

PROJECTS OF KINDNESS

by Robert Costa

Churches grow when there is a planned process of community outreach that meets the physical, mental, social and spiritual needs of people.

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” Matthew 4:23

Following the example of the Savior, the New Testament church met the needs of people in the name of Jesus. These early disciples showed an interest in the whole person: physically, intellectually, socially and spiritually (See Acts 3:6, Acts 6:1-4).

“Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Savior mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’” Ministry of Healing, p. 143

Growing churches have a variety of programs that meet the needs of different groups of people. Just like Jesus, who met the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs, His people, full of love, do the same.

Below there are some practical examples of projects of kindness. Almost every profession could be turned into a missionary project on vacation, selected days of the year, or week-ends.

- ✓ Single mom's free oil change. Most single moms have car problems regularly.
- ✓ Neighborhood windshield washing. Going door to door washing windshields in driveways.
- ✓ Mother's Day carnation giveaways. Set up outside grocery stores on Sunday before mother's Day.
- ✓ Smile and speak kindly to everyone you met.
- ✓ Sunday morning newspaper and coffee giveaway. Going door to door early in the morning to houses without a paper in the driveway.
- ✓ Snow removal from driveways and sidewalks. Rescue people from the ditches, etc.
- ✓ Carry a meal to a sick or an elderly person.
- ✓ Pulling out cars stuck in the snow. Help people dig out the snow.
- ✓ Empty garbage can returned from street. Bring cans back to people's houses garage.
- ✓ Free bottled water in a busy street, park, square, mall, bus or train station, or business district. Add a label with a promise from God
- ✓ Go on an errand for a neighbor.
- ✓ Clean house for the sick and shut-ins.
- ✓ Create a website, twitter or social media to pray for people.
- ✓ Kitchen clean up. Humbling but powerful service, especially for older people.
- ✓ Food delivery to shut-ins.

- ✓ Be sympathetic and help neighbors during bereavement.
- ✓ Praying in the neighborhood.
- ✓ Visit persons in prison.
- ✓ Car drying at self-serve car washes.
- ✓ Assist handicapped individuals.
- ✓ Leaf racking. Who likes to rake leaves? We do it for them.
- ✓ Car interior vacuuming. Set up in small parking lot or at a gas station and vacuum cars.
- ✓ Offer neighbors the use of your phone in an emergency.
- ✓ Filling windshield washer fluid in cars. Refill washer reserves in cars and clean off wiper blades.
- ✓ Show appreciation for other's kindness.
- ✓ Cleaning fireplaces. Remove ashes.
- ✓ Offer emergency lodging for those in need.
- ✓ Checking air on car tires. See if tires are properly inflated. Adjust pressure if necessary.
- ✓ Memorial service. Advertise complimentary memorial service in newspaper or telephone books.
- ✓ Attend neighborhood club meetings, and offer your services.
- ✓ Radon detectors. Give out complimentary detectors in areas where radon is a concern.
- ✓ Invite neighbors to your home for a social gathering.
- ✓ Carbon monoxide detectors. Give out complimentary carbon monoxide detectors.
- ✓ Smoke detector batteries. Give out complimentary smoke detector batteries for refills.
- ✓ Bring a souvenir from a trip to your neighbor.
- ✓ Outdoor window washing. Wash first floor windows.
- ✓ Yard clean up. Look for messy yards.
- ✓ Invite neighbors and relatives to dinner.
- ✓ Share a small gift with those who are sick.
- ✓ Share information that may be helpful.
- ✓ Easter basket giveaway. Every child wants an Easter basket.
- ✓ Invite friends and neighbors to church services and special church events.
- ✓ Rainy day grocery escort. Help shoppers to cars with packages.
- ✓ Offer to check for your neighbor's mail during his/her absence.
- ✓ Toilet cleaning. Clean toilets of restaurants and stores.
- ✓ Offer to watch your neighbor's house when they are away.
- ✓ Help sponsor a child to a youth camp or other special event.
- ✓ Christmas gift wrap. Everyone needs their Christmas gifts wrapped. Do it at the mall for free.
- ✓ Lawn care. Find unkept lawns and go for it.
- ✓ Soft drink or lemonade giveaway. On a hot day, nothing refresh like a cold drink in Jesus' name.
- ✓ Free hot chocolate. Set up tables at store exits, bus/train stations, or sporting events and serve hot chocolate on cold days.
- ✓ Share vegetables from your garden with your neighbor
- ✓ Water stations at marathons and running events. Offer electrolytic drinks in disposable cups to the runners.
- ✓ Offer to repair a broken object if you are able to do it.
- ✓ Give neighbors refreshments on the day they are moving.

- ✓ Windshield washing. Hit every car in the lot at stores and shopping centers. Leave a note: "While you were away from your car, people from the Vineyard SDA Church washed your windshield".
- ✓ Grocery store bag packing. Go to self-bagging grocery store and help people bag their groceries.
- ✓ Help persons carry groceries.
- ✓ Language classes for immigrants.
- ✓ Can collecting in Halloween to be distributed on thanksgiving.
- ✓ Thanksgiving dinner for the needy.
- ✓ Balloon giveaway. Go to a park and give balloons and cards to children with parents.
- ✓ Free bird feeders to convalescent hospitals. Share God's love with birdseed.
- ✓ Free house number painting on curbs. Address number painted on the curb with stencils.
- ✓ Rake leaves for elderly.
- ✓ Free community dinner. Throw a party for a neighborhood or for children.
- ✓ Shopping assistance for shut-ins. Shop for those that can't get out on their own.
- ✓ Collect trees after Christmas for proper disposal. Meet a practical clean up need.
- ✓ Speak an encouraging word in person or on the phone.
- ✓ Doggie dirt clean up of neighborhood yards. Clean up doggie mess.
- ✓ Help neighbor prepare and plant a garden.
- ✓ Shoe shining service. Free shoe shining at stores, malls, other public places.
- ✓ Surprise an out of town student with a care package.
- ✓ Feeding parking meters. Find expired parking meters before cars are ticketed and leave a note of explanation.
- ✓ Light bulb service. Go door to door with light bulbs, offering to change burned-out bulbs.
- ✓ Remember birthdays and anniversaries of neighbors and relatives.
- ✓ Give an appropriate book or booklet to a bereaved family.
- ✓ Conduct a neighborhood children's story hour
- ✓ Laundromat outreach. Pay for washing machines and dryers at local laundromats.
- ✓ Call your neighbor and inquire how they are doing.
- ✓ Blood pressure screening. Check people blood pressure at public places.
- ✓ Invite neighbors to a family outing.
- ✓ Car safety light check. Replace burned out bulbs in cars.
- ✓ Invite handicap and elderly persons to a holiday dinner.
- ✓ Killing weeds. Spray for weeds and poison ivy on sidewalks, driveways, etc.
- ✓ Greeting cards to sick and shut-ins.
- ✓ Operation flat tire. Always carry with you the necessary equipment to help someone in the road to fix a flat tire.
- ✓ Bake a loaf of bread and give to a neighbor.
- ✓ Seal blacktop driveways. Help homeowners seal driveways.
- ✓ Send your neighbor a card when you are on vacation.
- ✓ Offer to stay with handicapped or sick person when needed.
- ✓ During holidays, give a generous tip to the mail carrier.
- ✓ House gutter cleaning. Clean gutters on houses of leaves, sticks and debris.
- ✓ Loan items to neighbors as necessary.
- ✓ Birthday party organizing. Organize and run parties for children. Advertise in the newspaper, radio or TV.

- ✓ Polaroid pictures. Find lonely people or couples at parks or malls and “shoot” them, and give them the picture. Add a sticker with a Bible promise.
- ✓ Read the Bible, sing and pray with the sick and elderly.
- ✓ House/apartment repair. Fix broken things. Limit repairs to your capabilities.
- ✓ Offer to keep children or keep house during a funeral.
- ✓ House/apartment cleaning. Who doesn't need housework help?
- ✓ Be especially kind to the lonely.
- ✓ Winter car wash. Spry off salt and road grime.
- ✓ Write or send literature to those in jail or prison.
- ✓ Carry “Free Hug” signs with a group, and offer free hugs in a public street or city park or square.
- ✓ Carry “Free Prayer” signs at highways rest areas. Pray and distribute literature.
- ✓ Free summer car wash. Signs, “Free car wash – No kidding”
- ✓ Free full breakfast once a month at church or Community Services Center to Police personnel, and free car wash while they eat.
- ✓ Free haircut.
- ✓ Cut grass for elderly people, and plant some flowers.
- ✓ Offer to receive packages from the postman for your neighbors.
- ✓ Operation Balm. With the official permit from the Cemetery, leave a flower with a card and a message of hope in every grave early in the morning on “All Saints Day”.

Additional projects

- Adopt a church in the mission field
- Adopt a grandparent
- Adoption services
- ADRA mission trip
- Adult day care
- Advocacy services
- Alcohol program
- Assist a blind person
- Baby care class
- Be a good listener
- Be special kind to the elderly
- Bible study group
- Big Brother/Sister
- Blind camp
- Blind services
- Branch Sabbath School
- Camping for children
- Chaplaincy
- Child care
- Children's story hour/puppets
- Clothing/bedding program
- Community surveys
- Cooking school
- Counseling services
- Craft class
- Day camp
- Deaf services
- Disaster Response
- Dental clinic
- Divorce recovery seminar
- Do laundry for the sick
- Domestic violence program
- Door-to-door contacts
- Drug abuse detox
- Drug abuse prevention
- Drug abuse rehabilitation
- Encourage a child
- Families of prisoners
- Family camp
- Family Counseling
- Family finance seminar
- Family life workshop

- Phone Friend program
- First aid class
- Field trips for children
- Field trips for seniors
- Financial counseling
- Food Pantry
- Food distribution
- Foster grandparents
- Foster parents
- Furniture bank
- Give a bag of grocery
- Give a balloon to a child
- Give flowers to cheer someone
- Give fruit
- Grief recovery seminar
- Handicapped services
- Health appraisals
- Health screening
- Help neighbor with a stalled car
- Home nursing
- Home nursing class
- Homemaker services
- Homeless shelter
- Immigration assistance
- Information & referral
- Job-finding service
- Job training program
- Layettees
- Language classes for immigrants
- Legal aid Transitional housing
- Let another person go first
- Literacy program
- Literature rack
- Marriage seminar
- Meals on Wheels
- Medical Clinic
- Migrant Ministry
- Newcomer ministry
- Offer to baby-sit for a neighbor
- Offer to pay bills for the sick
- Operation Overcoat
- Operation Paintbrush
- Parenting seminar
- Preparing for Baby class
- Prison Dress-out program
- Prison ministry
- Refugee resettlement
- Say “hello” to strangers
- Self-help groups
- Senior citizen group
- Senior citizen lunches
- Sewing class
- Share clothing with the needy
- Shoes for Little Shavers
- Shoes for the Shoeless
- Soup kitchen
- Stop-smoking program
- Street ministry
- Stress seminar
- Suicide prevention
- Support group
- Take sick or elderly to pay the bills
- Take someone to lunch
- Tax assistance
- Teen run-away shelter
- Thrift store
- Transportation assistance
- Traveler's assistance
- Tutoring program
- Vision clinic
- Visit neighbors and relatives in hospital
- Write and encouraging letter

In the natural world as well as in the spiritual world, there are laws of the harvest. One of the most basic is simply this: “To have a crop, it is necessary to plant the seed.” No farmer expect God to work a miracle and germinate seed he has not sown. When the seeds of kindness and love are planted, the Holy Spirit will lead the people to listen “the rest of the story”.

- The only **visits** God can bless are the ones we make.
- The only **literature** God can bless is literature we distribute.
- The only **prayers** God can bless for souls are prayers we offer.

- The only **Bible studies** God can bless are the ones we give.
- The only **evangelistic** seminars God can bless are the ones we conduct.
- The only **acts of kindness** God can bless are the ones we practice to others.

It is presumptuous to believe we can have a great harvest without adequate effort in sowing the seed of God's word. In fact, it is in the process of sowing that our own hearts are watered by the Holy Spirit and prepared for the harvest. As we participate with Christ in touching the lives of others with the gospel, the Holy Spirit transforms our own heart making our churches centers of His healing grace.

A story of an act of kindness

One night in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, a man came to a small hotel, approached the counter and asked for a room. George Bolt was the clerk on duty that night. He said, "Sorry, sir, all rooms are taken tonight." The old man began to walk away and said, "Sorry, my wife is sick and I need a room, has not been able to find any tonight."

The old man was leaving when George said, "Wait, sir, I did not say you could not have a room. What I said was that there is no room in the hotel, but if your wife is sick, you can have my room. I can sleep in one of these chairs when I finish my shift. You can have my room. Follow Me."

He took the old couple to own it room to feel comfortable. The poor man hardly slept that night. Early in the morning he called the hotel owner said: "I'm John Jacob Astor. Do you have an employee named George who was on call last night?"

"Yes, his name is George Bolt. What do you need?"

"Well, I'm going to build the largest hotel in America, and I want that boy is my business manager. For years I've been looking for someone like him who knows how to be kind to strangers."

So, John Jacob Astor built the Waldorf-Astoria and George became the manager of the most famous hotel in America for 40 years, because he practiced kindness.

The example of George Bolt can be repeated many times in the life of Christians. Kindness is the result of something that God through his Spirit runs in every heart when we let it. In a hectic world, goodness, kindness and love for others are like an oasis, to refresh those around us. Do not believe that is the purpose of God that his church should be the center of courtesy, kindness, understanding and love?

"If we would humble ourselves before God, and be kind and courteous and tenderhearted and pitiful, there would be one hundred conversions to the truth where now there is only one." Testimonies, vol. 9, p.189.

"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
John 13:35

"And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you."
Ephesians 4:32

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel

to the poor; he has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.” Luke 4:18, 19

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:13-16.

“Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.” James 1:27

“When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’” Matthew 25:31-40.

You are His hands, you are His feet, you are His eyes, you are his ears, and above all you are His heart to love them enough to lead them to Jesus.