some cultural barriers have kept him from embracing full and authentic surrender. My prayer for him is that the true gospel would be evident in his life. For now, it has been amazing to see how the hand of God has touched my dear friend P.



#### LEARN MORE OR GET INVOLVED WITH IFC:

saltcompanyames.com/ifc





# Culture Spotlight

### Pray for the Middle East

hen you think of the Middle East, what are the first words that come to your mind? Do Islam, terrorism, or war make the top of the list? What would it take to cultivate within yourself a perspective of the Middle East that moves you towards prayer? For most of history, this region has been troubled and riddled with conflict, poverty, and oppression. In fact, 65% of the world's current conflicts are happening in North Africa and Middle East (NAME). However, these are not the greatest problems that the Middle East faces. To quote Paul Chitwood, the president of the International Mission Board, "The greatest problem in the world is lostness. The only solution to the problem is the Gospel." For the most part, the population of this area is composed of Muslims. Since 1955 the population of the Middle East has grown from 38 million to 188 million people. This means the amount of lostness in the region has also significantly grown. As the region grows, so does the need for the gospel. Let's be people who pray for God to be worshiped by all people in all places.



#### PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- the gospel to be heard in the Middle East
- those considering placing their trust in Christ but risking persecution
- protection over Muslim-background believers who are being bold in their faith in their native region
- peace in this region
- IFC: there are students from the Middle East who have the opportunity to hear the gospel while they are at school in the United States. Pray that there would be more students who return to their countries with the gospel

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- Church Planting Development East (CPDE), a church planting movement in North Africa and the Middle East, led by Cornerstone-supported Muslim-background believers
- the Bomans, a Cornerstone family who is preparing to move as missionaries to the Middle East in 2024



### *Middle Eastern Hummus*

prep: 10 minutes

Recipe from Inspired Taste

Sometimes the best way to get the flavor of a new culture is to taste one of their national dishes. As our church prepares to send the Boman family to the Middle East, we wanted to share a recipe for Hummus. Hummus is a staple of Middle-Eastern cuisine and, although readily available in nearly every American grocery store, this homemade version has a depth of flavor that will delight your taste buds. Gather the ingredients and make this easy recipe with your family as you pray for gospel harvest.

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 (15 ounce) can chickpeas
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cup fresh lemon juice (1 large lemon)
- 1/4 cup well-stirred tahini
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- Salt to taste
- 2 to 3 tablespoons water
- Dash ground paprika or sumac (for serving)

#### DIRECTIONS:

- In the bowl of a food processor, combine the tahini and lemon juice and process for 1 minute, scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl then process for 30 seconds more. This extra time helps "whip" or "cream" the tahini, making the hummus smooth and creamy.
- 2. Add the olive oil, minced garlic, cumin, and a 1/2 teaspoon of salt to the whipped tahini and lemon juice. Process for 30 seconds, scrape the sides and bottom of the bowl then process another 30 seconds or until well blended. Open, drain, and rinse the chickpeas. Add half of the chickpeas to the food processor and process for 1 minute. Scrape sides and bottom of the bowl, then add remaining chickpeas and process until thick and quite smooth; 1 to 2 minutes.
- 3. Most likely the hummus will be too thick or still have tiny bits of chickpea. To fix this, with the food processor turned on, slowly add 2 to 3 tablespoons of water until you reach the perfect consistency.
- 4. Taste for salt and adjust as needed. Serve hummus with a drizzle of olive oil and dash of paprika. Store homemade hummus in an airtight container and refrigerate it for up to one week.

Makes 6 servings

# Indigenous / Near-Culture Partnerships



God is a global God, so we believe each local church should have a global vision. This year, I had the opportunity to travel to the Middle East and see, firsthand, how God is at work through strategic partnerships our church has with indigenous church-planting movements. In these partnerships, the goal isn't to send Western missionaries to reach the unreached world, but to empower and resource our brothers and sisters who are native to these places to reach their own people with the gospel. From what I have seen, I am THRILLED! We are living at an amazing time when the historical mission field has now become the missionary! In particular, I'm encouraged by the gospel stories we are hearing from our friends at Church Planting Development East (CPDE) and Serve India.

- Mark Vance, Lead Pastor

#### GROWING THE KINGDOM THROUGH HOUSE CHURCHES

♥ NAME Region

Written by SR | Church Planting Development East

G od is at work in the North Africa and Middle East (NAME) region in an unprecedented way in history. This region of the world has been in spiritual darkness for many years with wars and conflicts, regimes and empires, and, often, religions and false gods keeping most people blinded to their spiritual reality. The past few decades, and particularly the past ten to fifteen years, many have grown tired of this reality and have experienced hopelessness which has been expressed through government overthrows, wars and terrorism. The unrest has made the people in this region thirsty for the Living Water, Jesus Christ.

Church Planting Development East (CPDE) was founded in the Middle East with a vision to reach the NAME region by using local believers as "native missionaries." These believers develop relationships with the people in their daily lives, find those who are thirsty, and lead them to Christ. Then the older believers help the new converts grow by discipling them and encouraging them in their faith. Subsequently, house churches are planted and leaders are raised as God works through those laboring to change and grow people's hearts and minds for the reality of living for His kingdom. "Locals going to locals" is the heartbeat of CPDE's strategy as believers are contextually equipped and passionate about reaching their ethno-linguistic groups and the other peoples living amongst them.

Since its inception, the vision to reach out to others locally in a rippling effect has been CPDE's strategy, starting with believers themselves. The strategy is to go to any existing believers and educate, assist, and call them to action to live out their faith and the Great Commission by reaching out to any nominal (often Orthodox or Catholic) Christians who are often Christian only by birth, title, and their ID cards. As this happens, these Christians and house churches will begin to impact and reach out to their Muslim majority neighbors and the other people groups living near them. This strategy has



been very effective although it has taken a great commitment on the part of its founder, Dr. Maz\* and the staff, to keep the vision going amidst persecution and challenges. Dr. Maz had the foresight to build an effective infrastructure through layered leadership, training and evaluation processes, and support for local believers and leaders. This infrastructure established the foundation from which local believers have been reaching out to those of near cultures for over twenty years (currently in eight countries) forming nearly 500 staff and 2,000 volunteers working to support and oversee 18,000+ house churches.

One example of locals being sent to locals in CPDE is Salam<sup>\*</sup>. He was a sincere Muslim who grew up in a village where Islam was strongly practiced. He attempted to follow in those footsteps, even leading prayers in the mosque from a young age. However, he had multiple dreams about Jesus, and when he fled the country due to war, he sought out Christians in order to get answers and find more information about Jesus. He eventually put his faith in Christ, began gathering with believers in the country to which he had fled, and began working in ministry. Shortly after, he met CPDE Regional Coordinator Sam\* who discipled and trained him; they began a new church planting work together. Over the past seven years, Salam has grown to be a leading worker in multiple countries, including his home country. Throughout these countries he has worked with Arabs, Kurds, Muslims, Christians, Yazidis, atheists, and other ethnic and religious groups. He has helped hundreds of families come to faith and has planted over one hundred house churches amongst primarily-Muslim people. Please pray for Salam, Sam, Dr. Maz, and the other 500-member-staff of church planters, trainers, and administrators as they continue to push towards the goal of seeing twenty-five nations - over 600 million people reached with the gospel through the planting of healthy and multiplying house churches. Praise God for the work he has accomplished and for what he is continuing to do!

\*Real names are not used for security purposes.





#### TRAINING NATIVE PASTORS TO REACH NATIONAL BROTHERS AND SISTERS

Written by Brother Sam | Serve India Ministries

aju was a Hindu priest and his wife was deeply involved in sorcery before they both became Christ's followers. After his first meeting with me at a native pastors training event, he said to his wife, "Sam is carrying a huge load of reaching out to 100,000 unreached villages! I want to lighten his burden by taking care of at least five villages." That was nearly twenty years ago, but planting has been my focus since 1978 when I obeyed the call of God on my life and went to a cross-cultural mission field in northern India. By 1999, while serving as the Mission Director of an organization that was working with over 5,000 native workers across India and six other Southeast Asian countries, I had begun to be rather desperate in my private prayers about India still being outside the fold (97%) even though disciple Thomas had landed on the shores of South India 1,900 years ago. Early in 2006, the Lord gave me a daunting vision of reaching out to 100,000 unreached villages through 200,000 native pastors.

Let me pause here so you can better understand the significance of this vision. From the mid-sixties through the eighties, the Lord caused a mission revival primarily in south India and raised and sent hundreds of native missionaries, like myself, to the unreached parts of India. And while they were being used of the Lord to bring thousands of people to Christ, they saw Him beginning to deploy some of their native new converts to reach out to their own people. By the way, India boasts of 1,652 languages and dialects and 2,135 unreached people groups. Surprisingly, the native new converts were more successful than the cross-cultural missionaries from the south. Soon the small house churches they were planting began to multiply. It goes without saying that the south Indian missionaries were no longer needed to bring the gospel to the unreached regions of India.

So here is the situation in India today: It is estimated that there could be in excess of 150,000 native, first-generation (converts) native pastors scattered across the unreached regions of India! Before you raise your eyebrows, let me say that since 2006, Serve India Ministries has recruited, trained, and deployed 17,678 native pastors across twenty-six states of India. We place equipped Bible trainers with pastors and train them for three to five years. While training with us, they each work in five unreached villages seeking to plant churches. We work in Nepal as well where we are on course for recruiting 160 native pastors, and in Sri Lanka 137 native pastors are actively training with us.

Pastor Kannan is a classic example among the Indian native pastors we have trained and sent. His mother died when he was three months old. His proverbial step-mom pulled him out of school when he was in third grade and sent him to the meadows to take care of the family's sheep. Kannan does not remember ever eating at home. The neighbors fed him, and he slept on somebody's porch. When he was fifteen, a native pastor came to his village and Kannan became his first convert. A few others accepted the Lord, but before long the villagers were upset with the pastor and beat him and chased him away and the shepherd's mantle fell on Kannan's shoulders. When he was thirty-three, he enrolled with our pastoral training program. Kannan, desiring to make Timothies out of the few believers he had, was faithfully passing on the training to them, despite feeling inadequate due to his poor education. By the time he completed the training, he had trained twenty Timothies, planted three churches, and his main congregation had 170 members. Yes, there is now more hope for reaching out to India's 1.4 billion people because the Lord of the Harvest has raised the native new converts, like Kannan, who are serving him in their distinct socio-cultural-linguistic world as powerful instruments of the gospel.


# Mercy, Compassion,







#### MAKING THE GOSPEL PLAIN BY SERVING IN JESUS' NAME

Written by Eric Warren | Cornerstone Global Missions Pastor

uffering, disasters, poverty, hunger, war, slavery, injustice, and homelessness are problems occurring all over the world. These problems create various physical and emotional needs. But humans have spiritual needs as well, and everyone's deepest eternal need is Jesus. Therefore, gospel proclamation will always be primary in Cornerstone's global vision strategy. Acts of mercy, compassion, and justice can be effective ways to open doors for gospelsharing opportunities with people in their times of deepest need. Physical needs and struggles often create the biggest barriers to hearing the gospel. When these acts of mercy, compassion, and justice are done in the name of Jesus, God's Word is seen more clearly, hearts are more receptive, and bodies and minds are secure and able to comprehend it more effectively. Cornerstone partners with many credible and Christ-centered organizations. These organizations receive our funds and encourage their people to meet needs while faithfully proclaiming salvation through Jesus Christ. We participate in both relief and development opportunities all across the globe.

One type of mercy, compassion, and justice work is categorized as *relief*. Relief funds may be extended to people after a natural disaster or a humanitarian crisis. These crises are often sudden and unpredictable, and people's needs are extremely desperate for a time. Hopefully, as the crisis comes to an end, the need for relief will wane as local individuals and leaders work within their own systems to resolve their problems. People in these unfortunate circumstances often realize their deep spiritual needs when their physical worlds plunge into darkness. Gospel demonstration and proclamation can be powerfully carried out through relief workers who become the hands and feet of Jesus. In the last year, Cornerstone has given relief funds to aid the Afghanistan crisis, the Sudan crisis, the Ukraine war, and the Turkey/Syria earthquake. Our funds were primarily allocated through our partner, Send Relief. The funds given for Ukraine were stewarded by our partner, Vitaliy Sorokun, who visited Cornerstone in November of 2022. In addition to meeting the needs of the Ukrainian church members who lost their homes and their livelihoods, funds were also used to keep native Ukrainian missionaries financially supported so they could continue their mission work.

Another type of mercy, compassion, and justice work is categorized as *development*. Development is the idea of making an investment in long-term solutions to long-term problems through resourcing, training, and educating locals in the community. Through development, we are able to help native people create systems that enable them to meet their own phyical needs. Orphan care, education and feeding programs, and other development work done in the name of Jesus help people see God's love lived out as they hear His truth applied to their lives. In the last year, Cornerstone sent funds to trusted partners in places like Zambia, Haiti, South Africa, Guatemala, Thailand, Central African Republic, and Pine Ridge reservation. Many of our members also took part in short-term trips to these places.

Thank you, Cornerstone, for being generous with your time and money. Your faith and funds enable people all over the world to experience the body of Christ through the presence of his people.

# **•** Thailand



## THE LIGHT CENTER

hank you for partnering with The Light Center in Thailand! Your participation supports teen mothers and abuse victims in a crisis pregnancy transition home, promotes life advocacy to medical staff and social workers in government hospitals, provides Christian mentors to education sponsorship recipients, and distributes emergency infant formula to the poor through our healthcare network. Hundreds of Thai families have been impacted in the name of Christ. Entire generations of families have been changed. And many young families now put their faith in Jesus as a result of God working through you, The Light Center, and our local church.

Written by Marcus & Bum Fey

South Africa

## RESTORING HOPE VILLAGE / HOPE BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

hank you, Cornerstone! Your partnership with Restoring Hope Village and Hope Bible Fellowship Church is making a significant difference in leading children to the true source of hope - a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Meeting the physical needs of orphaned, abused, neglected and hopeless children is only the beginning. Through gospel-centered mentorship, discipleship groups, outreach efforts, and the love of a Christ-centered community at HBF Church, many children have discovered the transformative power of the gospel and the hope it brings to their lives. The collaboration between Cornerstone Church and Restoring Hope exemplifies the profound impact that a shared commitment to leading others to Christ can have on the lives of vulnerable children, guiding them towards a future filled with true hope, purpose, and eternal love. We give all glory and praise to God for your faithfulness and dedication to this mission. Your partnership is truly a blessing!

Written by Brian & Lois Niehoff



## ♥ Zambia

## THE HOPE CENTER: AGRICULTURE

hanks to Cornerstone for allowing me to serve and love our brothers and sisters in Zambia. Each visit to The Hope Center in Serenje is an adventure and, without fail, God touches my heart with someone who desperately needs mercy and compassion so that in a small way I can share the love of Jesus. I provide agricultural training, seed, and fertilizer for improved maize production, which increases food security for orphan caregivers and subsistence farmers, and I coordinate the distribution of desperately needed medicine and wheelchairs to churches in the bush. Jesus said, "Whatever you have done for the least of these, you have also done for me." What a joy to be used by God for His glory.



Written by Marlin Rice

🕈 Zambia

#### THE HOPE CENTER: EDUCATION

In January of 2023, Cornerstone began a new program within The Hope Center in Serenje, Zambia - a Scholarship / Mentorship program. The Hope Center serves some very talented young men and women who are in need of mentorship and financial support in order to continue their education beyond high school. Thanks to the generosity of Cornerstone, the program was able to financially assist four students who began their college education, including Esther Namutowe who began studying at the University of Zambia. Esther is currently in medical school and has future plans of bringing her talents back to The Hope Center.

Written by Russ Jones

## ♥ Pine Ridge, SD

## ČHAŊKÚ WAŠTÉ RANCH

ornerstone, thank you for your partnership with us. It enable us to make the gospel as accessible as possible for our community here in Pine Ridge. Your partnership has helped us purchase fuel to run our buses for one month of summer camp, and you have sent us some amazing volunteers to put on an amazing week of camp for kids in our community. We are better because of you!

Written by Matt & Amanda Hadden

♥ Haiti

#### MISSION STARFISH HAITI

M esi - thanks - Cornerstone Church for partnering with Mission Starfish Haiti. Your giving this year has been a huge difference-maker, as it has allowed us to continue supporting our local school (360 students) and local church (220 members) even during one of the darkest times in Haiti's history. Cornerstone Church's giving has provided Starfish the provisions to feed the school children, support teacher salaries, and to purchase books and needed school supplies. It is our desire to continue to share the gospel in our school and greater community; Cornerstone Church's partnership helps reinforce this vision each day by helping us empower our local school staff and pastor. Ansanm Nou Pifo - together we are stronger. Mesi Cornerstone Church!

Written by Silentor Eshitil Henderson





# **◊** *Turkey*

## EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

y wife and I serve in Turkey long-term and were able to help build shelters and facilitate trauma debriefing in the earthquake zone in March of this year. The widespread devastation in the provinces we visited was overwhelming. City after city, block after block, building after building, apartment after apartment, were cracked, flattened, or reduced to piles of rubble - each one representing lives suddenly uprooted. So many were grieving the loss of loved ones and livelihoods, and struggling to meet basic human needs. Yet in the face of so much ruin, the churches of Turkey have come together to provide food, clean water, clothing, shelter, sanitary services, trauma debriefing, and community support. They committed to be an active, faithful presence, not just in the first weeks of acute crisis, but for the months and even years of rebuilding and recovery. Thank you to Cornerstone for giving to Send Relief.

Written by P & H

## **V***kraine*

#### THE BAPTIST UNION OF UKRAINE

O n behalf of the Baptist Union of Ukraine, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Cornerstone Church for your partnership and generosity. Your support has allowed the foreign mission department to continue supporting the work of Ukrainian missionaries around the world, enabling them to stay in the field and advance the gospel. Despite the war, we have been able to increase the number of sent ones, with twenty-two missionary units in fifteen countries, and have planted eighty-seven Ukrainian churches among the Ukrainian refugees in Europe. Additionally, we have appointed nineteen coordinators to oversee the new European ministry. This would not have been possible without Cornerstone's support for which we are truly grateful. We look forward to a continued and deepened partnership in the future.

Written by Vitaliy Sorokun





• North Africa

#### **RESTORING THE LAND**

e are so glad to have Cornerstone standing with us as we start our regenerative agriculture business in a hard and dry land. On our 240-acre ranch, we've got one hundred goats and sheep and six cows which allow us to demonstrate how livestock can be used to restore the land and produce abundance. We're also discipling our staff and local believers. Off-farm and online, we've been able to put God's Word in front of hundreds of thousands of people, most of whom have never heard the Good News, and we've seen a handful of them come to faith. Thank you, Cornerstone, for partnering with us these last fifteen years!

Written by The C Family





